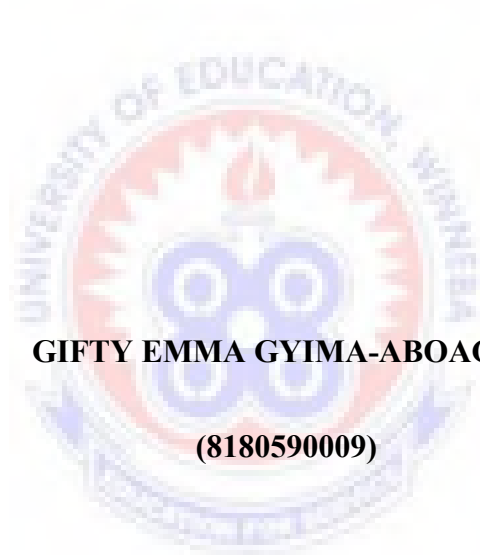**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE THREE PART EXCHANGE IN POKUASE SCHOOLS

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**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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SEPTEMBER, 2019

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, GIFTY EMMA GYIMA-ABOAGYE, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: ....

DATE: ....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis /dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME: DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY

SIGNATURE: …………………………………

DATE: ………………………………………

DEDICATION

To the Gyima-Aboagye family.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content   **Page**

LIST OF TABLES

Table   **Page**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure   **Page**

ABSTRACT

Classroom interaction refers to the exchanges that occur between the teacher and the learner during a classroom discourse. This study examined the application of Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model of exchange structure (IRF) in classrooms in schools in Pokuase in the Ga-North Municipality. In examining the classroom interaction, the study focused mainly on Initiation-Response and Feedback (IRF) as a pedagogical technique used in the ESL classroom. To achieve the objectives, data were collected using recordings, interview and observation from five public and five private basic schools from Pokuase and analyzed qualitatively. Results indicated that teachers and pupils utilize different types of the IRF structure to achieve language learning objectives. Based on the results, it is argued that teachers in Ghanaian schools could employ the exchange structure to create a conducive classroom atmosphere devoid of intimidation as pupils also find it necessary to be part of the structure. Also, teachers are entreated to have an understanding of this structure so as to allow pupils to freely initiate lessons where possible in order that they will not miss their turns in the interaction.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the study

Teacher-student interaction refers to the exchanges that take place between the teacher and the student in the course of teaching and learning. The essence of the teacher in the classroom is to impart knowledge to the student which will eventually become useful to them and be part of their lives. This is best achieved through the teacher's effort to impart specific knowledge to the student to prepare them in a particular way for the future. Among the several subjects taught in schools are languages. Interactions between teachers and learners have been the focus of many studies in English as a Second Language (ESL) and related fields, based on the assumption that opportunities for oral production coupled with feedback from teachers facilitates the learning process (Sibley, 1990). Classroom interaction is necessary and useful as an educational strategy to enhance the students' learning process since it plays a significant role in the process of second language learning through giving learners opportunities to receive the input that is provided by the teacher which must be understood by the learners in order to make them involved in the classroom task by providing the output (Taous, 2013).

According to Hall and Walsh (2002), classroom interaction takes on an especially significant role in that it is both the medium through which learning is realized and an object of pedagogical attention. The extent to which a student acquires a language usually becomes very evident in his/her life. And until when the student is able to proficiently use the target language, the teacher's effectiveness is hardly measured to the maximum. However, the teacher's efforts coupled with several other factors contribute to his/her effectiveness. Second language classroom interaction

1

research began in the 1960s with the aim of evaluating the effectiveness of interaction in language acquisition (Kalantar, 2009). According to Brown (2001), interaction is at the heart of communicative competence. When a learner interacts with another learner, he/she receives input and produces output. As Nunan (1991) observes, language is acquired as learners actively engage and interact with each other to communicate in target language. In addition, social–interactionist see language as rule-governed cultural activity learned in interaction with others. According to Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Shannon, 2005), social interaction plays an important role in the learning process. Again, Ellis (2004) states that interactionists view language learning as an outcome of participating in discourse, in particular, face-to-face interaction. That is, besides what the teacher teaches, other factors exist in the learning environment, thus, social factors also affect the student's rate of the language acquisition. The fundamental objective for learning a language is to enable the student communicate in the target language and such is the reason for learning the English language as well.

In the process of assisting the student in his/her learning, it is observed that the job of the teacher, the setting of the learning environment, and social relations are factors that affect classroom communication (Sinclair, & Brazil,1982). This is quite phenomenal in the Ghanaian setting. In the Ghanaian education setting, teachers deal with students of multiple linguistic backgrounds with diverse socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds as well as diverse ethnographic environments. All of these have one influence or the other on the student's rate of acquiring the English. By implication, the rate at which a student acquires language is dependent on the interaction that takes place between him/her, and the teacher as well as the environmental factors. This notwithstanding, the major factors that influence the

student's language acquisition is the interaction between the teacher and the student in the classroom environment.

To be sure of the contribution of the teacher-student classroom interaction, there is the need for a careful analysis of such interaction. Thus, whether a class follows a traditional style or more recent trends, analyzing classroom discourse is a useful way to understand the structure of communication between teachers and students. Again, an understanding of classroom spoken discourse can be a valuable tool in preparing second language learners for real-life language interactions. Analyzing classroom discourse can show the proportion of teacher-talk to that of ‗real' communication by assessing teacher and student output (McCarthy, 1991). Awareness of components of interaction can improve classroom spoken discourse and pedagogy by encouraging teacher decision-making in the classroom (Jones, 2009).

Interactions between teachers and students have usually been conducted in English as a Second Language (ESL) and related fields, with the assumption that the student gains the opportunity to practice the correct usage of the language orally through such interactions and also receives instant feedback from teachers which facilitates the learning process. Nonetheless, authenticating the assumptions and the contribution of such interactions cannot be said to have been achieved fully in one or some particular studies. It is still an open field endowed with rich untapped knowledge and this study seeks to join in the exploration and to add to the wealth of knowledge in the field from the Ghanaian school setting. Again, investigating the assumptions underlying the teacher-student classroom interaction also grants the opportunity to unravel other factors that influence language acquisition.

The major features of a classroom interaction can be considered in three parts: a teacher initiates (Initiation, or I), a student responds (Response, or R), and a teacher

provides feedback (Feedback, or F). This is what some scholars have termed commonly as IRF, or IRE: Initiation, Response, Feedback/Evaluation. The other version, IRE, is sometimes used as the teachers' feedback is considered an evaluation of the student's contribution. In this study, data were collected from selected public and private basic schools in the Pokuase community and its environs, within the Ga North Municipality of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992) model of classroom discourse analysis was used to in analysing the data so gathered in this respect. This was done to ascertain the extent to which the structure can be used in the Ghanaian context. This was also necessary for the fact that from the literature, the model has been applied to students with monolingual background unlike the situation in Ghana.

1.2   Statement of the problem

Many a time, teachers have been accused of the abysmal performance of their students during external examinations. In situations like that, the blame had been put squarely on the teacher; the students could not perform well probably because he/she might have used an inappropriate methodology in his/her teaching. Again, studies have shown that interaction between the teacher and the student as a teaching methodology plays a very significant role as far as the language acquisition process is concerned. However, the extent to which the classroom interaction plays a role in the language acquisition process of a target language has not been clearly established. Furthermore, scholars who have conducted investigations on the classroom interactions or discourse have mostly analysed their data using the Sinclair and Coulthard model to establish their findings. In most cases, the model has been applied to students of a monolingual background and in parts of the world other than Ghana and Africa for that matter. Given the diverse linguistic and other diverse backgrounds of the Ghanaian students

4

and their teachers, the way classroom interaction affects the rate of the ESL acquisition and how it impacts on the language is not known.

According to Gaies (1983), there has been a shift in research focus from the nature of language input in the classroom to the nature of interaction between native speakers and second language acquirers. Gaies (1983) and van Lier (1984), among others, provide useful guidelines for analysis based on verbal interactions in the ESL classroom. Allwright (1984) asserts that with a goal of having students achieve a high degree of communicative competence, instruction in the classroom has relied heavily on the value of interaction-of live, person-to-person encounters. He is of the view that such interaction should be inherent in the very notion of classroom pedagogy itself, and a successful pedagogy, in any subject, necessarily involves the management of classroom interaction. In addition, Pica et al (1987) maintain that teacher-student relationships and patterns of classroom interaction are required, that are radically different from the pattern of teacher elicitation, student responses, and teacher feedback that is typical of classroom discourse. Teacher feedback is the final stage of the pedagogical cycle. In spite of the fact that studies abound regarding the use of the IRF exchange structure in most native speaker classrooms, there is little or no information on its application in any classroom in Ghana. This study therefore intends to fill this gap by investigating how the IRF is applied by employing a qualitative research design with data from interactions in the ESL classrooms in Pokuase in the Ga North Municipality.

1.3   Research objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. To investigate the application of the IRF exchange structure in the classrooms of schools in Pokuase;

2. To determine the various IRF patterns that are produced in the classroom;

3. To examine the roles of teachers and learners in the exchange.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How is the IRF applied in the classrooms of schools in Pokuase?

2. What are the various patterns of the IRF structure produced in the classroom?

3. What are the roles of teachers and learners in the exchange structure?

1.5 Significance of the study

It is the researcher's desire that the outcome of the study would be of a great value to both casual readers and practicing teachers. That is, it will serve as a source of knowledge, information and a guide to the prospective readers. The researcher is looking forward to a situation where the work, apart from adding to the volume of literature on the subject matter, will also contribute to shaping the teacher's pedagogical skills in the ESL classroom using the IRF methodology. And lastly, it would enable the reader appreciate the essence of classroom interaction and the correlation between the classroom interaction and the acquisition of the target language since both teachers and learners have various respective roles to play in the classroom to achieve learning goals in the ESL classroom.

1.6 Limitation of the study

The research being purely academic, involved very extensive reading, coupled with delay of some of the school authorities in responding to the letter introducing the researcher and seeking their permission to conduct the research in their schools. Again, the researcher was given a strict working space. That is beyond the seventy minutes lesson when the researcher could sit in a lesson to observe, she could not engage the teachers in any other interactions until break time or closing hours where she could

conduct some interview with the teachers who were available. This was so because the heads and proprietors of the schools feared any engagements outside the aforementioned hours could cause a class interruption. This notwithstanding, the researcher had to combine normal classroom teaching with the research work which really became a very daunting task to say the least. However, the researcher was not intimidated by any of the aforementioned, she became rather toughened and more poised to see this research through to its successful and logical conclusion.

1.7   Organisation of the study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents a review of related literature and how it impacts the study, as well as the theoretical framework upon which the study is conducted. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology adopted for the study. This encompasses the research design, population and sampling, and data collection instruments and procedure. The rest are validity and reliability, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 discusses the result of the study. In the ESL classroom, the IRF is applied in diverse ways during classroom discourse through the use of open ended questions. The result also showed that there were different types of initiation, responses and feedback during interaction. The chapter further discusses the various patterns within the IRF structure where initiation, response and feedback are not done by only teachers but learners also do initiate and give feedback and not to only respond during interaction. The roles of both the teachers and learners are also discussed. These roles are very important during discourse to make interaction effective. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the work; it includes a discussion of the summary of findings and the role of the IRF exchange structure in the English language classroom. It also discusses the implications of the findings to language teaching and concludes with a suggestion for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

A vast scholarly investigation has been conducted in the classroom regarding the pedagogical styles of imparting knowledge to the learner on various aspects of knowledge acquisition. In the second or foreign language class, studies have concentrated on how teachers are able to assist students acquire a target language, L2 other than their own mother tongue, L1. In the Ghanaian context, a number of languages other than the student's own mother tongue are introduced in the Basic School. These include the English language, French and Ghanaian languages. Without doubt, each of these languages requires one approach or the other in order to facilitate its acquisition. In this literature review, the study focuses on teacher-student interaction in the ESL classroom, the three-part exchange, teacher feedback, and the conceptual framework adopted for the study.

2.1   The study of classroom interaction

To achieve the goal of teaching is to get learners demonstrate their understanding of the lesson in practical terms. This may best be done through the classroom interaction. Generally speaking, the assumption has been that an English language classroom mostly becomes very formal and teacher-centred, which usually tends to minimize students' participation; a phenomenon which is believed to slow down the rate of language acquisition. However, the classrooms become livelier and active if the lessons become student-centred, which focuses on learning English through meaningful communication. To achieve this, there is the need for a well-structured classroom interaction which gives the students more opportunities to contribute and participate in actual conversations. To buttress this, Hardman (2016)

observes that high quality talk between the teacher and student(s) provides a fertile ground for an active, highly collaborative and cognitively stimulating learning process leading to improved learning outcomes. High quality classroom talk is characterized by the use of open and authentic questions and formative feedback whereby student contributions are probed and elaborated on. The three-part exchange structure therefore enables the teacher to understand the structure of communication between him/her and students. An understanding of classroom spoken discourse can be a valuable tool in preparing second language learners for real-life language interactions.

Another intriguing aspect of this literature review is that, scholars conducting investigations into this field of teacher-student classroom interactions have divergent ideas. Whereas some believe it is a very useful tool for quick and effective L2 acquisition, others believe otherwise. For instance, Mhundwa (1987) observes that instead of facilitating learning, teachers' language tended to hinder it. In certain classrooms that the researcher observed, language problems seemed to be so serious that learners could hardly understand what the teachers were trying to put across. From this, one observes that even though classroom interaction is good to facilitate learners' acquisition of the L2, it can also turn the learner's dream into a nightmare. And this may hinder or impede the learner's ability for a very long time which may also minimize the learner's interest in the language for almost his/her life time.

On the other hand, some researchers, in spite of the fact that these signs of incompetence and student or learner deficiency may exist, still believe that the amount of oral practice students' use in the target language correlates significantly with L2 proficiency. There seems to be general agreement on the assumption that oral L2 practice, and especially verbal interaction with native speakers, has beneficial learning outcomes. But none of these authors were specifically investigating the three-part

exchange, or how teacher questioning strategies and teacher responses to student answers may enhance interactions and lead to L2 acquisition. An understanding of classroom spoken discourse can be a valuable tool in preparing second language learners for real-life language interactions. Besides, the primary focus of this study to find out if a similar results could be arrived at in Ghana, using the frameworks and methodologies, especially the Sinclair and Coulthard model which has been used by most researchers abroad and applied usually to people of a particular L1.

2.2   Classroom interaction in relation to language learning

Research has shown that classroom interaction is central to teaching and learning, not only functioning as a pedagogical tool but also a medium for active learning and thinking. Interaction, according to Wagner (1994), is the reciprocal events that require at least two objects and two actions. Interaction occurs when these objects and events naturally influence one another. That is, in the ESL classroom, there is an engagement between the teacher and the student; they react to each other's statements and actions to enable effective transfer for acquisition of knowledge to occur. This also means that the kind of interactive engagement or exchanges established between the teacher and the student with the aim of facilitating the student's knowledge acquisition in the L2 using appropriate questioning techniques to solicit appropriate responses from the student on their progress in the knowledge acquisition process.

Also, according to Hardman (2016), classroom interaction refers to how teachers interact with students during whole class, group-based and one-to-one teaching. This interaction serves as a medium through which the teacher solicits a response for the extent to which teaching and learning have taken/are taking place. In addition, Thurmond and Wambach (2004) state that interaction is the learners' engagement with the course content, other learners, the instructor and the technological

medium used in the course. They further intimate that true interaction with other learners, the instructor and technology results in a reciprocal exchange of information. The exchange of information intended to enhance knowledge development in the learning environment. This assertion points to the fact that Thurmond and Wambach (2004) added another dimension of interaction in the classroom. In summary, virtually everything that engages the student in the process of knowledge acquisition constitutes interaction, and is found to be holistic in nature.

2.2.1 *Characteristics of classroom interaction*

Characteristically, the interactions that take place in the classroom refer to the exchanges that occur between the teacher and the learner during a classroom discourse as well as the learner and the immediate classroom environment. They can be segmented into three forms. Thus, interaction between the teacher and the learners known as teacher-student interaction, interaction between the learners themselves termed student-student interaction, and interaction between the student and the classroom environment, termed student-technology interaction. Each of these forms of interactions is discussed in the following sections:

2.2.1.1 Teacher-student interaction

To a greater extent, learning is usually facilitated through the interaction that occurs between the teacher or instructor and the student. This goes a long way to further emphasize the importance of the exchanges that occur between the teacher and the student during their interaction in the classroom. In a three-part exchange, the teacher's questions aim at soliciting the student's answers which direct or shape the teachers' responses in accepting, correcting or extending the student's answers. Most of the times, researchers focus their attention on the interactions between teachers and learners because the assumption has been that the more opportunities are given to

11

learners to practice orally, the more learning takes place in the process. Sibley (1990) posits that interactions between teachers and learners have been the focus of many studies in English as a Second Language (ESL) and related fields, based on the assumption that opportunities for oral production coupled with feedback from teachers will facilitate the learning process.

Again, learner-teacher interaction addresses the climate of communication between the instructor and students in class. Lessons where students have multiple opportunities to communicate with the teacher are essential for the effective construction of student knowledge. By welcoming curiosity and encouraging students to raise their own questions about the content or claims being discussed, the instructor can guide students to develop habits of mind for framing and answering questions. For example, when an instructor creates a climate of respect in the classroom and encourages students to generate their own ideas involving scientific ways of thinking, students are more likely to think deeply and persist in the face of challenges (American Association for the Advancement of Science – AAAS, 1989).

To achieve the best of results from such an interaction, the teacher should be careful in the way s/he plays his/her role. To buttress this, Harmer (2009) states that:

> Teachers should focus on three factors when they talk with their students. First, they must pay attention to the kind of the language the students are able to understand, that is, they should provide an output that is comprehensible for students. Second, they must think about what they will say to their students; hence, the teacher's speech is a resource for learners. Third, teachers have to identify some features such as voice, tone, and intonation in their speaking.

The fact is if a teacher in their interaction with the students uses language above the standard of the students, they end up using words for words sake and no impact whatsoever. In effect, the teacher's expression or use of language in all what are done is nothing other than a show off since students cannot align with him/her or benefit from his/her teaching. This is why it is incumbent on the teacher to ensure that his/her choice of words is within what can be understood by his/her students in order to achieve his/her objective (Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

Again, knowing that students are learning from him or her, the teacher should be circumspect in the choice of words and general expression, with minimal errors. This is done in order that students would not copy or imitate the wrong thing which may be very difficult to correct in future. That is, besides the teacher's ability to choose appropriate words, s/he still has the responsibility to ensure meticulous articulation. This goes a long way to impact positively on his/her students. The teacher, having taking note of all these, must create an avenue for students to practice what has been taught and learnt. The student at this juncture must be given the opportunity to practice or demonstrate the skill acquired (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). In this sense, the teacher observes, listens and corrects students where necessary, ensuring that they are much as possible able to express themselves reasonably. After all, the use of the target language is one of the main purposes in learning and perhaps the primary objective why many people will learn a second language. Besides, a learner's ability to use the target language in communication is a means to measure their success in acquiring the language. It has also been widely assumed that the use of the target language is an indicator of a necessary condition for successful second language acquisition.

In their study on the discoursal features of classroom interaction, Hosein and Tabatabaei (2018) assert that classroom interaction is crucial in building knowledge

and improving skills. Allwright (1984) cited in Hosein and Tabatabaei (2018) believe that keeping learners active in the classroom is important, reducing the amount of teacher's talk and increasing learners' talk time. Allwright hits the nail right on the head when he notes that the learner stands to gain more in the process of teaching and learning if it becomes learner-centred than teacher-centred. Thus, the more the teacher interacts with the student, or the more the teacher creates an avenue for the student to interact, the less the teacher has to exert energy to talk and the more s/he obtains better feedback which shapes his/her response to students' contributions.

2.2.1.2 Student-student interaction

This refers to the interaction that takes place between students in the classroom. Here, students listen to one another's comments, ask questions among themselves, and build rapport among themselves through frequent inter-personal communication. Through this means, students communicate with one another in class. It is believed that classes where students have opportunities to communicate with one another help them to effectively construct their knowledge. Furthermore, during student-student interaction, *learners talk to themselves* about information or ideas contained in a given material. Student-student interaction also refers to interaction between students, including talking, listening, viewing, emailing and posting in discussion boards. It is a two-way communication between students, either on an individual basis or on a group basis, and with or without the real-time presence of an instructor. However, this interaction also has the tendency to promote unending noise making if not properly supervised; especially when the opportunity is given for the interaction to take place in an uncontrolled manner it could sway the teacher's attention from the core objective. It may also bring about some difficulties in class control. In spite of its potential to enhance the student's rate of acquisition, confidence

and competence in the L2 in order not to deviate from the purpose for which the interaction is key, the teacher is advised to use various means to control the students' interaction among themselves.

2.2.1.3 Student-technology interaction

This is the interaction which occurs between a student and his/her immediate classroom environment as well as the content to be learned. This includes reading a textbook and completing activities. The cognitive and/or perceptual contact between students and the materials of study that results in acquisition of meaning by students, such as reading text in print or digital format, watching or listening to media, operating with equipment in labs, and finding information. According to Wagner (1994), interactions occur when objects and events mutually influence one another. Thus by this, for interaction to take place, the engagement must be between appropriate objects. Here, the student interacts with technology, or anything tangible within his/her learning environment that could help him/her in the process of the knowledge acquisition. These assumptions and related hypotheses may become useful if they are subjected to critical scrutiny and proven to be part of the factors that influence language learning and acquisition through the necessary scholarly research procedures.

2.2.1.4 Forms of classroom interaction

Classroom interaction may be verbal or non-verbal. Non-verbal interaction relates to behavioural responses in class. This means students interact through their behaviours such as head nodding, hand raising, body gestures, and eye contact. Verbal interaction, on the other hand, contains written interaction and oral interaction. Therefore, verbal interaction in this context does not necessarily refer to oral exchanges between the student and the teacher but any way by which the student is able to respond to the teacher's questions by the use of words. Written interaction is the style of

interaction in which the students write out their ideas, thoughts and responses to the teacher's or instructor's questions. They may also respond through reading a written text material. It means they interact with others through written words or documents. By contrast, oral interaction implies that students interact with others by speaking in class, answering and asking questions, making comments, and taking part in discussions. Interaction is therefore a ―face-to-face" action. In effect, this action can be either verbal channelled through written or spoken words, or non-verbal, channelled through tough, proximity, eye-contact, facial expressions, gesturing (Robinson, 1994).

It is thus essential for students to demonstrate that they are grasping the language they are being exposed to by responding appropriately so that they can become competent users of that particular language. Through communication, the student does not just listen, but also reacts to and interacts with the teacher or asks questions for clarification. The most essential issue for the students here is for them to be able to demonstrate that they understand what they are being taught or listening to and are able to give appropriate responses orally or in writing. This is only achieved through good classroom interaction which leads to achieving communicative competence. Communicative competence is a linguistic term used to refer to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately (Hymes, 1971). Within this process, communicative competence is a way of describing what a language speaker knows that enables him or her to interact effectively with others. Thus, in order to speak a language correctly, one does not only need to learn its vocabulary and grammar, but also the context in which words are used. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to place more importance on teaching of the skills in integration in order to encourage the individuals become communicatively competent (Lin, 2004).

Moreover, as Ely (1986) observed, oral correctness was influenced by classroom participation. Some research works have also confirmed a positive relationship between language learning and the quantum of time spent on oral interaction inside and outside the language classroom. This by implication means that the time a language learner spends in interacting with others in and out of the classroom has a huge influence on his/her general acquisition and competence level. In addition, participation in verbal classroom interaction offers language learners the opportunity to follow up on new words and structures to which they have been exposed during their language lessons and to practice them in context (Pica, et al, 1996). To be certain about the contribution of classroom interaction to the learner's acquisition, there is the need for some analysis of the exchanges that take place between the teacher and the student. Most scholars undertaking studies in this area have used the Sinclair and Coulthard model and this study follows such scholars.

2.3   Conceptual framework: Sinclair and Coulthard's sequence of classroom interaction

Earlier scholars on interaction and the three-part-exchange in the ESL classroom have used various frameworks to arrive at their conclusions. For instance, Fahim and Seidi (2013) employed the socio-cultural theory in their study because to them, a language has both communicative and psychological functions which mediate meaning between the individual and the linguistic goal and therefore assists the cognitive development process of the learner. This framework has some close links with the purposes of this study and can be a very good resource in achieving the goals of this research. One model that has also been adopted in studies of this nature is Sinclair and Coulthard's model. This model was developed to investigate the organization of linguistic units above the rank of clause, and to explore the

intermediary levels of language between context and phonetic substance in the early 1970s. The model which was used as a ‗starting point' for discourse analysis (DA) has also become a stepping stone for other new models to be developed for similar purposes. This also gives a clear indication of the extent to which scholars in the field of classroom discourse have accepted the Sinclair and Coulthard model.

According to de Boer, there have been many modifications to the original Sinclair and Coulthard model due to its narrow beginnings (de Boer, 2007). The criticism has basically been the fact that the dominant use of display questions end up making the entire exercise counter-productive. This is so because the lesson becomes teacher-centred and drastically reduces students' talk time. As Thornbury (2000) observes, the students rarely get the opportunity for any meaningful communication practice. Again, the Sinclair and Coulthard model is not designed to handle pupil/pupil interaction in project work (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) and lessons which neatly fit into the model tend to be overtly teacher-based (Macedo, 2000). Therefore, it is seen that data taken from a student-centred classroom should not easily fit into the model, and so adaptation of the original model would become necessary for analysis to proceed.

Some researchers have also approached the research from the ethnographic perspective. This means taking a non-judgemental stance, exploring the meanings of communication patterns from the perspective of the informants, and describing the concrete details of a specific setting (Hardman, 2016). That is, the researcher depends on the natural human environments through critical observation in order to explain the ―whys" of interaction from an etic (outsider) and an emic (words of insider) point of view. This approach gives the investigator the freedom to be independent in their judgement and drawing of conclusions in order to explain the necessary phenomena

regarding particular situation or condition. From this angle, this approach is also helpful in this study and can be combined with other frameworks to enhance the investigation that is to be established. In all of these, how classroom interaction and the three-part exchange affect their rate of L2 acquisition, and the extent to which students' and teacher's linguistic background combine to negatively or positively affect the teaching or learning.

Employing an approach that grants the researcher the freedom of independent judgement is quite crucial and very welcoming. To buttress this, Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988) notes that borrowing ethnographic methods from Anthropology allows the investigation of issues such as sociocultural practices and details of classroom interaction which are difficult or impossible to address through traditional experimental studies. They stress that both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used, but all observations must be systematic, intensive, and detailed. Adding to this, van Lier (1988) observes that ethnographic classroom research illustrates classroom methodology, and is therefore of immediate relevance to classroom teachers, which increases their professional awareness through a better understanding of classroom interaction. Thus, employing ethnographic approach to this study enhances a better understanding of the classroom issues which eventually benefit the teacher in the ESL classroom in assisting his/her students to acquire and use the L2 effectively.

2.3.1 *Historical overview and description of the Sinclair and Coulthard model*

According to Allwright and Bailey (1991), Bellack et al (1966) were the first to initiate the process for analyzing classroom discourse. They provided a framework which looks at classroom analysis in four levels: 1) structure, 2) solicit, 3) respond and 4) react. Historically, it has basically been the British linguists who have contributed immensely towards maintaining the structural-linguistic criteria for analyzing the bits

and pieces of the units in isolation and finally setting up a well-defined sequence of discourse (McCarthy, 2002). Notable among scholars in this area are Sinclair and Coulthard who undertook a very useful study at the University of Birmingham in 1975. They developed a model for analyzing teacher-student talk based on a hierarchically structured system of ranks. In this work, they came up with a framework to analyse the English used by teachers and pupils during classroom discourse. According to Yu (2009), Coulthard himself published _An introduction to Discourse Analysis' in 1977 with a view to summarizing their theory. Sinclair and Coulthard suggested that pedagogical discourse at the analytical level can be considered in terms of the linguistic levels of sentential analysis and the social and pedagogical level of programmes and courses (Snikdha, 2016). The discourse was analysed in five rank levels; namely:

Lesson ⟶ transaction ⟶ exchanges ⟶ move ⟶ act

Each of the elements within the rank builds up the elements of the higher rank, in accordance with the hierarchical structure. That is, acts come together to build a move; a build-up of moves give an exchange; a build-up of exchanges produces transaction and eventually moves from transaction to lesson. In their study, it was found that the language classroom of traditional native-speaker schools is combined with a three-part exchange: 1) Instructor's initiation 2) Learner's response 3) Instructor's feedback or follow up (IRF). The IRF pedagogy is also relevant in today's classroom and it is the type of teaching methodology considered to be able to generate interest and activity in the classroom, the interactions that ensue between the teacher and the student. Before the model was developed, Sinclair and Coulthard preceded their work with a number of questions. Paramount among them was whether there was any linguistic evidence for units of discourse above the clause or utterance. They resolved to analyze spoken discourse in an attempt to find such evidence (Raine, 2010). They

decided to focus on classroom discourse; a form of discourse which had more structure and direction.

2.3.1.1 Principles

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) were guided by four principles in developing their system of discourse analysis. These were (a) the categories or labels of discourse had to be finite; (b) they also had to be clearly defined; (c) the descriptive system had to be comprehensive; and (d) there had to be at least one combination of labels that was not permissible. The principles were to help them develop a logical system of analysis which was systematic and scientific in orientation. The first principle aided them to avoid inventing new categories for every single element of discourse which could have created the illusion of classification. The second principle enabled them to prevent ambiguity in the classification process. The third principle stipulated that if too many discoursal elements were thrown into a ‗ragbag', then the description must fail. The fourth was to ensure the description was one which would reveal meaningful patterns and not just random combinations of discoursal elements.

2.3.2   Elements of the framework

2.3.2.1 The rank scale

The Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) method of analysis was based on a ―rank scale". This is a system of hierarchical organization whereby linguistically identifiable elements of discourse combine to form larger elements which in turn further combine to form other larger elements until no larger element of discourse could be linguistically determined. In the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) method of analysis, the largest element of classroom discourse is the ‗lesson' which they however admitted there was little point in labelling the lesson as a unit because, in much the same way as paragraphs can be made up of any order of sentence types, lessons could be made up of

21

any order of their constituent elements-transactions. The co-authors also expressed doubts about the ability of the concept of ‗transactions' to stand up to detailed investigation (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). The other elements on the hierarchy are exchange, move, and act.

Table 2.1.The hierarchical relation and types of exchanges, moves and acts

TYPE OF EXCHANGE	CLASS OF MOVE	CLASS OF ACT
Teaching	Opening	(marker)
		(starter)
		elicit*
		direct*
		inform*
		check*
		(prompt)
		(clue)
		(cue)
		(bid)
		(nomination)
	(answering)	acknowledge*
		reply*
		react*
		(comment)
	(follow-up)	(accept)
		(evaluate)
		(comment)
Boundary	framing	marker*
		silent stress*
	focusing	(marker)
		(starter)
		meta-statement*
		conclusion*
		(comment)

Key: Parentheses denote optional elements. Asterisks denote core elements. Where there is more than one core element, at least one of them is required to be present, with the exception of the framing move, where both core elements are required.

2.3.2.2 Exchanges

Two classes of exchanges are defined. These are boundary exchanges and teaching exchanges. According to the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) method of analysis, boundary exchanges are used to signify the beginning or end of what is

22

considered by the teacher to be a discrete part (transaction) of the lesson, whilst teaching exchanges are used to deliver the pedagogic content of the lesson, and are characterized by the four main functions of informing, directing, eliciting and checking. A further eleven sub-categories of teaching exchanges are also distinguished. Six of which are free exchanges and the other five are bound. The latter type of exchange depends on the former type, and cannot occur in isolation: the function of bound exchanges is fixed because they either have no initiating move, or have an initiating move without a head, which simply serves to reiterate the head of the preceding free initiation (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). The classes and functions of exchange identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) are presented in Table 2.

2.3.2.3 Moves

According to Sinclair and Coulthard, a move is the smallest free unit although it has a structure in terms of acts. They identified and described five classes of moves. These are as follows: framing, focusing, opening, answering and follow-up moves. The framing and focusing moves realize boundary exchanges; while opening, answering and follow-up moves, realize teaching exchanges. Framing moves consist of a closed set of words, such as ―well" or ―OK", which signify that a new part of the lesson is about to begin. Focusing moves consist of meta-statements pertaining to what the next part of the lesson will be about. Opening moves cause others to participate in an exchange by passing on information, directing an activity or eliciting a fact. Each opening move is followed by an answering move, which is an appropriate response in the terms laid down by the opening move. Follow-up moves are subsequent to answering moves, and their purpose is to let the pupil know how well he/she has performed (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

Table 2.2. Classes and functions of exchange and their structures

Class of exchange	First sub-class of exchange	Second subclass of exchange	Function of the exchange	Structure of exchange in terms of moves
Boundary	N/A		to signify the start of a new stage (transaction) in a lesson	(FO) (FO) (Focus)
Teaching	Free	Teacher inform (Inform)	to convey information to the pupils	I (R)
		Teacher direct (Direct)	to direct pupils to do (but not say) something	I R (F)
		Teacher elicit (Elicit)	to elicit a verbal response from a pupil	I R F
		Pupil elicit (P-Elicit)	to elicit a verbal response from the teacher	I R
		Pupil inform (P-Inform)	To convey information to the teacher	I F
		Check (Check)	to discover how well pupils are getting on	I R (F)
	Bound	Re-initiation (i) (Reinitiation)	to induce a response to a previously unanswered elicitation	I R Ib R F
		Re-initiation (ii) (Reinitiation)	to induce a correct response to a previously incorrectly answered elicitation	I R F (Ib) R F
		Listing (Listing)	to withhold evaluation until two or more responses are received to an elicitation	I R F (Ib) R F
		Reinforce (Reinforce)	to induce a (correct) response to a previously issued directive	I R Ib R
		Repeat (Repeat)	to induce the repetition of an response	I R Ib R F

Key: I - initiation (opening move), R - response (answering move), F - feedback (follow-up move), FR - frame (framing move), FO - focus (focusing move). The framing and focusing moves are both optional, but one or the other must occur in order to constitute a boundary exchange. In the structure column: parentheses denote an optional element; Ib indicates the iteration of I two or more times. In the second subclass of exchange column, the notation of the exchange, as appearing in the analyzed transcript, is provided in parentheses.

Table 2.3.Summary of functions of moves

Move type	Notation	Function
Framing move	FRAME	to signify the beginning of a new part (transaction) of the lesson
focusing move	FOCUS	to summarize what the next part (transaction) of the lesson will be about
opening move	OPENING	to cause others to participate in an exchange
answering move	ANSWERING	to respond appropriately to an opening move
follow-up move	FOLLOW-UP	to let pupils know how well they have performed (in their answering move)

In sum, the various classes of Move Functions in a specific way. Framing move, FRAMEs to signify the beginning of a new part (transaction) of the lesson. Focusing move, Focuses on the summary of what the next part (transaction) of the lesson will be about. Opening move ensures OPENING of the transaction in a manner which causes others to participate in an exchange by answering. The answering move ensures ANSWERING through elicitation of the appropriate responses to the opening move whereas follow-up move FOLLOWs-UP on pupils' or learners' responses to let them know how well they performed. A summary of the functions of moves as identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) is shown in Table 2.3.

2.3.2.4 Acts

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) observe that Acts are typically one free clause, plus any subordinate clauses but may also be constituted by single words or groups. One function of act is silent stress. This is used to emphasize a marker *m* to mark (transaction) boundaries in the discourse starter *s* to ―prime" pupils for a correct response to an initiation elicitation el to request a linguistic response check *ch* to ascertain whether there are any problems preventing successful progress of the lesson

directive *d* to request a non-linguistic response informative *i* to provide information prompt *p* to prompt a response to a previous directive or elicitation. This has been summed up in the Table 2.4 and Figure 2.1.

Table 2.4. A summary of the functions and notations of the acts

Type of act	Notation	Function
silent stress	^	to emphasize a marker
marker	M	to mark (transaction) boundaries in the discourse
starter	S	to —prime" pupils for a correct response to an initiation
elicitation	El	to request a linguistic response
check	Ch	to ascertain whether there are any problems preventing successful progress of the lesson
directive	D	to request a non-linguistic response
informative	I	to provide information
prompt	P	to prompt a response to a previous directive or elicitation
clue	cl	to provide additional information to help students respond to a previous directive or elicitation
cue	cu	to evoke an appropriate bid
bid	b	to signal a desire to contribute to the discourse
nomination	n	to call on or give permission to a pupil to contribute to the discourse
acknowledgment	ack	to show that an initiation has been understood
reply	rep	to provide a linguistic response appropriate to a previous elicitation
react	rea	to provide a non-linguistic response to a previous directive
comment	com	to provide additional information relating to a previous informative
accept	acc	to indicate that a reply or reaction was appropriate
evaluate	el	to positively or negatively evaluate a previous replyevaluate el to positively or negatively evaluate a previous reply
silent stress	^	to highlight a marker
meta-statement	ms	to help students follow the future structure of a lesson
conclusion	con	help students understand the past content of a lesson
loop	l	to elicit the repetition of a student reply
aside	z	Includes any elements of discourse intended not intended to elicit a reply or reaction, such as the teacher —thinking out loud" or talking to himself.

2.4   The initiation, response and feedback approach to teaching

This refers to exchange or the interaction that occurs between the teacher and the student in the classroom. Here, the teacher initiates the interaction, usually by asking a question, from the student that elicits a participatory response from the student. The teacher then evaluates the response through a feedback move (Ho, 2007). This three-part exchange was first documented and described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). The three-part exchange is what has been referred to as Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF). Other scholars refer to it by some other names such as triadic dialogue (Lemke, 1990) and triadic dialogue genre (Wells, 1999) respectively. The essence of this is to help the teacher monitor the progress of learning.

According to the Florida Centre for Instructional Technology (2001), good teachers go through a continuously repeating process of assessing students' needs. This involves planning instruction, delivering instruction, assessing outcomes, and then determining students' needs again. For experienced teachers, much of this is done internally. That is, even though the three-part exchange is basically oral, it is a very well planned and executed activity which aids both the teaching and learning of the L2. This implies that without adequate preparation, no better classroom interaction can be achieved. Sinclair and Coulthard note two major classes of exchange. These are boundary exchanges and teaching exchanges (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). The boundary and the teaching exchanges take place to mark either the beginning or an end of a lesson, transaction. This can also be used to signify a change of topic with words such as ‗right', ‗alright', ‗now', ‗OK' spoken with falling or rising intonation and a short pause. In this sense, Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) describe teaching exchanges as the individual steps through which the lesson progresses.

```
                          Lesson


                        Transactions


Teaching                                         Boundary
Exchanges                                        Exchanges


Free                                             Bound
Exchanges                                        Exchanges

                              Direct         Re-imitation (I)
Elicit         Inform                        I R Ib R F

                                             Re-imitation
I-Elicit       I-Inform        I - Direct    (2)   I R F (Ib)

                                             Listing
                                             I R F (Ib) R F (Ib) R

R- Reply       R - Acknowledge  R - React    Reinforce
                                             I R Ib R

F- Accept      F- Accept        F - Accept   Repeat
                                             I R  Ib R F
```
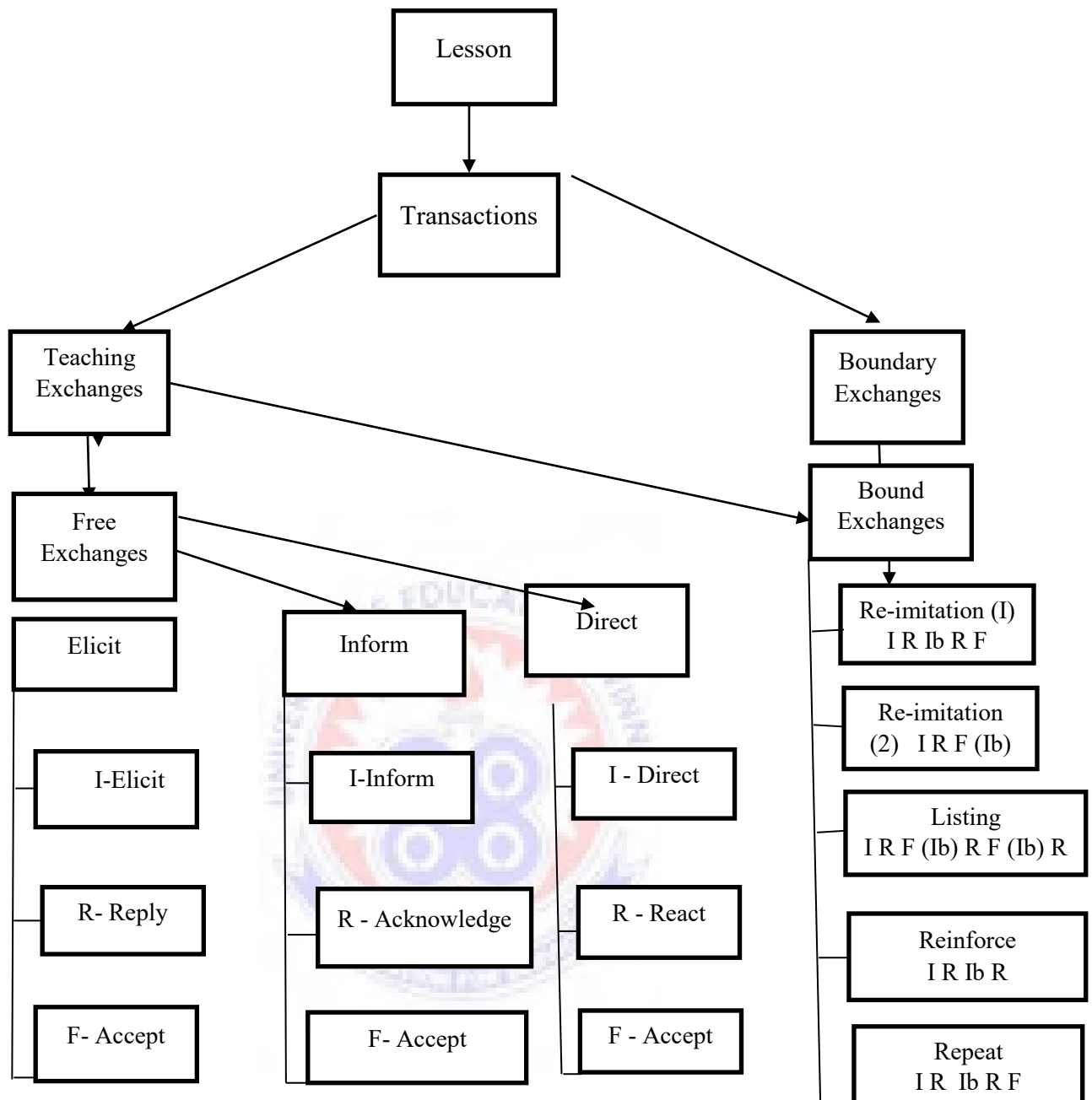
Figure 2.1. A summary of the functions and notations of the acts (Sinclair & Coulthard, *1975)*

The Three-part exchange has also been referred to as the pedagogical cycle. It is applicable not only in the ESL classroom but also in the non-ESL classroom. Sinclair and Coulthard observe that nearly half of the teacher-student interactions in the (non-ESL) classroom centre on the three-part exchange to make up the teaching cycle (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). This kind of interaction involves three instructional

moves: a solicitation by the teacher or instructor through the use of question, a response by the student through his/her answer, and a reaction, or feedback, from the teacher/instructor. The teacher's or instructor's reaction usually comes in the form of evaluation, remediation, or some other reactions. Thus, classroom discourse follows a typical structure that is easily predictable. This structure is an important in the sense that it reflects the teachers' feedback, typically used to evaluate students' contribution. Most of the time, a lot of teachers or instructors employ the three-part exchange approach in their work. From that broad perspective, one may consider it to be the basic unit of instruction or the most primary pedagogical approach to teaching and learning. However, Sadker and Sadker (1991) argue that ―the manner in which it is handled would usually bring about how effective or ineffective the instruction which is also determined by how well each of the stages ... is implemented" (p. 14). This means that teachers need to understand the structure, its usage and benefits before they engage it in their lessons.

Generally speaking, most research works considered in this work have pointed out that the three-part exchange dominates the second language classroom and really forms an integral part of classroom pedagogy. This makes it a more relevant area of study in order to better understand the dynamics of teacher-student interactions in the ESL classroom. Again, classroom researchers have noted that though three-part exchange is common, the teaching methodology of the ESL classroom is a very structured style of teaching and can be related to improvement in formal, literary decoding skills (Chaudron, 1985). Thus, studies will also help the researcher to understand how its usage relates to and facilitates language proficiency in the second language classroom. Beyond weaknesses identified by some scholars, the stages of the

teaching cycle have all generated much research in an attempt to understand how the three-part exchange is employed, and how it relates to improving language proficiency.

Additionally, a lot of studies have been conducted on teacher questions, which Long et al (1983) have observed to be the essence of the teacher questions. This includes providing a means by which the teacher, who is the dominant participant, exercises and maintains control over others, and possesses a well-documented ritual nature, which is particularly apparent in the pervasiveness of the display question. The dominant nature of the teacher in the ESL classroom also enables us to understand the special nature of classroom interaction, why teachers talk so much more than learners: For every utterance made by a learner, teachers typically make two, and overused classroom interaction can become very mechanical, even monotonous. As Heinel (2017) observes, historically, English classrooms have been teacher-fronted, controlled and highly structured. This formal way of organizing the classroom translates into the relationship between the teachers and their students.

However, in a three-part exchange classroom where one looks forward to a proper interaction, a different atmosphere is created; the classroom becomes student-centred and with the focus on learning English through meaningful communication. These kinds of classes are often meant to give students more opportunities to contribute to and participate in ‗real world' conversations. Broadly speaking, the IRF approach of teaching usually features Display questions which only demand one- or two-word answers. Hardly does one note a referential question. Sadker and Sadker (1987, p. 25) in a review of non-ESL classroom studies found that display questions generally solicit only one- or two-word answers, and suggest that referential, or open-ended questions, may be used to promote higher-order thought (such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) and far more complex answers. Sinclair and Brazil (1992) are of the view

that in the three-part exchange, teachers use discourse to tell things to their learners, motivate their learners to do things, and get them to say things or evaluate the things they do.

Malouf (1995) and Jones (2009) assert that teaching exchanges are classified as *free*: informing, directing, eliciting, and checking; or *bound*: re-initiation, listing, reinforcement, and repeat. Bound teaching exchanges contain a more complex structure as they are attached to the preceding exchange and always initiated by an eliciting move. Though exchanges are predominately initiated by the teacher, learners can also initiate elicit or inform exchanges. The aforementioned scholars have corroboratively pointed out that for a second language to be better acquired, there is the need for the three part exchange. In other words, for a second language acquisition to be achieved effectively, classroom interaction following the IRF structure is preferred. After all, the primary aim of learning a language is to use it in communication in its spoken or written forms. Invariably, classroom interaction is a key to reach that goal (Tuan & Nhu, 2010).

2.4.1 Initiation: Description and types

In the context of teaching and learning, the teacher initiates the interaction based on the topic for the day's lesson and the communicative objectives to be achieved. The way the topic is introduced and demonstrated for further classroom discussion is what is referred to as initiation. The exchange between the teacher and learners generally take place within ‗topically relevant' sets of talk and the teacher may not always need to make explicit initiations (Mehan, 1979). Most often, teachers or instructors initiate a topic in the language classroom using the questioning technique. In this case, learners are expected to answer the queries raised by the teacher. The students' answers help the teacher to assess their level of understanding on the topic in

particular which eventually directs how she/he frames his/her subsequent questions based on the level of the students in the class. The different types of initiation found in a classroom situation come in different forms and are identified by Cutting (2010), Kao et al (1996), Pinantoan (2013), Woods (2006). These are discussed as follows:

2.4.1.1 Eliciting

The most common exchange is eliciting exchange (Willis, 1992). It is a form of initiation that is used to request the learners' response to a query by the teacher or instructor. The teacher may ask as many follow-up questions as possible to elicit the learners' total understanding of concept in the given topic. This is done in order to direct his/her teaching methodology (Hellermann, 2003). For example, if a teacher asks

Do you know any other poet apart from Efua Sutherland, then it expresses the intention of obtaining more data from the learners.

2.4.1.2 Informing

Informing is the act of giving information to the learners about the topic at hand. Here, the teachers/instructors at first try to inform the learners about the content of a lesson or task. The opening move usually begins with an informative act and can, but does not necessarily need to be followed by a reply by the students (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). For instance, he can provide information as in;

(i) T: The blue mountain is higher than the red one, (ii) T: The earth is going round the sun

(iii) T: We can see that the purple ball is smaller than the yellow one.

2.4.1.3 Directing

Directing expresses the act of giving an order or direction to the learners to complete a task or to fulfil the lesson objective. It is designed to get the pupils to do an

assignment without saying something (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992; Willis, 1992). For example,

> T: the team leaders have to write the names of their group members first on the board,
>
> T: pick one folded sheet to know your numbers,
>
> T: Go to the board to march your colour.

From this, we see that directing is used to induce learners to carry out some actions.

2.4.1.4 Checking

Instructors or teachers use this type of act to find out the progress of the given task or activity. In the middle of a task, they ask some questions to check the level of progress the learners have made at that moment. Snikdha posits that teachers apply different checking phrases while monitoring classroom activities like group discussion on listing, matching ideas, developing a concept, or arguing on declared statements (Snikdha, 2016). For instance, they might ask questions such as (i) T: Have you finished reading the text? (ii) T: Are you ready to present your posters? (iii) T: How far have you been of the task?

2.4.1.5 Giving cues

Teachers or instructors sometimes encourage learners to contribute to the classroom discussion by giving them different cues. Macedo classifies cues as part of turn-taking acts which include bids, and nominations which allow students to contribute by raising a hand or shouting to answer (Macedo, 2000). This is also consistent with Dailey (2010). For example, the teacher/instructor might use expressions like,

> T: those of you who know the answers please raise your hand.

2.4.1.6 Nomination

The teachers or instructors sometimes address the respondents with their names and thus invite specific students to join in the discussion. Addressing the learners by names contributes a great deal to make them participate fully in the lesson and make it learner-centred (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). For example a teacher may use expressions such as

T: Mercy, please tell us the answer,

T: Kofi, write the question on the board.

2.4.1.7 Prompt

Prompts usually put reinforcement on directives and elicitation and are commonly used in the middle of an initiation task. Prompts can be used to elicit students' responses, aiming to highlight a pedagogical focus. Here, the teachers or instructors reinforce the fulfilment of the goals to be achieved in the targeted timeline (Dailey, 2010; Snikdha, 2016). For instance, the teacher might say (i) T: Go on fast, we are running out of time or (ii) T: Hurry up, only five minutes left to finish your poster.

2.4.1.8 Repetition of instruction

In this approach, teachers or instructors repeat the information and instruction of a task or activity before introducing it to the whole class to solicit students' maximum attention in order to avoid the chaotic situation or side talk among the learners during the activity. Repetition helps to produce prompt responses of understanding or doubts regarding the task to be performed ahead of time. For instance, a teacher or instructor would say, (i) T: You have to make the outline first before writing the essay.

2.4.1.9 Marker

Markers are realized by a close class of items used by the instructor. When a marker is acting as a head of a framing move, it has a falling intonation and a silent

stress. Instructors use markers to mark the boundaries of a discourse pattern. For instance, the use of words like ‗ok‗, ‗well‗, ‗now‗, ‗good‗, ‗alright‗ express the closing of an exchange (Snikdha, 2016).

2.4.1.10 Bid

Bids are realized as a closed class of verbal and non-verbal items and the only type of initiation that is used by the learners instead of the instructors. Non-verbal bids include heavy breathing, finger clicking, raising hands. On the other hand, verbal bids include terms like ‗Sir‗, ‗Madam‗, and ‗Miss‗. Its main function is to signal a desire to contribute to the discourse (Dailey, 2010; Snikdha, 2016).

2.4.1.11 Clue

It is realized by a statement, command, and question type item. It helps the learners to provide information and thus to comply with the elicitation or directives asked by the instructor. Examples include

T: You have to colour the countries that have been British colonies before. (Clue)

S1: So, we have to mark those colonies with different colour in this map?

T: Yeah, that‗s right. And for this task, you‗ll get only five minutes.

2.4.1.12 Aside

It can be used both by the instructor and the learners in the classroom context. It is realized by a statement, question, command, and modeless item. It is usually indicated by lowering the tone of voice, and not really addressed to the whole class (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). For instance, a teacher or student can have questions such as

T: Where did I put the book? Or

S: Where are my bag and the pen?

2.4.2   Response: Description and types

Learners' responses are mostly shorter than the teachers or instructor's questions in an EFL classroom context. For example when a teacher or instructor asks a question like T: _What do you like to do on weekends?' The students may answer that _watching movies' or _going out with friends'. Nonetheless, some of the teacher's or instructor's queries may also end up with non-verbal responses such as nodding the heads, giving a blank gaze or showing the figures with the fingers etc. The types of responses found in a classroom been stated as follows:

2.4.2.1 Loop

In Sinclair and Coulthard's (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992) speech act categories, loop is realized as a closed class of items that have rising intonation. Its main function is to return the discourse to the stage it was before the pupil spoke, from where it can proceed with a normal mood. For example,

T: Kofi, can you tell us what is meant by dialect?

S1 (Kofi): Errrh…sorry sir, I didn't get it. (Loop)

T: Well, I am asking for the definition of dialect.

2.4.2.2 Comment

This is realized by a statement or tag question that is subordinate to the head of the move. Its function is to exemplify, expand, justify and to provide additional information. (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992) For example,

T: If I say that _stupid' is a praise word. Is it true?

S1: No sir. How could it be? It can't because its meaning is negative. (Comment)

T: Yes, people are not praised with words which have negative means.

2.4.2.3 Silent stress

It is realized by a pause of one or more beats, following a marker. It helps to highlight the marker when it is serving as the head of a boundary exchange indicating a transaction boundary. It is expressed by the symbol. (^) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992. pp. 19-20 cited in Dailey, 2010)

2.4.2.4 Scaffolding

In scaffolding, the instructor is an activator whose role is to facilitate the student's incremental mastery of a concept. According to Kao et al (1996), there are two primary types of scaffolding. The Soft Scaffolds which are dynamic and situation-specific aids that are provided by the instructor or peer while Hard Scaffolds, which are static and specific. These types of scaffolding situations can be anticipated and planned based on the typical difficulties that a learner might face in course of the given activity. Hard scaffolds can also be divided into three sub-categories: (i) Conceptual Scaffolds: This type of scaffolding helps the learners to put their thoughts together as well as connect related information. (ii) Specific Strategic Scaffolds: This scaffolding also helps the learner to ask the teacher or instructor more specific questions and (iii) Procedural Scaffolds: This type enables learners to clarify the specific task in detail. An example of such scaffolding is the oral and digital presentations that the learners make for a course.

2.4.2.5 Reacting

This is realized by a non-linguistic action which brings about the appropriate non-linguistic response defined by the preceding directive (Snikdha, 2016). For example, a teacher may produce an order such as:

T: All the team leaders please write the names of your team members in the tags and wear as badge.

37

From this, students quietly do as instructed.

2.4.2.6 Replying

It is a statement, question or modeless item and non-verbal surrogates as nods. It aids in the provision of an appropriate linguistic response to the elicitation (Snikdha, 2016). An example is:

T: Do you know how many types of grammar there?

S1: (nods or shake the head) (reply)

T: Okay, Sena. Do you know the answer?

S2: Five types, sir. (Reply)

2.4.2.7 Close-ended questioning

This is indicated by the sets of questions that have specific or universally accepted answers. With this, teachers ask questions to solicit responses from the learners to check whether they were attentive for the lesson or not (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). For instance, a teacher may ask a question such as

T: Who is the author of the drama ‗The Dilemma of the Ghost'?

S1: It is Ama Atta Aidoo.

T: Are you sure? Isn't that by Chenua Achebe?

S1: Yes, I am.

2.4.2.8 Rhetorical questions

A rhetorical question is asked by the instructor just for effect or to lay emphasis on some points discussed in a class when no real answer is expected. A rhetorical question may have an obvious answer but the questioner asks it to lay emphasis to a point (Tsui, 1992). For example,

T: Do you like to be admired by others, Jonny?

S: Who doesn't love to be admired? We all love it, sir.

38

2.4.2.9 Focusing

Focusing occurs when the teacher or instructor consciously manages to succeed in getting the attention of the students on a particular issue. This is usually done through descriptions, questions, or materials. Thus, the instructor creates an interest among the learners in order to get their attention onto the topic by asking them to respond to the question or situation under discussion. For example,

T: There is anarchy everywhere; people are not willing to follow law and order.

What do you think is the main cause behind the situation?

S: Umm…….corruption. (Focusing)

T: Right, corruption is the main barrier to our development.

2.4.2.10 Summarizing

Teachers sometimes invite the students to share their understanding of the topic under consideration. It helps teachers to find out the in-class understanding and the needs of the students. It also grants the learners the opportunity to share their thoughts with their peers as they compare notes (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992; Snikdha, 2016) Examples of such is

T: Nana can you summarize the story about the wicked stepmother?

S1: he gives people very bad and dangerous punishment; besides a number of people get hurt in her way every day as a result of her attitude. (Summarizing)

T: Excellent, sit down.

2.4.2.11 Revising

Teacher use probing questions to find out students' understanding of a previous lesson. Sometimes the learners need to re-read and share the content studied before, in order to maintain a chronology of content. Initiation

T: What did we study in our last lesson? (Response (R))

39

S: We learnt about the parts of speech.

T: Can you mention some parts of speech? (Response (R))

S: Parts of speech include nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adverbs.

Again, the teacher uses the means to revise the previous lesson in order to build a strong and formidable RPK to serve as the foundation for the day's lesson (Snikdha, 2016).

2.4.3   Feedback: Description and types

The teacher's Feedback or Follow Up comments, serve as evaluative remarks for the students. Hardman et al (2003) identify different types of feedback in the classroom. These are as discussed as follows:

2.4.3.1 Acceptance

This is the most frequent form of feedback that occurs almost 57% of the time in the classroom discourse analysis. An example of such situation is when the instructor grants a response with positive terms like ‗yes and that's right' (Snikdha, 2016). With this, the teacher can use the learner's response to give more information that the students' need (Noviana & Ardi, 2015). Finally, the teacher can accept the response with feedback or a follow up by saying *yes*, *no*, *good* or allow an utterance given by a student (Macedo, 2000).

2.4.3.2 Praise

It is the next mostly occurred forms of feedback that instructors use in class. It is found to have occurred 21% in the classroom discourse context. Examples of praise terms are ‗*well done'*, ‗*right'*, ‗*good job*' or ‗*great*' (Elkhouzai, 2016; Ellis, 2000).

2.4.3.3 Probing of learner's response

Instructors sometimes probe learners in order for them to contribute more to the class discussion. They sometimes tend to use expressions such as:

(i) T: ‚tell me more about that',

(ii) T: ‚what will be your reaction if you are in this dilemma of life?' or

(iii) T: ‚do you agree with the view of this writer?'

Review of literature reveals that probing usually occurs 14% of the time in the classroom (Snikdha, 2016).

2.4.3.4 Criticism

This is a relatively rare form of an instructor's evaluation which constitutes only 7% of instructor's reactions (Snikdha, 2016). For example, if a learner is found to be inattentive towards the lesson, the teacher might use an expression like,

(i) T: ‚I see that you have put your minds outside somewhere',

(ii) T: ‚Haven't you been paying attention to my words?' or

(iii) T: ‚Seems like you were in another planet when I was explaining the task' etc.

2.4.3.5 Reallocation of questions

Reallocation occurs when the instructor assigns or allot an already asked question to a different person from the one originally intended. In such cases, the instructor may nominate the intended learner by their names. Repetition of the uttered words of the first learner may also occur here in some cases, by the instructor (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992; Snikdha, 2016).

2.4.3.6 Evaluation

Thorough analysis of completed or ongoing classroom activities by the instructor to know how far the lesson has been assimilated is called evaluation. Instructors monitor and evaluate the activity to ensure the effectiveness of the task and how it increases the efficiency of the learners. Evaluation of completed activities is called post-hoc evaluation or summative evaluation while evaluation of on-going

classroom activities is called in-term evaluation. Thus, an instructor can put several questions to the learners in the middle of an activity to know their level of understanding. An example is shown as follows:

T: How do you find the task of making a poster of people in your house?

S: It's fun.

T: Good, how far have your group listed, Sara?

S1: We have listed 20 words so far.

T: That' great. Go on as we have only 20 minutes left for it (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

2.4.3.7 Reflecting

This is the process of paraphrasing and restating both the feelings and words of the speaker. The purposes of reflecting include:

(i) allowing the speaker to hear their own thoughts and to focus on what they say and feel, (ii) showing the speaker that you are trying to perceive the world as they see it and that you are doing your best to understand their messages, and (iii) encouraging them to continue talking. Reflecting does not involve asking questions, introducing a new term or leading the conversation in another direction in a classroom context. Speakers are helped through reflecting as it not only allow them to feel understood, but also gives them the opportunity to focus their ideas. This in turn, helps them to direct their thoughts and further encourages them to continue their conversation.

2.4.3.8 Reinforcement

Reinforcements are stimuli used by the instructor to promote or discard some sets of behaviour and practice inside the classroom. This terminology is derived from psychology where it is divided into two parts:

42

1) Positive reinforcement: It occurs when a token, appreciation or reward is given to strengthen the practice of a desired behaviour in the classroom.

2) Negative reinforcement: It also strengthens a particular expected behaviour but it removes the unwanted parts of behaviour through some sorts of threatening or punishments.

2.4.3.9 Conclusion

Instructors end their lessons by summarizing the contents of the topic by reminding learners about the ensuing tasks that they need to complete at home. In conclusion, the conversation can also occur through arranging a short discussion or question-answer session to clear the learners' doubts about the lesson.

2.5   Criticism of the Model

The Sinclair and Coulthard model, has been described by Raine (2010) as ―a litmus test for whether or not a lesson is communicative‖ (p. 19). He identifies some weaknesses with the model and tends to proffer some modifications and complementary models which will enable it to be more easily adaptable to his research data. He however admits that the model has served as a ‗starting point' for data analysis and a ‗basis for more current models' of discourse analysis. Again, it certainly appears to have been oft-adopted by respected TEFL and linguistics researchers (de Boer, 2007). Nonetheless, Raine (2010) sounds a word of caution; there is the danger for one to be easily deceived based on the popularity and frequency of its usage, to sway the opinions of individual researchers on whether it is useful for understanding classroom communication in our own contexts. It is worth noting that Sinclair and Coulthard applied their original model to data taken from teacher-led primary school classroom settings in the 1970's (Cockayne, 2010). This type of data was chosen because it represented ―a more simple type of spoken discourse‖ (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, p. 6

cited in Cockayne 2010) than other less structured varieties of interaction, such as that of the more ‗communicative' modern-day EFL/ESL classroom.

For the effective use of the Sinclair and Coulthard model, there is the need to thoroughly understand it and its functionalities. This is what Sarah Jones actually advocates. She calls for a desire to investigate features that may be lacking from the model, treatment of complex exchanges, and student difficulties within these interactions. The relationship between classroom discourse and real world discourse are also addressed (Jones, 2009). In comparison, one other version of the model has been introduced. This is by Francis and Hunston (1992) for similar purposes in different situations. The Sinclair and Coulthard model was used to analyze data transcribed from a recording of a conversation class taught at a Japanese university. And for exchanges that do not adhere to the model because of the non-traditional style in which the class was conducted, he used categories from a model developed by Francis and Hunston (1992) for analyzing everyday conversations (Heinel, 2017). He did this to enable him comment better on the models regarding their limitations and usefulness for analyzing classroom communication.

It is important to note that the 1975 model of Sinclair and Coulthard aimed at investigating ―the structure of verbal interaction in classrooms" (Coulthard, 1985, p. 120, cited in Heinel, 2017). In their original discourse analysis model, they found that in traditional teacher-led native-speaker school classrooms, where teacher and student roles were well defined, interactions were highly structured (McCarthy, 1991). For teachers especially, the model has implications because ―the discourse type it chose to analyse was school lessons" (Cook, 1989, p. 46). The 1992 model of Sinclair and Coulthard is however based on the idea of *rank scale* in Halliday's model. Halliday's description of grammar was also based on the linguistic theory of the time, organized

categories of grammar into ranks with each rank having a structure expressed by the rank below it, with the exception of the lowest rank, which has no structure. In other words, they described the scale as ―[e]ach rank above the lowest has a structure which can be expressed in terms of the units next below" (Coulthard, 1992, p. 2). Thus, *lesson* is somehow equated to the rank *sentence*; *transaction* is equated to clause; *exchange* is equated to group; *move* is equated to word, and *act* is equated to morpheme (Coulthard, 1985, cited in Heinel, 2017).

van Lier (1984) also asserts that the three-part exchange does not represent real communication. This is because the student is more or less placed in a straight jacket to produce a situation of rigid turn control. In effect, learners will not be able to explore the ways in which speaker change is effected through turn taking in the target language. The content and activity of subsequent turns have been established by the teachers‗ questions, and the dominant position of teachers in such exchanges, including their right to make evaluative comments about the contributions of other participants, is unique to the instructional setting (van Lier, 1988). That is, in the ESL classroom, where the IRF method is used, one finds the following routine activities: question-and-answer sequences, pupils responding to teachers‗ directions, as well as pupils listening to the teacher giving information. In a similar vein, the BBC has also raised concerns about this method of teaching on similar lines. It states that:

> The Initiation-response-feedback, or IRF, is a pattern of discussion between the teacher and learner. The teacher initiates, the learner responds, the teacher gives feedback. This approach to the exchange of information in the classroom has been criticized as being more about the learner saying what the teacher wants to hear than really communicating.

(https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/sociocultural-

awareness-elt)

Some scholars believe that it is a method that is slow and delays the progress of the class since the teacher has to give individual attention to each of the students in his/her class, irrespective of the class size.

In spite of the criticisms, it is worth pointing out that the three-part exchange is one of the best if not the best pedagogical approaches to teaching. The exchange offers instant feedback to build the confidence of students as they get continuous evaluation of their performance in the class. It gives a predictable structure, comprising three parts; IRF. Some practitioners refer to the structure as IRE. To such writers, IRE is because they opine that it reflects the fact that the feedback teachers serves as an evaluation of a student's contribution. Thus, teachers constantly assess the correctness of an utterance and give feedback to learners. Although the class size may undeniably affect the pace and the expected progress of the class, the benefits so achieved through the use of the approach are enormous. It is therefore just not enough to see only the weakness inherent in it without the positives it presents. Hence, criticisms should come as a complete assessment package with the outline of its strengths and weaknesses.

2.6   Benefits of the IRF Model

According to Allwright (1984), if the goal of a student is for him/her to achieve a high degree of communicative competence, instruction in the classroom has to rely heavily on the value of interaction of live, person-to-person encounters. He reiterates that such interaction should be inherent in the very notion of classroom pedagogy itself. Meanwhile, successful pedagogy, in any subject, necessarily involves the management of classroom interaction. He mentions the five aspects of interaction which he knows to be equally applicable inside and out of the classroom. They are management of turn,

topic, task, tone, and code. In their three-year study of elementary school classroom interaction, Sadker et. al (1984) developed the INTERSECT (Interactions for Sex Equity in classroom Teaching) Observation System to record the distribution and nature of teacher responses to students. Also among other things, the system contains four evaluative teacher moves: praise, acceptance, remediation, and criticism. Praise, is defined as the explicit positive comment of evaluation and reward for successful production. Thus, a strong verbal or non-verbal emphasis can turn neutral comments into praise. Examples include very good, and excellent. In their study, Sadker et. al (1984) found thatpraise made up about 10% of teacher feedback. Other typical acceptance responses to convey praise include ―I see", ―OK", and ―uh-huh", and are usually characteristically short, non-specific, and imprecise.

Acceptance is the least helpful response in providing students with specific feedback, and a high percentage of these teacher responses represent one of the major barriers to more effective teaching, setting the tone for an unstimulating, rather placid classroom climate (Sadker & Sadker, 1987). They further refer to remediation, which formed about one-third of responses received as constructive comments, providing cues for further student elaboration. Such comments are designed to improve students‗ answers, and when used following incorrect answers, contain implicit criticism coupled with direction. The final category of response they identified was criticism. It was notices that they were used less than 5% of the time, and was an explicit statement that an answer was wrong. These comprised expressions such as ―No" and ―Wrong" which do not have to be punitive or harsh. They differ from responses in the remediation category because they end the exchange with the student, do not give the student a chance to self-correct, and may be followed by a teacher correction.

Nystrom (1983) observes that [e]rror correction is a highly variable aspect of student-teacher interaction due to the multiple factors at play. Chaudron (1988) summarizes an extensive body of literature on error correction, and points out that much research need to be conducted on whether all mistakes are corrected, and when and how errors are repaired. In other words, Chaudron is suggesting that there are some errors that need to be corrected while others are necessary in the knowledge acquisition process. If this assertion is anything to go by, then it is important for the teacher to decide on which errors to be corrected and which ones to be ignored. He again observes that most error correction occurs when the instructional emphasis is on form. Chaudron further states that several studies indicate that teachers are inconsistent in whether or not they ignore errors, and what kind of errors they correct; a stance this study finds impossible to associate with. That is, if this assertion is actually tenable, then there is no need for any teacher to pretend to be correcting errors identified during lesson delivery.

According to van Lier (1988), research has not been sufficient to discover what kinds of error repair are beneficial in L2 development. In the classroom, there is a heavy emphasis on teacher repair, as opposed to non-classroom settings, where self-repair is most common. Kasper (1985) mentions other patterns of classroom error repairs as teacher suggests and student repairs. Here, the student initiates the repair and the teacher completes it. Feedback may constitute the most potent source of improvement in both target language development and other subject matter knowledge (Chaudron, 1988).Moving on, a lot of researchers have focused on the importance of questioning and the type of questioning used in the ESL classroom for the purposes of ascertaining the appropriate feedback from students. Behnam and Pouriran (2009) explored patterns of questioning behaviour in six intermediate class levels. From this,

48

they noted that display questions were used by teachers more frequently than referential questions. To find out if there is any significant difference between effective and less effective teachers, they realized that teachers used explicit correction, recasts, clarification feedback, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition. From these, they concluded that in terms of their questioning and feedback behaviour in the classroom, teachers who were effective not only asked significantly more questions but also supplied significantly more corrective feedback than their less effective counterparts did.

In another study, Oberli (2003) cited in Masjedi and Tabatabaei (2018) investigated how an experienced teacher answers the weak/strong dichotomy with regard to questioning and feedback strategies in his interactive classroom during a 70-minute lesson. He concluded that the effectiveness of a teacher in seeking feedback from students depends on the experiences of the teacher. Thus, more experienced teachers are more effective than novice teachers. For a teacher to be effective in the classroom interaction, Mehan (1979) has proposed a three layer structure for analyzing classroom discourse. They are composed of: 1) The opening stage - comprises of the participation of both instructor and learners with the understanding of conducting a lesson; 2) An instructional stage where the instructor and the learners exchange information; and 3) A closing phase with a reminder of the core theme of the whole lesson (see also, Ellis, 2000). In addition, Ellis has noted two ways to describe the goal of a particular language discourse. He states as follows:

1) **Interactive goal**: The interactive goal is embedded in the classroom discourse which is to some extent controlled by the teacher. This is further categorized into core, framework, and social goals.

a) **Core goals**: These are revealed in the explicit pedagogical intentions of the teacher. These goals can be medium-centred, message-centred or activity-centred.

b) **Framework goals:** These refer to the interactive goals which relate to the organization of the classroom activities.

c) **Social goals**: These are achieved through the participants' interaction with daily social matters.

2) **Address**: The second dimension of classroom discourse identified by Ellis is the _address'. The address is identified based on the participants in the classroom; teacher, pupil, class member, or group member and with the interactive role s/he possesses; speaker, addressee and hearer. However, according to Nunan (1992), there is an unequal power relationship between the teacher and the learners during turn taking and nominating exercises in the course of a lesson. He observes classroom discourse from the social status and power relationship perspective. To this end, van Lier (1988) analyzes the components of classroom discourse from two distinctive dimensions and classifies the discourse of classroom interaction according to the way the teacher controls the topic (what is being talked about) and activity (the way the topic is talked about).

Based on these classifications, four basic types of classroom interaction are identified. The first type happens when neither the topic nor the activity is controlled by the teacher. Example of such classroom situation can be an oral communication classroom where the learners can bring in their opinion and view other than the displayed information. b) The second type of interaction occurs when the teacher controls the topic but not the activity. This type of interaction requires teacher to transmit some information or explanation of some issues. c) Third type of interactions involve teacher control of both the topic and the activity. For example, if a teacher

arranges a debate in an oral communication class on a certain topic then the teacher can control the whole activity and also select the topic to be worked on. d) The fourth type occurs when the teacher controls the activity but not the topic.

Scholars generally have emphasized classroom interaction due to its potential benefits to the learner. According to Al-Smadi and Rashid (2017), interaction in the classroom is a practice which fosters the advancement of learners' listening and speaking abilities. So, it is two or more members sending and receiving utterances to establish a communication practice. In corroboration, Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) observe that classroom interaction is a social process of meaning-making and interpreting, with the educational value of interaction growing out of developing and elaborating interaction as a social process. Again, it is noted that through classroom interaction, the learner is able to obtain feedback on his/her own performance during the lesson as it may serve as a motivation to propel him/her to the next level.

Ellis and Fotos (1999) explain negotiation as verbal exchanges which occur while speakers intend to prevent communication breakdown. They maintain that negotiation of meaning is the centre of the discourse structure. That is, the learner in the classroom is expected to make the linguistic output more comprehensible to enable their colleague students feel attracted to join in the interaction. Other scholars such as Blake (2000) see classroom interaction as a means through which the learner negotiates meaning which is a very essential part of foreign and second language development. Blake states that negotiation encourages understanding and positive interaction among students. Also to Smith (2003), Negotiation of meaning embraces precision, accuracy and inspiring self-repair. In addition, Ellis (2004) stresses the necessity of interaction in language development and acquisition. Students who get the opportunity to interact and speak in the classroom gain better in most cases as they improve their confidence to

overcome the emotional tendencies associated with acquisition of a target language than those who never make the effort.

It is the aforementioned assumptions that this study intends to investigate in order to ascertain their veracity as far as the three-part classroom exchange is concerned. The study also serves as a part response to the numerous recommendations for further research on proposed hypotheses on classroom interaction. This, no doubt, goes a long way to add to the bulk of literature in the field through the use of a combined method of research. Through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language – all they have learned or casually absorbed – in real life exchanges (Rivers, 1987). For instance, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2014) intimates that at least two individuals participate in an exchange in which production and reception alternate and may in fact overlap in oral communication. Going by this assertion, given that it is the exact form an interaction must assume, then applying that in the second Language classroom is very much necessary. The IRF exchange is therefore beneficial in this sense.

Interaction in the classroom enhances the students' rate of language acquisition through development of his/her cognitive and affective faculties and skills which eventually propel him/her towards a quick acquisition and effective usage of the language. In addition, theories of communicative competence emphasize the necessity of interaction as human beings use language in various contexts to negotiate meaning, or simply stated, to get one idea out of your head and into the head of another person and vice-versa (Brown, 1994). To Ellis (1990), interaction is meaning-focused and

carried out to facilitate the exchange of information and prevent communication breakdowns. However, classroom interaction is of a particular nature and a range of functions including formal instruction, whole class and task management and development of group cohesion. Therefore, it involves everything communicative happening in the classroom. Ellis defines classroom interaction broadly as not only to those exchanges involving authentic communication but to every oral exchange that occurs in the classroom, including those that arise in the course of formal drilling (Ellis 1990). Therefore, opportunities must be granted to students in the classroom for interacting, asking questions, asking for and giving feedback and speaking their mind. In effect, students should negotiate, state and interpret on-going meaning in classroom (Derakhshan et al, 2015).

Studies have shown that when students participate actively in class, their academic achievement seems to be higher than that of those who are passive in class participation. The linkage between students' classroom participation and their academic achievement is undeniable (e.g. Tsuo, 2005; Wudong, 1994; Zhou, 1991). Besides, as interaction involves participation, personal engagement, and the taking of initiative in some way, one's personal confidence is developed through the classroom interactive activities. Basically, student participation involves a number of activities such as speaking, listening, reading, writing, body language or physical movement. Therefore, increased emphasis has been placed on students' interaction or oral participation in the classroom (Ellis, 1988). Wagner-Gough and Hatch (1975) argue that conversational interaction forms the basis for the development of syntax, and is not just for practice. In support, Swain (1995) states that output hypothesis suggests that learners need the opportunity for meaningful use of their linguistic resources to achieve native-speaker levels of grammatical accuracy.

Again, the comprehensible output (CO) hypothesis states that we acquire language when we attempt to transmit a message but fail and have to try again. Eventually, as we arrive at the correct form of our utterance, our conversational partner finally understands, and we acquire the new form we have produced (Krashen, 1988). According to Tsuo (2005), a relatively large number of researchers have conducted empirical studies to examine the relation between language acquisition and classroom interaction and found that oral correctness was influenced by classroom participation. For example, he confirms that there is a positive correlation between language learning and the amount of time devoted to oral interaction inside and outside of the language classroom. This results from the learners having the opportunity to follow up on new words and structures to which they have been exposed during language lessons and to practice them in context. Ultimately, a student's success in a language acquisition process depends largely on the length of time spent in privately or personally practicing in the language. From this, the amount of time one spends learning the language within classroom period and outside classroom has a direct correlation with learner's rate of acquisition and how well s/he is able to use the particular language. Thus, the more time one spends in the learning of the language, the higher his/her achievement of success and the better his/her performance.

2.7   Related studies

For a very meaningful classroom interaction, a number of factors are taken into consideration, and the classroom environment generally plays a major role in this, showing the interaction between the student and technology. In this study, technology is used to refer to everything in the classroom which the student interacts with. They include textbooks, computers, and wall charts. In relation to this, Opoku-Amankwa et al, in their article *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, have observed the important role

textbooks play in classroom interaction, thereby influencing the acquisition of a target language (Opoku-Amankwa et al, 2011). They elaborated on the relevance of socio-critical approach to language and literacy learning derived from the tenets of sociocultural and critical theories. They argue that it is crucial to introduce learners to the fundamental characteristics of authentic real-life examples of both spoken and written discourse. In support of this claim, Walker and Horsley (2003) observe that textbooks have primarily been vehicles for transmitting knowledge and therefore focused on the provision of information and congruent activities.

It is instructive from this assertion that textbooks play a crucial role in target language acquisition, and in essence, classroom interaction. This is why Opoku-Amankwa et al stress the quality of information a textbook must contain before it is selected for use as such. For the fact that the student would eventually use the language in a socioeconomic environment, the textbook so selected should have information that is able to bridge the classroom knowledge and that of the community. As such, teachers of languages should be critical enough in their selection of textbooks which are purported to assist them achieve their objective of equipping their students to acquire and be able to use a target language. In other words, if a student is able to go through all the congruent activities of a second language and is unable to use the language in a real-life world communication, his/her learning becomes meaningless and useless.

Besides acquiring the academic aspects of the language, the student necessarily and ultimately must achieve the socio-critical aspect. This is the ability to use the language in daily social life activities and have the ability to brighten chances of securing some employment which eventually will enhance the socio-economic life. Hence, selected textbooks for the purposes of aiding second language knowledge acquisition should not be that which basically provide a body of knowledge. Rather,

they should inspire and stimulate the pupils' interest, develop creativity and interactive learning, and create cultural awareness (Fenner & Newby, 2000), bridging school knowledge to society and integrating different disciplines (Hummel, 1988) through the relevant activity. For Comber (2003), critical language and literacy development should involve three key pedagogical moves: recognise and mobilize learners' analytical resources, examine existing critical texts, and offer children new discursive resources'. Sharing Comber's view, the language teacher who is able to recognize and mobilise learners' analytical resources is able to decipher the appropriate teaching learning materials and activities that are able to shape and sharpen the student. This invariably leads them to be critical about what is happening around them and propels quick knowledge acquisition as well as stimulates interest in the knowledge acquisition process. The best opportunities are created for such students to be very interactive within the shortest possible time, building their personal confidence and promoting their ability to use the target language.

Finally, other scholars interested in critical language and literacy learning believe in educational approaches which empower learners. When the student is empowered they become confident in their own cultural identity, as well as knowledgeable of school structures and interactional patterns, and so can participate successfully in school learning activities (Au, 1998). In effect therefore, for a complete and very effective teacher-student classroom interaction, there is the need for the teacher to engage his/her students in oral, verbal and non-verbal interactive activities as effectively as possible. This makes it imperative for the teacher to know as a matter of urgency the quality of information contained in a chosen textbook or other verbal interactive material. That is, through classroom teacher-student, student-student

interactions, and other media interactions, it behoves the teacher to ensure that the student is empowered to be able to acquire and use the target language appropriately.

2.8   Conclusion

This chapter has examined the three-part exchange or IRF, the essence of classroom interaction, and the forms of classroom interaction. Even though this study depends heavily on Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model, there was the need to employ other frameworks in order to make realistic and dependable deductions. It is noted that virtually all scholars who have already conducted studies in this area focused on classroom interactions in countries other than Ghana and also directed their studies to students of common linguistic background and in most cases, same as their teachers. This is why embarking on a similar study in Ghana comes with different dynamics all together with respect to the diverse linguistic, socio-linguistic, socio-cultural and ethnographic backgrounds of both learners and teachers. It is therefore imperative to have a combined approach to be able to appropriately deal with the issues. Thus, in spite of the criticisms to the Sinclair and Coulthard model, it is considered a much simpler approach to ensuring a more comprehensive and reliable research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter describes the sampling procedure, the choice of instruments and their relevance, data collection and analytical procedures to fulfil the objectives of this research and ethical issues as far as this study is concerned. The main objective of this study is to identify how the IRF is applied in the ESL classroom using the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992) model. The discussion here focuses on the research design, the population, as well as sample and sampling procedure. It also discusses the data collection instruments methods and procedure, analysis, and ethical consideration.

3.1   Research design

Since the research design governs the entire research process, the most suitable methodological approach needs to be selected. In view of the research problem being investigated, and in order to satisfy the research objectives, a qualitative case study approach was adopted in order to get a holistic view of the study and clear direction towards achieving the set objectives (Creswell, 2013). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research. It emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Interaction between variables is important. Detailed data is gathered through open ended questions that provide direct quotations, and the interviewer is an integral part of the investigation (Jacob, 1988).

Qualitative research seeks to answer the ˍwhyˍ questions but not the ˍhowˍ question of its topic through the analysis of unstructured information like interviews transcripts and recordings, emails, notes, feedback forms, photos and videos. It doesnˍt

just rely on statistics or numbers, which are the domain of quantitative researchers (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009). Scholars who have embarked on research in the classroom have used diverse approaches and methodologies. Some researchers have depended on a particular theoretical and conceptual framework as well as method of approach based on the kind of information or issue being investigated. The approach was adopted to enable the researcher go a little further in the study beyond the classroom interaction.

3.2   Population and sampling

There are 30 schools in the Pokuase township. Of this, there are 15 public schools and 15 private schools. Because it was not possible to use every school for the study, 10 schools were selected. The 10 schools were selected using a convenience sampling technique. Before the study commenced, a letter was sent to all the schools for permission. Out of this, only 10 schools gave a favourable response. The 10 schools were made up of five public schools and five private schools. For the data collected to be representative enough, seven classes were selected from each of the sampled schools for interaction. The classes were Basic 1 to 6 and the one Junior High School class. Where there was more than one English language teacher in a particular JHS, only one was selected. Thus, the total teacher sample size from the sampled basic school was 70; 55 females and 15 males while the pupil sample size was 2350 (1816 from public and 534 from private schools). Table 3 presents the schools and their student population. For the purposes of anonymity, the schools are represented with letters.

Table 3.1. Population of school

Public		Private	
A	338	A	144
B	324	B	81
C	410	C	56
D	501	D	142
E	243	E	113
Total	**1816**	**Total**	**534**

3.3   Research instruments and data collection

The instruments used in this research were observation, lesson recordings and interview. These instruments were developed to solicit information from the classroom and teachers as far as the three part exchange is concerned. They were also designed to seek specific information or data on the topic under research. Samples of each have been included in appendix A.

3.3.1   Recording

One of the instruments used in collecting data from the classroom interaction was audio recordings of teaching and learning processes. The recording was done to ascertain how teachers and learners applied the IRF exchange structure, discover various patterns within the IRF structure and the roles teachers and learners play within the structure. The data collected through the audio recording were transcribed orthographically and analysed according to the model.

3.3.2   Interview

According to Fraenkel et al (1996), interviewing is an important way for a researcher to check the accuracy of data, to verify, or refute the impressions he or she has gained through observation. To buttress this, Fetterman et al describe interviewing as the most important data collection technique that a qualitative research possesses. Thus, we interview people to find out from them things that we cannot directly observe (Fetterman et al, 1996). An interview provides the researcher with the advantage of obtaining useful information which could otherwise not be captured merely through the observation process. It again gives the respondents the opportunity to personally give other detailed information about issues which cannot be captured in the observation but relevant to the study, and offer the opportunity to answer some other specific questions to be asked to elicit the needed additional information where necessary (Creswell,

2009). In this study, a semi-structured interview guide was used to find out the kind of classroom interaction the teacher and the learners engage in as well as the teachers' role in ensuring that interactions become successful. The interview was conducted in English language since it is the official language of Ghanaians and also the medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools. The interview was recorded and transcribed later for analysis.

3.3.2   Observation

Researchers can obtain data on the physical setting, the human setting, the interactional setting and the programme setting via observation. Observations are useful tools to provide direct information about language, language learning, or the language-learning situation. It is the best data collection technique because it helps the researcher to gain insight into the participants' behaviour in their natural environment (Cohen, et al. 2011). Observation was conducted to find out how the IRF is applied in classroom interaction as well as the role of teachers and learners in the exchange. Each observation the classrooms lasted for 20 minutes.

3.4   Data analysis

The recorded data were transcribed orthographically from audio to text format. The data were then analysed thematically based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps in analysing qualitative data. The first step is familiarization with the data. The researcher read through the data severally to immerse herself in and became familiar with the data. The second step is coding, which involves generating labels for important features of the data that are important to the research question(s). After familiarizing herself with the data, the themes that emerged were identified and labelled by the researcher. This includes how the IRF is applied in the classroom and the various roles of teachers and learners. The next step involved searching for themes. This included

looking for coherent and meaningful patterns in the data that were relevant to the research questions. As such, the researcher started searching for common patterns in the data that were relevant to the research questions. The fourth step is reviewing themes. At this point, themes in relation to both the coded extracts and full data set were checked for by cross checking the data with the research objectives. The fifth step is defining and naming themes. This required of the researcher to write and conduct detailed analysis of each theme that emerged. I went through all the themes that emerged and selected the final set of themes that would be useful in presenting the findings. With writing up the report, the final step in qualitative study, it involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts for a coherent narrative about the data, and contextualizing it in relation to the literature reviewed. In this regard, the various themes that emerged were linked and discussed to make a meaningful report. The analysis was informed by the principles of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) as discussed in the literature.

3.5   Validity and reliability

According to Zohrabi (2013), the principles underlying naturalistic and/or qualitative research are based on the fact that validity is a matter of trustworthiness, utility and dependability that the evaluator and the different stakeholders place into it. Additionally, Merriam (1998) posits that in qualitative research reality is holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing. In the same vein, Burns (1999) emphasizes that validity is an essential criterion for evaluating the quality and acceptability of research. This is necessary because the quality of conclusions a researcher draws fully depends on the validity and reliability of instruments used in collecting the data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). One of the main requirements of any research process is the reliability of the data and findings. Reliability deals with the consistency, dependability and

reliability of the results obtained from a piece of research (Nunan, 1999). In addition, Maree (2007) observes that the reliability of a given research depends on the consistency or the repeatability of a measure or an instrument (e.g. a questionnaire). High reliability is obtained when the measure or instrument is able to give the same results if the research is repeated on the same sample. For this reason the researcher ensured that the process of data collection was scientifically carried out and in a controlled environment.

The instruments were tested and evaluated through a preliminary pilot test, administered to three pupils and three teachers who were randomly selected from each of the sampled schools and the target classes to ascertain their validity and reliability. The teachers selected for the purpose of the pilot test were made to answer similar questions from similar interview questions as well as the observation checklist under similar conditions. This gave the researcher a fair idea of how the instruments would work. The teachers used to pilot the validity, reliability and evaluation of the instruments were not included in the actual study. The final results from the sampled schools were very similar and close to each other which confirmed the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Again, teachers who were observing the researcher go through validation exercise to confirm the reliability and validity, were also made to record various sessions of the classroom interaction being observed with phones. The checklist included strategies of interaction employed by the facilitator to enhance students' participation

3.7   Ethical issues

Ethical issues are basically issues or attitudes that are morally acceptable. In the case of a research work such as this, ethical issues would refer to all acceptable norms and practices expected in the research process. According to Rudestam and Newton

(2015), the first problem involves the validity of research, in which the research must take care of and hold a focus on valid research. Otherwise, it is ethically problematic to use people for invalid research leading to loss of respect for the researcher himself/herself and impressing as the kind of prankster than a serious investigator. It is therefore incumbent on the researcher to undertake the research through acceptable norms and practices. Thus s/he must comply with the standards of methodological selection of data collection and analysis procedures, which are critical for the production of a valid research. Appropriate population sample and size is also essential to produce an authentic, valid or credible research. In this way, the evidence does not have to be biased (O'Sullivan et al, 2008).

Besides the aforementioned, the information provided by respondents was treated with utter confidentiality. The intent and key information intended by respondents were carefully analysed to avoid misinterpretation. Before commencing the research and administering the instruments, all the prospective respondents were engaged in a brief meeting where the purpose of the study was explained to them. Through this exercise, the psyche of most prospective respondents was prepared to a very large extent to strategically prevent any negative attitudes during the course of the research and to pave the way for a smooth study. Again, a very high level of mutual respect was exhibited during the data collection process, especially in the interview. During the interview, respondents were allowed enough time to think through whatever responses they were giving after which further clarification was sought to responses which were unclear. In some cases those responses which were thought to be doubtful were cross-checked. Lastly, besides primary data collection, all other secondary data and academic or intellectual sources were duly acknowledged.

3.8   Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the reasons underscoring the use of qualitative methods in carrying out this study. It went further to outline why each of the data collection instruments was adopted and the contribution the particular instrument brought on board. It finally discussed how the data collected were analysed and the ethical issues involved.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and discusses them. It adopted the qualitative analysis by employing interview, recordings, and classroom observation to collect data on the pedagogical approaches of the teachers in their lesson delivery in English language. The basic schools for the study were sampled from Pokuase Community and its surroundings in the Ga North Municipality of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The main focus of the research has been to establish how the IRF is applied in the ESL classroom using the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) model as the main framework. The study also considered the IRF patterns that emerged in the classroom discourse as well as the roles of the teacher and the pupils. In all, a population of 70 teachers and 850 students and pupils were used for this study. They were selected from across the sampled private and public basic schools from all the classes in addition to the average of the full class-sizes of between 15 and 150 students and pupils per class.

The discussions and analysis of the research findings are based on the data collected and the research questions set out to be answered in this work. The chapter is divided into three sections: The first section presents the analysis of the application of the IRF exchange structure in the classrooms. Here, the focus is on the types of initiation, response, and feedback. The analysis showed that teachers utilize different types of initiation (directing, nominating, checking, giving cues, prompts, and markers). Learners also used two types of response (replying and reacting), and teachers used different types of feedback (acceptance, praise, probing, criticism, expansion). The second section discusses the results of the different patterns of the IRF

exchange structure that emerged from the data analysis. Here, it was realized that several patterns of the IRF exchange structure (e.g. I, IR, IRF, IF) were identified and utilized in the interactional discourse. The third and final section focuses on a discussion of the roles of teachers and pupils in the use of the IRF structure. The analysis suggests that both teachers and pupils have distinctive roles they perform in the application of the IRF to make the ESL class as interactive as possible.

4.1 Application of the IRF exchange structure

The number of three-part exchanges recorded during the first observation visit (A1 or B1) and second observation visit (A2 or B2) are as indicated in the Tables 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 respectively. These represent findings from the public and the private schools. The column indicating Total represents results of each of the two groups within the seventy minute lessons. That is, each class was observed in two separate seventy-minute lessons. The figures obtained are as featured in the tables and are featured on subsequent data displays to facilitate the analysis of greater numbers of interactions together. Table 4.1.1, which represents averages from the public schools, has an overall average of 31.4 three-part exchanges within one seventy-minute lesson, with a range of 0 to 96. Table 4.1.2 presents averages from the private schools. It presents an overall average of 56.09 three-part exchanges within a seventy-minute lesson with a range of 0 to 96. Arranging the classes by subject areas, wide differences in averages are witnessed. The Grammar and Reading classes are 15 and 57.2 for the public schools and 26.7 and 60 exchanges for private schools respectively. In the speech work lesson, there were 52.4 and 51.1 interactions, respectively.

The number of interactive exchanges occurring in the public schools appears lower than that of the private schools due to large class sizes found in the public schools. Comparatively, the private schools are able to engage more in the three-part

exchange during teaching and learning because they mostly have manageable class sizes. In the public schools, the following averages were noted: Overall Average is 31.4 interactions per seventy-minute lesson. Grammar lesson Average is 15, interactions per lesson, Reading average is 26.7 interactions per lesson and Speech work Average is 52.4 interactions per lesson with a range of 0 to 96 interactions per lesson. However, the picture in the private schools is quite different. The averages noted for the exchanges during the various lessons were as follows: Overall Average 56.09 interactions per lesson, Grammar Average is 57.2 interactions per lesson, Reading Average is 60 interactions per lesson and Speech work Average is 51.1 interactions per lesson with a range of 0 to 96 interactions per lesson.

Table 4.1. Public schools

SUBJECT	CLASS	AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	INTERACTIONS PER FIRST VISIT (A1)	INTERACTIONS PER SECOND VISIT (A2)	AVERAGE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS	TOTAL
Grammar	BS1	45	20	36	28	56
	BS2	52	16	24	20	40
	BS3	47	23	20	21.5	43
	BS4	68	15	18	16.5	33
	BS5	72	13	0	6.5	13
	BS6	84	0	16	8	16
	BS7	66	10	14	12	24
	BS8	94	10	13	11.5	23
	BS9	150	8	14	11	22
Reading	BS1	45	25	45	35	70
	BS2	52	20	38	29	58
	BS3	47	17	29	23	46
	BS4	68	21	43	32	64
	BS5	72	16	41	28.5	57
	BS6	84	26	34	30	60
	BS7	66	13	28	20.5	41
	BS8	94	24	14	19	38
	BS9	150	15	32	23.5	47
Listening/	BS1	45	68	96	82	164
Speaking	BS2	52	65	88	76.5	153
Speech	BS3	47	72	83	77.5	155
work	BS4	68	66	78	72	144
	BS5	72	0	15	7.5	15
	BS6	84	47	65	56	112
	BS7	66	38	60	49	98
	BS8	94	32	45	38.5	77
	BS9	150	26	0	13	26

Overall Average = 31.4, Grammar Average = 15, Reading Average =26.7 Speech work Average = 52.4

The IRF encompasses the totality of the exchanges that take place between the teacher and the learner during a lesson. As a pedagogical technique, the IRF is applied to ensure maximum participation of learners in the ESL classroom. Both the teacher and learners take turns in the exchanges within the full duration of the lesson.

Table 4.2. Private schools

SUBJECT	CLASS	AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	INTERACTIONS PER FIRST VISIT (B1)	INTERACTIONS PER SECOND VISIT (B2)	AVERAGE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS	TOTAL
Grammar	BS1	4	82	96	89	178
	BS2	15	58	64	61	122
	BS3	12	65	72	68.5	137
	BS4	8	78	80	79	158
	BS5	22	56	67	61.5	123
	BS6	36	48	0	24	48
	BS7	24	0	14	7	14
	BS8	33	50	53	51.5	103
	BS9	18	72	74	73	146
Reading	BS1	4	65	75	70	140
	BS2	15	50	68	59	118
	BS3	12	57	69	63	126
	BS4	8	72	73	72.5	145
	BS5	22	54	61	57.5	115
	BS6	36	46	54	50	100
	BS7	24	53	58	55.5	111
	BS8	33	44	54	49	98
	BS9	18	65	62	63.5	127
Listening /	BS1	4	68	96	82	164
Speaking	BS2	15	65	78	71.5	143
Speech	BS3	12	72	83	77.5	155
work	BS4	8	66	0	33	66
	BS5	22	0	15	7.5	15
	BS6	36	0	16	8	16
	BS7	24	58	60	59	118
	BS8	33	52	55	53.5	107
	BS9	18	66	70	68	136

Usually, the teacher initiates the lesson, the learners respond and the teacher gives a feedback on learners' response. The various types of **Initiation, Response and the Feedback** that occurred in the classroom are discussed as follows:

4.1.1 *Initiation*

In the classroom, initiation was done by both the teacher and the learners (Sunderland, 2001). In the context of teaching and learning, the teacher initiates the interaction based on the topic for the day's lesson and the communicative objectives to be achieved. The way the topic is introduced, demonstrated for further classroom discussion is what is referred to as initiation (Mehan, 1979). The different types of initiation found in the data are discussed as follows:

4.1.1.1 Nomination

The first element that was revealed in the initiation part of the classroom conversation was the nomination. Most of the teachers often addressed the learners by their names to involve them in the task on hand. Addressing the learners by their names contributed a great deal to make them participate minutely in the discussions and activities. The nomination also made the class learner centred instead of teacher centred. Active learners felt very motivated to share their opinions when their teachers volunteered them to give comments on the presented ideas. Moreover, the passive learners also became aware of their performance while the teacher addressed them by their names during the activity. In discussing the Sinclair and Coulthard model, Dailey stated that ―there can be cases when there is more than one act in a move, however there must be a head act while the other acts are optional. Nomination, bid, cue, clue, and prompt acts are all considered as ―….subordinate elements of the teacher's initiating move…" (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992, p.17 as cited in Dailey), meaning that in addition

to the head act, there can be an accompanying act in the opening move (Dailey, 2010). An example of nomination found in the data is presented in Extract 1.

Extract 1

1. *Teacher: well Akwetey ..... what is the topic about?*

2. *Akwetey: Madam, we are to give directions to our friends from our school to the community hospital*

3. *Teacher: Is he correct Asamoah?*

4. *Student: Sir, he's correct but I think he should have added after school.*

5. *Teacher: so what type of essay is it? Florence.*

6. *Student 1: Sir it is a narrative essay*

In Extract 1, the teacher stars teaching and then gets to a point where he needs a pupil to answer a question. Rather than just asking the question for anyone of them to raise their hands, he calls out someone's name for that person to provide the answer. In this sense, we say that nomination has taken place or the teacher has *nominated* a pupil. This is seen in lines 1, 3, and 5. From the analysis, it was realized that nomination was quite useful in the upper classes, with role play occurring more frequently in the lower classes, making the class child or learner-centred. On the other hand, in classes where the teachers did not nominate any learner by their names the learners felt less a part of the class than being involve. In such classes, teaching could easily be described as teacher centred, since the teachers did most of the talking. For this, learners of such classes seemed to be personally less involved in the activities. Again, in such classes, it became obvious that it became quite difficult for teachers of such classes to ensure effective classroom control. In some classes there were very good interpersonal bonding between the learners and their teachers which ultimately contributed to the

conduct of a more interactive class by involving the logical interpretations from the learners.

4.1.1.2 Directing

The next useful element that was noted in the lesson observations is directing. While directing the learners, the teachers applied their own teaching strategies based on their experience and assumptions about the learners' level of proficiency and interests. From the analysis, they used directing to give a clear idea about the task to be performed, helped the learners to complete the task by following a chronological plan and to maintain the role of the facilitator and to retain the classroom etiquette. An example is seen in Extract 2.

Extract 2

Teacher: open to page 23 of your English language workbooks; a substitution table about the Post office. Use the table to create a dialogue about your visit to the Post Office and your experience.

In this extract, during the teaching exchange, at a point the teacher decided to stop and evaluate the pupils' level of understanding. To do this, he decided to *direct* them to a specific task to do from their textbooks. To buttress this, Macedo contends that directing is when the teacher tells the students what to do as an opening move in a directing exchange. The response to this is students usually doing what they are told in a non-verbal act (Macedo, 2000). It was realized that this type worked better for the more experienced teachers. As a result, directing as part of the teaching strategy did work very well for teachers in the public schools.

Another example of directing is shown in Extract 3 as follows:

72

Extract 3

1. *Teacher: Oh! Messy board. Could someone erase the writing?*

2. *Pupil: Musah, get up to clean the board.*

3. *Teacher: All group leaders to raise up their hands; the rest of the class should break into their respective groups at where the group leaders.*

4. *Group leaders stand at vantage points to welcome the members join them.*

5. *Teacher: Each group is to discuss the your individual topics*

[Group Leaders ensure their groups carry out the assigned task].

From the extract, we see that directing helped the teachers to conduct the activities and lesson by avoiding any chaotic situations occurring from the misconception about the instructions and also to manage the classroom.

4.1.1.3 Checking

The teachers applied different checking phrases while monitoring the classroom activities like group discussion on listing, matching ideas, developing a concept, or arguing on a given topic. Rustandi and Mubarok (2017) add that in checking for confirmation, teachers who seek clarification have an opportunity to maximize learning potential since he/she does not always accept the first contribution that students offered. An example of checking is illustrated in Extract 4.

Extract 4

a. *Teacher: Ok, are you done?*

b. *Student: No Sir.*

a. *Teacher: How long do you need to enable you complete?*

Student: About ten minutes Sir.

b. *Teacher: Done?*

Student: Almost Sir.

c. *Teacher: The notions are already given in the box, right?.*

Student: Yes please.

From the extract, teacher checks by asking relevant questions to help the learners to be on track in the classroom.

According to Johnson (1995), teachers control what goes on in classrooms primarily through the ways in which they use language. These include those aspects of classroom discourse that are more relevant to teachers' language and the strategies they use to assist learners in the process of language learning (Maftoon & Rezaie, 2013). At the Lower Primary, some of the teachers offered the learners opportunity to choose their own topic and then to discuss it within the group. In a situation like this, the pupils were guided by the pictures in their book. The teachers however, had difficulties controlling their classes since they did not set them to any specific time or topic. As a result, time management, topic, and areas to cover the in topic were not defined. Such classes also became more chaotic and the teachers needed to spend a good deal of time controlling the chaotic situation occurring by the argument of the group members while selecting the topics and in shaping the titles and areas selected randomly by the groups. For this reason, the teachers could not conduct the presentation session of the activity at the end of the class. That is, frequent use of checking words and phrases by the teacher contribute a lot to control the classroom activities. Snikdha contends that teachers apply different checking phrases while monitoring the classroom activities like group discussion on listing, matching ideas, developing a concept, arguing on declared statements (Snikdha, 2016).

4.1.1.4 Giving cues

The teachers sometimes gave cues to the learners to encourage them to participate actively in the lesson. For this purpose, they used different types of cues to make the learners confidently come up with their own ideas and experiences before the class. Thus, it helped the learners to investigate the topic from a wide range of dimensions. The function of cues is to allow a student to contribute by raising a hand (in this case a fan) or shouting out the answer (Macedo, 2000). This is also consistent with (Dailey, 2010). An example of such situations is what occurred in Extract 5.

Extract 5

a. *Teacher: Ready? Those who are ready should raise your hands.*

   Teacher: Ok, who wants to come to the board first?

b. *Teacher: Done?*

   Student 1: No, please.

c. *Teacher: Those who are done with the work, should stand up*.

   Ok, come forward.

In the extract, the teacher wanted to know pupils who were ready to go to the board to perform a task (a). After this, she repeated the question so that anyone who was ready would stand and do that. She uses cues such as *ready* in (a) and *done* in (b) to be sure that anyone who decided to go to the board actually meant it.

4.1.1.5 Prompts

Prompts were used by the teachers to ensure the learners complete the assigned task within the given timeframe. This was done to teach the learners to work within the allotted timeframe of an activity and to understand their cognitive abilities by their level of accomplishment of a given task. Additionally, Li (2018) mentions that a teacher prompts students' in the IRF cycle to elicit students' responses with the aim to

highlighting a pedagogical focus. Such an idea is supported by Snikdha who also states that prompts usually put reinforcement on directives and elicitation and are commonly used in the middle of an initiating task. Here, the teachers reinforce on the fulfilment of the goal to be achieved in the targeted timeline (Dailey, 2010; Snikdha, 2016). An example of prompting is shown in Extract 6.

Extract 6

a. *Student 2: Sir, time?*

Teacher: You have five minutes to think. After which, I will call one member from each group to tell the class about their findings. So, everyone has to fully participate in the discussion.

b. *Teacher: Now, get back to your previous groups.*

c. *Teacher: You have fifteen minutes to finish this work. So, hurry up.*

In (a) a student asks about the time because the teacher had given them some time to think about the assignment. With this, the teacher provided the answer. Here, we see that the student has initiated the discourse by eliciting information from the teacher. It is after this elicitation that the teacher provided the answer. The expressions *You have five minutes to think* and *You have fifteen minutes to finish this work* are both prompts that are used by the teacher to get the students to be ready for the task ahead.

4.1.1.6 Markers

Markers were used both by teachers and the learners to mark the boundaries of a discourse pattern. Teachers **used** the markers to mark the end of a query raised by the learners with their responses. Learners **used** the markers for expressing their reactions towards the instructions and ideas delivered by the teacher. In this way, markers were used to maintain the interactional norms and context-specific discussions in an oral communicative class. The use of such markers is presented in Extract 7.

a. *Teacher: Who said that? (Screamed angrily). I have already uploaded it on our Facebook page. In today's class we will do some pair work first. Is it ok?*

   Student: Ok mum.

In the extract, the teacher used the marker *ok* in *Is it ok?* To check students' understanding of the assignment she would give them. This particular use of the marker was to mark the boundaries of a discourse pattern (Snikdha, 2016). Another use of a marker is seen in Extract 8.

Extract 8

b. *Teacher: Well, if you have got it then read question 1 and circle out the most appropriate option.   Now, in a pair tell your partner your reason for the choice of the option selected*

   Student: Ok sir.

   Here, *now* was used to open the exchange so as to call pupils' attention to the task to be followed.

4.1.1.7 Summary

The section has focused on the types of initiation and how it is applied in the exchange. The results suggest that teachers usually take their students through various activities as a way of involving them in the lesson. The various types of initiation discussed are nomination, directing, giving cues, using markers and replying.

4.1.2   Responses

In a classroom interaction, responses can come from both the teacher and the learner depending on the subject of discussion. It was found that responses from learners are typically shorter than the initiator's questions in the communicative classroom. Again responses can be verbal or non-verbal form nodding the head, giving of blank gaze, pointing with hand (Snikda, 2016). Responses can be a denial or

acceptance in reference to the question asked. Types of responses found in the classroom are discussed as follows:

4.1.2.1 Replying

In the classrooms, the learners often gave answers to the queries displayed by the teacher and their peers. These types of responses were all linguistic responses and therefore termed as replies. In most cases, responses of the learners comprised of short chunks than the teacher's questions containing long chunks. According to Snikdha, replying is realized by a statement, question or modeless item and non-verbal surrogates as nods. Its function is to provide a linguistic response which is appropriate to the elicitation (Snikdha, 2016). Similarly, Dagarin (2004) intimates that if the students already get comprehensible input through interaction with the teacher, they can construct their current knowledge and their understanding by making connection and building their mental schemata (Dagarin, 2004). Instances of replying are shown in Extract 9:

Extract 9

a. *Student k: Okay, mum. Last night I lost my best friend through a lorry accident.*

   Student d: (from the back) Oh! That's very unfortunate bro.

b. *Teacher: Please be quiet. So, how are you feeling inside now?*

   Student k: painful mum. … (Classes 1 and 2: reply through role play)

c. *Teacher: Hmm…. Now let's come to our education system in Ghana, have you learnt of any changes coming?*

   Student f: Yes sir. (Replying)

d. *Teacher: Good, could you tell us about it?*

   Student f: Sir, I hear there is a new curriculum being introduced. (Replying)

   T: You are right. Anymore?

78

e. ***Student p: Yes, New subjects have been introduced. (Replying) e.g. Our World
    Our*** *People*

    *Teacher: that's great. The National Curriculum and Assessment center (NaCA)
    has introduced new system of education which is more activity based and
    learner centered. Our teachers are being taken through its contents to ensure a
    smooth rollout in the next academic year beginning September, 2019.*

4.1.2.2 Reacting

Sometimes the learners reacted to the teacher's directions and presented ideas.
Therefore, reacting were those non-linguistic responses that the learners produced
during the classroom discourse. Reacting is realized by a non-linguistic action and its
function is to provide the appropriate non-linguistic response defined by the preceding
directive (Snikdha, 2016). In the opinion of Wells, a student attempts to answer the
question by replying to it (Wells, 1993). For example, in Extract 10,

Extract 10

a. *Teacher: So, you are saying they can take admission in some other schools
    where smoking is allowed.*

    Student m: (nodding her head to indicate a positive reaction)

b. *Teacher: So, please move your chairs quietly and re-form your groups.*

    Learners move their chairs and form circles of five members.

c. *Now, pick your vocabulary books and open to page 16.*

    *Students pick their books from their bags and open to the requested page. (In
    reaction)*

The extract shows that pupils did not give any verbal responses to the teacher's
instruction. They, rather, used non-verbal signals such as head nods (in a), moving

79

chairs (in b), and picking chairs (in c). This clearly shows that in the classroom, one can respond to an initiation not just by speaking always, but also by using non-verbal cues.

4.1.2.3 Summary

The section has examined the types of responses in the IRF structure applied in the classroom**.** It was found that responses from learners are typically shorter than the initiator's questions in the communicative classroom. Again, responses can be verbal or non-verbal form nodding the head, giving of blank gaze, pointing with hand (Snikda, 2016).Various types of responses discussed were replying and reacting.

4.1.3 Feedback

The last in the exchange is feedback (F), the exchange of a turn which aims to give feedback to students' response. From the analysis, teachers had varied means of evaluating their lessons and giving feedback to the learners. Because, it grants the opportunity for both teacher and student to play their part as instantly as may be necessary, teachers are able to correct students' mistakes as instantly as possible. Students are also able to present their difficulties regarding the lesson to the teacher. As already indicated in Chapter 2, feedback offers an opportunity for shaping students' oral communicative skills. This eventually goes a long way to enhance their answers to the written exercises (Rustandi, & Mubarok, 2017).

From the analysis, the number of attempts at feedback is classified in percentage terms as the particular feedback in the transaction or the exchange. Different types of feedback were found in the data: In the public schools praise formed 9.9% of the total responses. Acceptance, expansion and remediation as well as no response were 55.9%, 16.6%, 7.4%, and 10.2% respectively. Similar results were obtained from the private schools where there was 11.1% praise, 47% acceptance, 18.5% expansion and remediation, 8.8% criticism and no 14.5 % response. The teachers' responses following

open-ended questions were much more of the expansion/remediation type than simple acceptance. This finding is consistent with the findings of Sadker and Sadker (1987, p. 25) that a high proportion of display questions will probably be followed by acceptance responses like ―OK,‖ and that more challenging questions lead to more remediation responses. The most frequently used phrases and words of praise included: ―lovely, that was very good‖; ―good, that's a hard one!‖; ―Great!‖ and ―right, what a good example!‖

A simple word like ―good‖ said with emphasis or a big smile was also considered praise. From the enthusiastic way students interacted with their teachers, one would have expected that the percentage of praises to increase. However, the rate of praise was almost the same across the various schools and classrooms. This notwithstanding, there were more casual praise in conversations rather than in the three-part exchanges, following unsolicited student comments, and chorus answers. For example ―You guys are really good!‖ and so forth. Praise was also used at the end of an expansion/remediation response which was followed by student answers. In the oral communication classrooms, teachers started to adopt CLT based activities to promote leadership and proficiency with an aim to build confidence among the learners. For this reason, IRF elements occurred in a large scale while conducting an activity-based oral communication class. The observation came up with the following findings that would try to analyze the situations in which the IRF elements had occurred.

Generally, the teachers did not have any particular way of ending the interaction which was common to all of them. Thus, the teachers ended their interactions significantly different from the overall pattern of teacher responses. The distribution of the final responses in expansion/remediation exchanges is interesting, in that longer interactions ended with praise, which can be interpreted as a reward for working hard to correct oneself or for making a longer contribution to the discussion. They also

81

sometimes ended with acceptance. In addition, they gave some direction on the next topic to be discussed and took reactions of the learners on the conducted activities and lessons. The types of feedback found in the data are discussed as follows:

4.1.3.1 Acceptance

Though acceptance was considered as the widely used and most common form of feedback in the IRF model, in the class observation, teachers mostly used the praise, criticism and probing of learner's response as a form of follow-up activities. On the heels of this, the teacher used the learner's response to give a confirmation to the student's question and also give more information that the students need the related material (Noviana & Ardi, 2015). Finally, the teacher can accept the response with feedback or a follow-up by saying yes, no, good or allowing a repetition of the utterance given by the student (Macedo, 2000). For instance, Extract 11 is an illustration from a literature class:

> *Teacher: In literature, the place and time for incident is?*
>
> *Student: setting*
>
> *Teacher: good! (p)*
>
> *Teacher: Mercy, how many types of literature do we have?*
>
> *Student: sir, three.*
>
> *Teacher: No (negative feedback)*
>
> *Student2; two*
>
> *Teacher: that's fine!*

From the extract, the teacher initiates a question, a student answers and the teacher gives a feedback using words such as *good, No, that's fine*. The use of *No* shows that the teacher did not like the student's response, while *good* and *that's fine* suggest acceptance of the response.

82

4.1.3.2 Praise

Teachers make use of this type of feedback usually, by using words or phrases to indicate that a learner's response is satisfactory. In most cases, the common signals are ‗good', ‗very good', ‗yes', ‗correct' and ‗ok'. From data analysis, it was generally revealed that the teachers' evaluative feedback habitually takes three patterns; (i) the teacher praising the students after providing a correct response; (ii) the teacher repeating the answers offered by the students; and (iii) the teacher accepting answers but recasting them (Elkhouzai, 2016).

For example, in Extract 12,

Extract 12

a. *Teacher: Thank you, people, for your efforts to present your parts. (praise) Okay, now, tell me what your experience of making such dialogues is?*

The teacher praises the students for a good job done by using *thank you*. In fact, she lets the students know that they have done well by adding that they have put in great effort in executing the assignment.

4.1.3.3 Probing learners

This type of feedback has been found to occur only 7 percent of a teacher's feedback. Typically, it is employed if a learner is found to be inattentive towards the lesson (Snikdha, 2016). An example is seen in Extract 13:

Extract 13

1. *Teacher: Did you face any difficulty in making the dialogues? (Probing the learners)*
2. *Students: (Keep silent)*
3. *Teacher: So, do you want to brush up your current work? (Probing the learners)*
4. *Students: (screamed together) yes mum.*

83

In the exchange before 13, the teacher had asked the students break into their groups and produce dialogues. After the activity, she wanted to know if they encountered any obstacles in the course of carrying out the activity. At the first instance, students did not say anything so she continued probing until the whole class screamed with *yes mum*.

4.1.3.4 Criticism

This kind of feedback may be used diversely and sparingly in class. According to Snikdha (2016), it is a relatively rare form of instructor's evaluation which also occurs only 7 percent of instructor's reactions. In Extract 14, a learner is found to be inattentive towards the lesson.

Extract 14

Teacher: can you give me examples of closing note to end up dialogues?

Learner:" quotations and full punctuations"

Teacher: Good, then let me help you out with some areas. I see many of you have forgotten to sup the dialogues with proper closing note. (Criticism) Remember guys; don't forget to give a closing note before you end up your role play.

Student: Okay, mum.

Teacher: Oh, I see, you know a lot of them. Great.(Praise); Now, let's come back to our case.

In the extract, we see that a student responds to the teacher's questions and the teacher also gives her assessment of the answer. However, rather than completely dismissing the student's answer, she decides to first praise him and then let the class know exactly what is missing from his answer. With this, she is also able to give further directives as to what to do next time.

4.1.3.5 Expansion

Exchanges which begin with open-ended questions are less likely to include teacher responses of simple acceptance, and much more likely to include expansion/remediation responses, thus soliciting further student involvement. (Sibley, 1990). Wood (1992) notes that teachers should use a less controlling type of discourse if they really want to hear what pupils think. He also admonishes that they should do if they genuinely want to encourage them to ask questions of their own. An instance of expansion is seen in Extract 15:

Extract 15

Teacher: Kwasi, mention one effect of drug abuse

Kwasi: Sir, mad

Teacher: Yes, you have a good point but you can say it this way; one effect of drug abuse is madness.

Teacher: who else will try? Yes Abena.

Abena: Sir lose job

Teacher: Another good point but we can put it this way; it can bring about loss of job

Throughout the exchange, the teacher expanded whatever answers that students gave. This is because she realized that every one of them gave an incomplete answer. What is important about this feedback is that the teacher did not just expand the structure, but rather, drew students' attention to the fact that they always need to produce the correct form of their answers, and not shorten it.

4.1.3.6 Summary

The section has focused on the form of initiation, response and the feedback. Teachers usually take their students through various preparatory activities as a way of getting them ready for the day's work. The activities at the initiation stage may be open

or referential questions which borders on the topic for the day, a summary of the main points of the previous lesson or a recapitulation of the previous lesson. At this stage, teachers pause for students to volunteer answers to their questions or nominate students to supply answers to their questions. Besides the initiation, the section also discussed the responses teachers usually receive from the learners. Upon these responses, the teachers are able to offer the appropriate feedback. The types of initiation found in the data are nomination, directing, checking, giving cues, prompts, and markers. Replying and reacting were the types of responses produced by students. Lastly, the types of feedback identified and discussed are acceptance, praise, probing learners, criticism, expansion, and remediation.

4.2   Patterns of the IRF structure in classroom discourse

This section discusses the various forms or patterns that the IRF structure can take to aid better interaction in the ESL classroom (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). However, many researchers have identified that it is not always the teacher who initiates, gives response and feedbacks. Learners can equally initiate, respond to other comments and give feedback as well (Cockayne, 2010; Raine, 2010). In the same move, sometimes there is no feedback to any response or initiation (Quomi, 2004). Table 4.3 presents a summary of the different patterns that the IRF can take in the classroom.

Table 4.3. A summary of different IRF patterns

CLASS OF EXCHANGE	FIRST SUB-CLASS OF EXCHANGE	SECOND SUBCLASS OF EXCHANGE	FUNCTION OF THE EXCHANGE	STRUCTURE OF EXCHANGE IN TERMS OF MOVES
Boundary	N/A	N/A	to signify the start of a new stage (transaction) in a lesson	(FO) (FO)
Teaching	Free	Teacher inform (Inform)	to convey information to the pupils	I
		Teacher direct (Direct)	to direct pupils to do (but not say) something	IR(F)
		Teacher elicit (Elicit)	to elicit a verbal response from a pupil	IRF
		Pupil elicit (P-Elicit	to elicit a verbal response from the teacher	IR
		Pupil inform (P-Inform)	to convey information to the teacher	IF
		Check (Check)	to discover how well pupils are getting on	IR(F)
	Boundary	Re-initiation (i) (Reinitiation)	to induce a response to a previously unanswered elicitation	I R I^b R F
		Re-initiation (ii) (Reinitiation)	to induce a correct response to a previously incorrectly answered elicitation	I R F (I^b) R F
		Listing (Listing)	to withhold evaluation until two or more responses are received to an elicitation	I R F (I^b) R F
		Reinforce (Reinforce)	to induce a (correct) response to a previously issued directive	I R I^b R
		Repeat (Repeat)	to induce the repetition of an response	I R I^b R F

Key: I - initiation (opening move), R - response (answering move), F - feedback (follow-up move), FR - frame (framing move), FO - focus (focusing move). The framing and focusing moves are both optional, but one or the other must occur in order to constitute a boundary exchange. In the structure column: parentheses denote an optional element; I^b indicates the iteration of I two or more times. In the second subclass of exchange column, the notation of the exchange, as appearing in the analyzed transcript, is provided in parentheses.

The various patterns found in the data are discussed in the section that follows.

4.2.1   I

There are situations where we find an entire structure consisting of an initiation that may or may not be accompanied by a response. This gives us the pattern I(R). The analysis revealed instances of this pattern. With this pattern, the teacher can convey information to learners and vice-versa with no response in the teaching exchange. This is illustrated in Extract 16.

Extract 16

1. *Teacher1: Accra is the capital town of Ghana.* **(I)**

2. *Teacher2: our topic for today is what I do every Saturday.* **(I)**

3. *Student: there is a sea in my hometown, so there are a lot of fish there.* **(I)**

In Extract 16, we see a teacher initiating the discourse in lines 1 and 2, while a student initiates in line 3. The teacher uses his initiation to convey information to the learner and the learner also does same. This is consistent with what Raine notes in his (2010) work as.

4.2.2   IR (F)

In this pattern of the structure, the teacher elicits non-verbal responses from learners (or directing). For example, Extract 17 is from a composition class where the teacher directs the learners as to what to do in the course of the teaching.

Extract 17

1. *Teacher1: open to your textbook and use the substitution to form sentences on a visit to post office.* **(I)**

2. *Student: students open without saying anything.* **(R)**

3. *Teacher2: what type of essay is this?* **(I)**

4. *Student2: narrative essay.* **(R)**

In the Extract 17, teacher elicits non-verbal response from the learners. This confirms the assertion that responses may be verbal or non-verbal. In this pattern of exchange, the students generate nothing, but a few simple words to answer the teacher's questions or respond to his/her instructions. They have few chances to practice unless the teacher initiates a question which requires them to give an answer (Qomi, 2004). This is consistent with Gaies (1983) and van Lier (1984), among others, which provide useful guidelines for analysis based on verbal and non-verbal interactions in the ESL classroom. Also, according to Križan, if one directs the other speaker about something, the response is usually non-verbal. In this case, a verbal response is expected and is indicated by the teacher (Križan, 2008).

4.2.3   IRF

This is the commonest structure whereby there is always an initiation, response and feedback (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). It is used to discover how well pupils are getting on in the teaching and learning process. This is presented in Extract 18:

*Teacher1: mention three types of nouns? (**I**)*

*Student: common noun, proper nouns and abstract noun. (**R**)*

*Teacher1: Good, that's okay… (**F**)*

*Teacher2: Adoley, tell us what you do on Saturdays. (**I**)*

*Student2: I go to sell by the roadside. (**R**)*

*Teacher2: okay…well (**F**)*

In each of the two moves teacher initiates based on the students' response. The teachers' responses had been either in the form of praise of acceptance. This indicates a positive response showing that the student is making a progress in the learning. This satisfies the IRF pedagogy as proposed by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975). This is what Carter and Nunan describe as classroom interaction; which refers to interaction

between the teacher and the learners and among the learners in the classroom (Nunan & Carter, 2001).

4.2.4 IR

In this structure there is an initiation and a response. This can be used by the learner and the teacher with the aim of eliciting a verbal response from each other in the exchange. An example of this is shown in Extract 19:

Extract 19

Student: so sir, are there other forms of nouns? **(I)**

Teacher: yes **(R)**

Teacher2: is that all? **(I)**

*Student3: I wash my clothes…***(R)**

In this exchange, both teacher and students play the roles of initiators. In the case of the student she seeks clarification or further information about the lesson on nouns. In the second exchange, the teacher's initiation seeks to solicit some form of understanding from the students as to whether they have really grasped the concept of nouns. In the first exchange, the teacher gives a positive response; an assurance to the learner that lesson on nouns was not exhaustive in the previous lesson. In a similar vein, the student's response also informs the teacher that they have understood the topic ‗nouns'. This is consistent with Belobrovy (2015).

4.2.5 IF

This is another form of learner initiation which is aimed at giving information. To each of the initiation, the teacher gives a corresponding feedback. This is similar to what Cockayne (2010) identifies as student informing/conveying information to the teacher. In a composition class in Extract 20, a teacher introduces the lesson and then a student also initiates with a question.

Extract 20

Teacher: Today we're going to talk about giving directions to people from

house using important landmarks.

Student 1: madam, what are landmarks? (I)

*Student2: my house is adjacent to **the chief's palace**. (I)*

Teacher: That's okay! Good one there! (F)

Student4: madam, I think we should start from the school to … (I)

Teacher2: well, I think so also… (F)

From the extract, the learner initiates with a question on what landmarks are, with another giving information on where his house is, while the teacher provides appropriate feedback.

4.2.6 I R FI[b] R R F

This structure induces a response to a previously unanswered elicitation and a re-initiation at a point with a response and feedback. This is shown in Extract 21:

Extract 21

Teacher: tell me a dream you had last night. (I)

Student1: Okay, madam. Last night I had a dream I was urinating outside our

compound. (R)

Student2: (from the back) Wow! That's cool Nathan, I can relate... (F)

Teacher: Please be quiet. So, what happened next? (I)

Student1: I woke up to see…. (R)

Teacher: wow! That's a nice experience (F)

Teacher2: so who will tell the class what he/she does every Saturday from

morning till eve…. (I)

Student2: madam, I can do that…(R)

Student3: does that mean from the time we stand up from bed? (R)

91

Teacher2: yes, from the time you wake up till the time you get back to bed. (R)

Student3: okay, then I will say it…. (F)

From Extract 21, Teacher initiates exchange, the student responds, another give a feedback. In the exchange, the first student is given the opportunity to narrate her dream. This time the teacher is the one who gives the feedback. In the next exchange with the Teacher 2, two students attempted various responses. While student 2 makes a statement to indicate understanding of the teacher's question, student 3's response was in the form or seeking clarification. However, in the course of seeking the clarification, she makes a mistake in her expression which the teacher comes in to correct. Student 3 then gives a feedback to the teachers' response. This is in conformity with Nunan, who observes that what mostly happened in this lesson was that the teachers' questions were referential (higher order questions), to which the answer was unknown to the other teacher. Such questions are often used to encourage students to express their personal attitudes, opinions, knowledge and beliefs (e.g. Nunan, 1991).

4.2.7   I R F R F

This pattern seeks to withhold evaluation until two or more responses are received to an elicitation. This is illustrated in Extract 22:

Extract 22

Teacher2: travelling by boat is a nice experience. (I)

Student2: I tell you madam! (R)

Whole class: Eeeeiii, Adam! Since when did you … (F)

Teacher2: never mind Adamu, share your experience with us (R)

Student2: well madam……… (F)

In Extract 22, teacher initiates lesson with a past experience, which corroborated the response given by the student. The student's response attracted a probing feedback

from the rest of the class. Teacher then responds to students' feedback by encouraging the first respondent to continue.

The teacher's response also attracted a positive feedback. Ramadhan (2013) proposes that the teacher should realize the importance of the classroom interaction characteristics and to develop their teaching skill and method. First, it is better if the teacher not only spend the teaching –learning time by explaining the material. Teacher can organise some activities for the students to make the classroom interaction more effective. They can also use more open-ended questions to promote space for discussion and higher level questions in order to enhance the student thinking process. Then the teacher should create positive atmosphere in the classroom, so the students will enjoy taking part in the teaching-learning activities.

4.2.8   Summary

This section has discussed patterns that emerged from the data analysis with respect to the IRF exchange structure. Some patterns within the structure produced by both the teachers and pupils include **I, IF, IRRF, IR, IRFF, IRFI[b]RRFF.** These patterns show that not only teachers can initiate, give response and feedback but learners can equally do same in classroom interaction. These patterns can help in better interaction in the ESL classroom

4.3   The role of the teacher and students in the IRF exchange

The role of teachers and learner in the application of the IRF model is paramount. Both the teachers and learners have specific roles to play in the classroom to make the lesson as more interactive as possible. From the observation, it was revealed that teachers perform several roles as far the effective application of the IRF is concerned. Some of the roles teachers perform in the classroom are monitoring, facilitating, giving guidelines to the learners, engaging in teacher talks and most

especially giving feedback to the learners. Learners also have diverse roles to perform to make the communicative chain a success one. Some of the roles of learners in the classroom as observed were; learners as respondent to instructions or questions, interact with peers, perform role plays and simulations, interacting with teachers and technology in the communicative classroom.

4.3.1   The role of the teacher in the IRF exchange

In a classroom language teaching (CLT) based language classroom, the teachers usually ask the learners to do self-evaluation, arrange peer feedback or discuss some aspects of a previous lesson in order to make the subsequent lessons more learner-centred. Again, they arrange such sessions to check the learners' level of competence after completing the task. The observation revealed the fact that in CLT based oral communication classroom; the teacher's role as far as the effective application of the IRF exchange structure is concerned, include engaging in teacher talk, monitoring learners, providing prompt guidelines, providing specific and individual feedback, and acting as a facilitator. These are discussed in the following sections:

4.3.1.1 Engaging in teacher talk

In classroom interaction the teacher often controls the topic and the amount of attention that each student receives, and allocates turns (Erickson, 2004). Teacher talk refers to a teacher's usage of language in the classroom discourse. As Nunan (1991) puts it, teacher talk refers to the language used by a teacher in organizing class and language teaching. It is an essential tool for teachers in the implementation of the teaching plan and an important source of input for students. This is also consistent with Blanchette (2009), who argues that teachers play a supporting role in classroom teaching by continuously engaging in organizing, explaining, summarizing, reformulating, and redirecting what has been said both by themselves and by students.

94

In support of this assertion, Long and Porrter (1985) posit that the effectiveness of teaching therefore depends on the language used in classroom and the type of classroom interaction. An example of teacher talk takes place between teacher and learner in Extract 23.

Extract 23

Extract…

Teacher: What did you do last weekend, Mansa?

Mansa: I went to the beach with my family.

Teacher: Really! What was the occasion?

Mansa: it was my kid brother's birthday.

Teacher: what role did you play, Mansa?

Mansa: I drove the car to and from the beach.

Teacher: 'Drove', Mansa, 'drove'. It is an irregular verb, remember?

From the extract, there is an interaction between a teacher and a learner where the teacher is able to reiterate a tense form through effective talk with the learner. The exchange in Extract 23 shows that teacher talk can be used to achieve different pedagogical objectives.

4.3.1.2 Monitoring

Teacher monitoring could be explained as all activities the teacher engages in to be able to measure the learner's progress in the classroom. In other words, monitoring refers to all the activities pursued by teachers to keep track of student learning for purposes of making instructional decisions and providing feedback on the progress of their students (Cotton, 1999). The teacher's classroom monitoring activities include questioning students during class discussions to find out their level of understanding in the lesson being taught. Here, the teacher engages in one-on-one discussions with

learners about their work, assigns whole class, groups and individuals to tasks, collects, marks and corrects homework, records, completes, and grades students. The teacher also conducts periodic reviews with students to confirm their grasp of learning concepts and to identify gaps in their knowledge for the appropriate remedy. S/he administers and corrects or tests by way of monitoring the learners' progress and performance. Mercer (1992) argues that triadic dialogue is justified as an effective means of monitoring children's knowledge and understanding, guiding their learning, and marking knowledge and experience which is considered educationally significant or valuable (Mercer, 1992). Similarly, Newman et al (1989) claims that the three-part structure of triadic dialogue is quite nicely designed to achieve the goals of education; whereas the exchange, as a whole, is collaboratively constructed (Newman et al. 1989). In the interview with teachers, they explained that they monitor students during any lesson for various reasons. Extract 24 represents some responses from some two teachers.

Extract 24

Teacher1: I usually, monitor pupils by supervising and going round during class activities and mark their exercise books and assignment.

Teacher2: I monitor pupil's assignment to provide necessary feedback.

From these, we realize that teachers are able to monitor the progress of their pupils in their classrooms.

4.3.1.3 Providing prompt guidelines

The teacher's role as a prompt guide, involves his or her ability to offer the necessary assistance to the learner on and in time. The teacher is the facilitator of the lesson, planner of the lesson and as such, has upper hand regarding the necessary materials and aids that will enhance his lessons as well as the step-by-step approach to

enable the student grasp the concept being taught. The teacher assists the learner in his/her efforts to read, write, or speak a target language. This is best achieved through the teacher's personal love for the subject and his/her ability to understand and apply the appropriate pedagogical techniques that could sustain the learner's interest in the classroom in order to make headway. Biggs (2011) states that the teachers must create a learning environment that facilitates learning activities that in turn make the students achieve the desired learning outcomes (Biggs, 2011).

Bye, in addition posits that the key to success is to make sure that all teaching and learning components such as the curriculum and the teaching methods, and the assessment tasks are aligned to each other (Bye, 2017). Again, Tout powerfully emphasizes the critical role a teacher plays in the classroom. He explains the need for students to be supported and guided in order to learn the necessary skills to achieve the desired outcomes. Without this support and direction, the investigation and associated learning will not succeed (Tout, 2016). Teachers' approach in giving prompts is shown in Extract 25:

Extract 25

Interviewer: how do you give prompt guidelines?

Teacher 1: assists the learner in his/her efforts to read, write, speak a target language, draw, scribble, etc.

Teacher2: This is best achieved through the teacher's personal love for the subject and his/her ability to understand and apply the appropriate pedagogical skills.

Teacher3: I do that by creating conducive environment in the classroom to help the student roll with along their learning.

From the extract, teachers have various ways to give prompt to result in better learning outcomes. This is consistent with what Biggs (2011) postulates that. He argues that the teacher must create a learning environment that facilitates learning.

4.3.1.4 Providing specific and individual feedback

With this role, the teacher assesses the learner's response in respect to the learning objectives, identifies the learners' progress of achievement and offers appropriate evaluative comments which are helpful for the learner's success to make the needed progress. As mentioned earlier, Tout (2016) states that it is vital for the teacher to monitor the progress of their learners and intervene in order for them to successfully achieve the learning and outcomes. Thus, if the teacher proceeds without a comment, the implication is that he has given positive feedback (Seedhouse, 2004). Similarly, Walsh (2012) posits that minimal responses in classroom interaction sometimes work as feedback and demonstrate the convergence of pedagogical goals. From the interview, teachers explained how they provide feedback in the exchange structure. This is found in Extract 26:

Extract 26

I*nterviewer: how do you as classroom teacher provide feedback?*

Teacher1 : I sometimes give positive feedback when the learner answers correctly. In the same vain I do give written corrective feedback in their workbooks to help them come out of their difficulty and get better

Teacher 4: I criticize them where necessary and praise them as well in their assignments.

From the extract, teachers explain in various ways the give feedback to their learners, this means that in the teaching and learning processes using the IRF, feedback is very essential (Walsh, 2012).

4.3.1.5 Facilitating

Teachers facilitate effective group work when they create truly interdependent activities with clear goals, lead discussions, and monitor group work to reinforce how students can help one another. They also facilitate frequent evaluations of how work is progressing. A classroom climate of trust, where students have opportunities to share their views without fear of being wrong, is essential to these student-to-student interactions. The teacher's role as a facilitator in the classroom ensures that he/she does not dominate the class but allows the learners to control the activities of the class. His/her presence in the class creates the platform for the learners to explore their skills of creativity and innovation.

The teacher as a facilitator assesses the learners' knowledge about the task, addresses issues identified by the learners and adopts new strategies to addressing the needs. He also uses practical, participatory methods, releases information in many different directions between him/herself and the learners, both as individuals and as groups, encourages, and values divergent views of learners. This is consistent with Withall's (1975) assertion that the primary role and purpose of any teacher in any classroom is to help learners learn, inquire, problem-solve and scope with their own emotional needs and tensions as well as with the needs of those around them. Lee and Van Patten (2003) also see the teacher's role as that of an architect or facilitator. This is because it is their responsibility to not only plan, organize, and conduct lessons that encourage interaction, but also to create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning (Finlinson, 2016).

A teacher can affect the mood of a classroom, allowing for new and original thought, and inspire students to question and investigate ideas, thoughts, and beliefs. As learning a language takes a lot of time (Garrett, 2006), it is a teacher's role to help

students get as much meaningful practice as possible inside the classroom. Additionally, Gynnild et al (2007) suggests that the teacher must adopt a role as a facilitator for learning, much similar to a personal trainer at the gym, guiding the trainee, and eventually making the trainee self-monitored and self-regulated. Excerpts from the interview on this aspect are found in Extract 27:

Extract 27

Interviewer: how do you facilitate in the classroom?

Teacher: I guide them in all activities in the class seeing to it that the right thing is done for better learning outcomes.

Teacher:3   I facilitate in the class by helping them to investigate and create good atmosphere in the classroom to aid learning.

From the extract, teachers are not just in the class to teach but also to plan, organize and create good learning outcomes.

4.3.2   *Role of learners*

In every classroom, learners are to perform several roles to help in the teaching and learning process. Again, in the ESL classrooms, even though pupils are to learn, they can initiate, respond and give feedback as well (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). This section discusses some of the learner's roles in the ESL classroom during the observation. Some of the roles of the learner discussed are role play, simulation, responding to teachers in the classroom, interacting with their peers, and interacting with their teachers. As learners perform these roles in the teaching and learning, their communicative skills is sharpened.

4.3.2.1 Role-play

In my classroom observation, I observed that teachers had some activities in which the learners are assigned some roles to act during a given lesson. The structure

was usually initiated by the teacher to demonstrate the meaning of a particular concept. Role-play, according to Ahmed (2017), is a type of acting in a real life situation initiated by the teacher for students who will not feel comfortable to behave like real people. Again, Nunan (2003) cites an example where a student plays a tourist telephoning the police to report his bicycle stolen. The other plays the role of police officer trying to help the stranger file a report. Ahmed (2017) states that in role play, learners are encouraged to use target language because it resembles real life situation.

4.3.2.2 Simulations

Simulations are similar to role play; the only difference being that simulation is a real theatrical scene in actual setting of conversation. According to Nunan (2003) *props* and *documents* are employed to represent real life goods for performance between two different persons where one is a customer and other a shopkeeper. Ur adds that in simulations the individual participants speak and react as themselves, while situation and task given are an imaginary one in role play. For example, You are the managing committee of a special school for blind children. You want to organize a summer camp for the children, but your school budget is insufficient. Decide how you might raise the money" (Ur, 1995). For example, in a conversation class in a lower primary about the shopkeeper in Extract 28, the teacher selected few pupils to prepare with their lines and rehearse for a simulation scene the following day. They brought items to simulate as Maame Mansa the shopkeeper with the customer.

Extract 28

Leaner 1: Good morning Maame Mansa

Maame Mansa: Good morning, Adei.

Maame Mansa: how may I help you?

*Learner1: I am here to buy **a tin of milk**.*

*Leaner: **how much** is a tin?*

*Maame Mansa: is one **Ghana cedi.***

Learner: alright, I will buy two tins of milk.

*Maame Mansa: **here you are**, thank you*

From the extract, learners are seen acting in a conversation using lines written form them, paying particular attention to new vocabularies to be used in buying and selling with real items and costume from homes to act in the classroom with theatrical scene.

4.3.2.3 Respondents

In the classroom, the learner is the main focus and as such the teacher does his/her utmost best to ensure that s/he grasps the concept being taught in order for the lesson objectives to be achieved. As a result, the only way the teacher can verify the learner's progress of learning is to assign the learner to task. The task may be through oral interaction, written or project work. The nature of task determined the kind of response received; either verbal or non-verbal. From the observation and recording, it was realized that learners mainly acted as responders within the exchange, although there were cases in which they initiated or gave feedback. Its essence is to enable the teacher evaluate and estimate his/her level of progress in the class. This is what Schegloff and other scholars such as (Heritage, 2005; Hosoda, 2014; Lerner, 1995 as cited in Butterfield & Bhatta, 2015). It is important to know that teachers frequently engage in the exchange by asking students known-answer questions to which students respond, and teachers give feedback based on the accuracy of the student's response (Schegloff, 2007). In addition, Ohta (1999) intimates that the IRF sequences have power in the language socialization of classroom interaction. By this statement, Ohta emphasizes the importance of the learners' role as a respondent. Thus, the learner has the sole responsibility to respond to questions and interactions in order to make

progress in the learning of the language. He/she does not benefit if someone else responds on their behalf.

4.3.2.4 Interacting with peers

Everything we learn takes place in a social context. From birth and throughout our lives, our interactions with others shape our understanding of the world. Learning occurs as parents talk with their children, as children play together, and as teachers assist students. Schools can take advantage of the fact that students learn from each other as well as their teachers. Vygotsky, (1978) intimates that learning is basically social and that both teachers and peers can shape development and the learning process. This clearly affirms that the process of knowledge acquisition is not unidirectional where the learner benefits only in the presence of the teacher. Interaction between the learners themselves also creates the avenue for learning to take place. The peer interaction facilitates dialogue and collaboration among the students and compels them to think more clearly and to produce high-quality work.

Through peer interaction, learners are able to achieve both academic successes and social communicative competence. Through peer interaction, the learner gets the opportunity to assume leadership role where s/he is able to help him/herself as well as his/her colleagues. As learners prepare to teach their peers, they are compelled to go the extra mile in acquiring more insight into the topic at stake ahead of their peers; something they would not have bothered had it not been for peer teaching. Again through such interactions, they are able to work for themselves and others more independently. And also through peer interaction, learners of different strengths and capabilities come together to strengthen the efforts of each other and they develop together. From the observation, I realized that learners enjoyed interacting with one another. This may be attributed to the fact that they have more freedom as they do

group and pair work. Wade, in corroboration, states that most students can obtain benefits such as the enjoyment of sharing ideas with others and learning more if they are active in contributing in class discussion. Effective learning process occurs when both instructors and students interact and actively participate in the learning activities (Wade, 1994).

4.3.2.5 Interacting with teacher

According to Tharp et al (2000), teachers and students work together in joint productive activity, which occurs when experts and novices work together and have an opportunity to talk about their work. Joint activity means teachers share power with students-they share decisions about the selection of topics, as well as responsibilities for how to proceed, for instance. Following from this the interaction that occurs between the teacher and the learner goes a long way to help the learner learn better as s/he gets the opportunity to participate in a lot of things in the learning process. As it has been discovered by many researchers, second/foreign language learning best occurs through interaction. Hence, teachers should provide learners with opportunities to communicate in English in the lesson delivery. Since many learners' goal in language learning is to communicate fluently in formal and informal interaction, classroom activities should be designed to promote oral fluency (Koran, 2015)

To instil in students, learning dispositions, character traits, mindsets, and other so-called ―soft skills," schools employ myriad of strategies aimed at boosting students' engagement with the learning process and their eagerness to pursue schoolwork wholeheartedly (Education Week, 2014). In the classroom, the teacher and the learners relate cordially in order for teaching and learning to take place. The teacher and the learner relate interactively in an informal formal way in order for the learners to achieve the maximum out of the lesson. This helps the learners to overcome tension

and freely voice out their difficulties to be addressed. In support, Seedhouse (2004) suggests that for classroom interaction the following features of naturalness in conversation would have to be met: …turn-taking and participation rights in conversation must be unrestricted; responsibility for managing and monitoring the progress of the discourse must be shared by all participants; conversations are open-ended, and participants jointly negotiate the topic for the learners to regard the teacher as a fellow-conversationalist of identical status rather than as a teacher. In other words, the familial relationship assumed between the teacher and the student through the classroom interaction prepares the grounds for effective knowledge acquisition in the process.

In applying the IRF in an ESL classroom, there is a core mandate to fulfil in order to satisfy the demands of the pedagogical approach. That is, in the ESL classroom, both teacher and learners have specific roles to play in order to make the class effective. This section has focused on the discussion of some of the teacher and learner roles. In the ESL classroom, the teacher assumes different roles such as engaging in teacher talk, monitoring, providing prompt guidelines, providing specific and individual feedback, a facilitator. It also develops learners' speaking skills, simplifying ideas, repeating instruction, blending the global theme of the topic among others. In a similar vein, the students or pupils also have roles to play. These are learners, role-play, simulation, responding, and interacting with their peers. The rest are interacting with teachers, carrying out a given task a class, participating in group work performing various learning tasks as individual and interacting.

4.3.3   Summary

In applying the IRF in an ESL classroom, there is a core mandate to fulfil in order to satisfy the demands of the pedagogical approach. That is, in the ESL

classroom, both teacher and learners have specific roles to play in order to make the class effective. This section has discussed the roles of the teachers and learners. In a similar vein, the students or pupils play roles such as learner role-play, simulation, responding, and interacting with their peers. Others are interacting with teachers, carrying out a given task a class, participating in group work, performing various learning tasks as individuals in the classroom.

4.4   Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has presented the results obtained from the data analysis. Through interview, recordings of lessons, and observation were employed to conduct a qualitative case study. The results or the finding was based on the research objectives. The findings suggested that the IRF model used as one of the pedagogical techniques makes CLT classrooms more effective. Teachers applied it in various forms to achieve teaching objectives. Again, it was realized that the IRF has various patterns within its structure. The different structure in the model makes teaching and learning more communicative and does not make it teacher-centred as many researchers have always seen the model. Since both teachers and learners have respective roles they played to make interaction easy and very communicative one in the classroom. It was noted that the method was mostly employed to sustain learners' interest in a given lesson. The chapter further discussed the role of the teacher and the role of the learner in the ESL classroom in applying the IRF. In effect, in the ESL classroom, both teachers and learners have core mandate to perform to fulfil to make the interaction an effective one. There both teachers have their distinct roles they perform during discoursal interaction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study with the key findings, as well as the conclusion and recommendations. The study has focused on teacher-student interaction in the ESL classroom. The main focus of the research has been to establish how the IRF is applied in classrooms of schools in Pokuase in Ghana. The study also examined the patterns of the IRF structure in classroom discourse and the role of teachers and learners in the exchange. The Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) model was used as the framework for analysis and interpretation. In all, a population of 70 teachers and 850 pupils were used for this study, selected across the private and public basic schools. In addition, observations were made in all the classes with average full class-sizes between 15 and 150 pupils per class. Finally, interview was employed to obtain from teachers about their roles in the classroom exchange. The following section presents the summary of the findings.

5.1   Summary of findings

The study was based on three main research questions as follows:

5.1.1   *How is the IRF applied in classrooms of schools in Pokuase?*

In the ESL classroom, it was noted that learners could as well initiate the lesson as the teachers except that the teachers initiated the lessons in most cases. The teachers' initiation were usually in the form of summarizing the key points of the previous lesson, testing learners' idea about the topic to be discussed for the day through display or referential/open-ended questions or a recapitulation of the previous lesson. The learners' initiation however, mostly came as a way of seeking or giving information in the form of questions or contributions. Besides the initiation, learners had the basic

responsibility to offer responses to the teachers' questions. Through the learners' responses, the teachers were able to give appropriate feedback. The teachers' feedback was in the form of praise, acceptance, remediation, expansion, criticism or sometimes no comment at all. Where the teacher moved on to the next activity without a comment, the implication was that s/he had given a positive response. In most cases, teachers were very careful in the usage of criticism as a form of feedback in order not to discourage learners or letting them feel embarrassed.

5.1.2   *What are patterns of the IRF structure in classroom discourse?*

In the classroom discourse, various patterns were observed within the IRF structure. Some patterns within the structure are **I, IF, IR IRF,** and **IRFI^{b}RRFF.** These patterns show that not only teachers can initiate, give response and feedback but learners can equally do same in classroom interaction. These patterns can help in better interaction in the ESL classroom.

5.1.3   *What are the roles of teachers and learners in the exchange?*

In the ESL classroom, where the IRF is applied, teachers and learners had their respective roles. Some of the roles of teachers are as facilitators, monitoring, giving feedbacks to learners. Similarly, learners also have distinctive roles as role play, interacting with teachers and peers, simulating among others.

5.2   **The role of the IRF exchange structure in the English language classroom**

The IRF exchange structure proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) is an important part of classroom interaction which mostly enjoins teachers and learners to communicate effectively. The IRF is commonly referred to as the ₋standard teaching exchange'. In the exchange, there is an initiation which informs and also acts as a means to engage learners' attention, promote verbal responses and evaluate learners' progress. Carefully using the IRF activities makes students take active part in

classroom interactive discourse, for example, initiating, responding to, ending dialogues and giving feedback (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). Again, the IRF structure is the medium through which learning is realized as an object of pedagogical attention (Hall & Walsh, 2002). This implies that because there is always interaction and feedback, teachers are able to evaluate their lesson; giving corrective and appropriate feedback, which is the ultimate in the learning process. When there is no feedback teachers are seen to be glossing over their main business in the classroom.

In the application of the IRF structure in teaching, there is always teacher-learner(s), learner-learner(s) interaction. This is so because both teachers and learners can inform, elicit and evaluate in the structure. Learners also do interact in the various patterns of the IRF, thereby making it a non-teacher-dominated exchange (Sunderland, 2001). Sunderland's study clearly show that the turns in the IRF pattern are not that fixed. Students can take on various roles in the IRF pattern and not just the ones the teacher has assigned to them, but also roles that they, as active participants in the interaction, want to take on. This is done irrespective of any plans by the teacher about the interactional _exchange' in that situation. The students' active role is also paramount.

5.3   Pedagogical implications

To begin with, the effective use of the IRF pedagogical technique has the potential to enhance the development of communicative skills and the teaching strategies of teachers which in effect will impact positively on learners' rate of language acquisition. According to Belobrovy (2015), this research fills teachers' practical needs for designing language of instruction that will support students on their way to develop aural linguistic skills. In addition, the IRF technique provides the grounds for the teacher to build the learners' oral and aural skills which Nunan (2007),

expresses as a need. This is consistent with Cameron's (2001) idea regarding the two guiding principles for the teaching of oral and aural language to young learners. He states that 1) meaning comes first, 2) importance of active student participation in the learning process. By these principles, the teacher has the responsibility to make the lesson easier for the learner to understand through the effective application of the IRF technique. Through this, the learner is made to participate actively in the class.

The analysis of this interaction is believed to have the potential to contribute a great deal to second language pedagogy by highlighting the conditions for language acquisition. That is, to be an effective second language teacher, the teacher's way of introducing the language to his/her students should be content-based. This is considered to play a major role in the language learning system. To corroborate the idea of content in language acquisition, Moll and Diaz (1987) note that children achieve greater comprehension when the focus is on making meaning rather than on the correctness of the utterance. In a similar vein, Gordon (2007) intimates that successful learning processes of the first language is an exploration of the world by students and discussions of those explorations with adults rather than by means of studying vocabulary and then learning how to use the words. This goes a long way to suggest the need for teachers to design experiential activities that provide contextual clues and comprehensive input. According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), children might still be in the process of building their knowledge at the beginning of their first and/or second language acquisition. In the ESL classroom where the teacher's quest is to be effective in their use of the IRF, s/he gets the opportunity to use a variety of repetitions.

This may include corrective and non-corrective repetitions and teacher re-voicing which all inure to the benefit of the learner. Thus during the interactions, the teacher repeats some key words used in the learners' responses in the course of the

exchanges to indicate his/her involvement and also to underline the contextual background of the interaction with the learners. In most of the interactions, it was observed that through the teacher's meticulous way of engaging the learners in the IRF, some were able to acquire the comprehension of advanced grammatical concepts. It was also observed that the teachers' consistent reference, and repetition of concepts inside the text, enhanced the learners' comprehension a great deal. In the ESL classroom where the teacher consciously engages the learner in the IRF, students are able to play the roles of the initiators of a lesson. This also means the teacher is able to place emphasis on context.

In sum, to rake in the full benefits of IRF in the ESL classroom, the second language teacher needs to be systematic in his/her repetitions and create an enabling environment where learners could take up the roles of initiators in class. Furthermore, teachers should strive to be consistent in their references, minimize the use of abstract and informal language, minimize their tendency on the use of ungrammatical structure and finally ensuring that learners are clear with the contextual background of the topic under discussion, the more reason why the lesson should be content based. It is imperative for teachers to note the crucial essence of teacher talk in the language-learning process. It is thus the responsibility of the language teacher to create an output that activates the language-learning process. This by implication will depend on the interaction style and role distribution strategy adopted by the teacher. That is, language teachers are being encouraged to adopt coherent and strongly repetitive classroom interaction style that will enhance comprehension and trigger students' curiosity among language learners.

5.4   Suggestions for future research

This study focused on the application of the IRF exchange structure in the ESL classroom. As the results have implications for future research, further studies on the impact of the IRF may be conducted in the English language classrooms of secondary and tertiary levels of learning in Ghana. Also, the extent to which the socio-cultural and ethnographic factors affect the teaching and acquisition of the L2 as well as the correlation between the IRF and the L2 acquisition are also recommended for future study. Lastly, studies that make use of interview from learners may also be conducted in order to determine learners' understanding of the exchange structure.

5.5   Conclusion

In conclusion, it was noted in the course of the study that most teachers engaged their learners in more oral interactions in classes with smaller class sizes than those with larger class sizes. Teachers with the smaller class sizes gave more individual attention to their learners than their counterparts with the larger class sizes. As a result, teacher-student interaction was observed more in the private schools than in the public schools. Classes were more learner-centred in the private schools than in the public schools. Furthermore, it was observed that both teachers' and learners' background played a significant role in the learning process. That is, learners followed the teachers' way of pronunciation and grammatical constructions as well as how they have been hearing particular words within their specific communities. It was also observed that classes in which teachers engaged their learners in more oral interactions learner fluency and confidence levels were usually high. However, in the teacher-centred classes, though the teachers did their best, practice among learners was generally low.

112

In the Ghanaian classroom context, learners from different linguistic backgrounds sit in the same classroom and their levels of acquisition are equally different. It is therefore recommended to the teacher to initiate their lessons with more elicitations. Again, there is the need to decrease teacher talk time and increase learner talk time in order to enhance learner communication skills and language acquisition. It is thus recommended to the teacher to create a more interactional atmosphere in the classroom to facilitate learners' acquisition rate and oral practice. In this way, the teacher will only help them out when they are unable to find a proper vocabulary or have difficulty in rephrasing a concept (Yan & Yuanyuan, 2012).

Learners of an oral communication class should be encouraged practice and follow turn-taking method in classroom discussion as part of classroom etiquette. Turn taking is an important conversation technique that enables one person to start and remain involved in a particular conversation through mutual co-operation. Teachers should engage in minimal interruption during the conversation and turn taking sessions; they may possibly interrupt to correct learners on their ideas, vocabularies and structures. It is better for teachers to note down their feedback while the learners share thoughts or concepts and provide it to the learners after the performance or class. Teachers also need to closely monitor the turn taking sessions to ensure fair participation of all learners. The achievement of learning how to maintain the turn taking is considered as the very basic learning required for learning the communication strategies of a target language.

Besides the oral interactions, teachers also took their classes through written interactions. This was again well executed in the schools with low enrolments. Teachers assigned learners to as many tasks as possible and also provided the necessary feedback as promptly as possible. However, the situation was quite different in the

schools with very large enrolments. Although teachers did their best to engage learners in the necessary interactions, they were not as thorough as those with smaller class sizes. Finally, the study has confirmed that learners in the interactive classes did better than their colleagues in the less interactive classes. The study emphasized the important aspects of classroom discourse and the areas of teaching and learning that need to reflect the current need of time and strategy for making the learners more self-explorative. It highlights the importance of focusing more on bringing in innovation and diversion in the content and the way teachers conduct their oral lessons.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Observation Guide

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Observation date……………………………………………………………………….

Name of school…………………………………………………………………………

Class observed ………………………………………………………………………….

Number of students ……………………………………………………………………

No. of girls……………………………………………………………………………....

No. of boys…………………………………………………………………………….

Age range………………………………………………………………………………

Time of start of observation……………………………………………………………

Time of end of observation……………………………………………………………

Topic taught……………………………………………………………………………

Teacher qualification……………………………………………………………………

No. of teaching years……………………………………………………………………

Classroom layout………………………………………………………………………

No.	Statement	Number of observations that follows the statement at the underneath score				
		always	**frequently**	**sometimes**	**rarely**	**Never**
1	Is the classroom environment conducive for learning					
2	Is the teacher using teaching and learning materials?					
3	Is the teaching and learning interactive?					
4	Is the teacher using appropriate method or methods and approaches					

125

5	Teacher uses authentic and social life communication to motivate English language use					
6	Teacher encourages students to ask questions as well as to answer others' questions.					
7	Teacher plans lesson to emphasise English language in use					
8	Teacher presents grammar through, and for, usage rather than critical analysis.					
9	Teacher plans activities that provide students with successful learning experiences					
10	Teacher makes sure that the lesson, content and activities are appropriate to age and developmental level of the class and to the target culture(s).					
11	Teacher gives clear classroom directions and concise examples and keeps English learning as a student-centred process.					
12	Teacher gives many, varied and concrete materials and uses a diversity of classroom techniques and strategies to cope with different learning styles.					
13	Teacher uses visual and audio techniques as well as role play dramatisation and group activities effectively to cover all learning styles.					
14	Teacher makes sure that no student is left behind and all students are active throughout the class period both individually and in pairs or groups					
15	Teacher appears enthusiastic and motivated while in a two-way communication of English to his/her class.					
16	Teacher shows patience with student attempts to communicate fully in English and acknowledge students'					

	differences in their level of fluency.					
17	Teacher gives students timely, varied, appropriate and motivating feedback					
18	Teacher is fully aware of students' level of enthusiasm and motivation					
19	Teacher makes him/herself and students feel the gladness and happiness of being a member of the English class.					
20	Teacher balances the score of classroom testing in terms of communication, i.e., to emphasise reading, writing, listening, and speaking.					

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Teachers

These questions are meant to solicit your candid opinion on the classroom interaction between the teacher and the learner as well as the kind of feedback students receive from their teacher. The exercise is strictly for academic purpose and confidentiality of information is highly assured.

Now answer the following questions as appropriate.

1. Do you prefer to call on individual students or have students' volunteer answers to your questions?

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2. How do you choose which method to use for soliciting student answers? :

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3. How do you decide which students to call on,

……………………………………………………………………………………………

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and how often do you call on each student during a class period? :

…………………………………………….. (at random? in order?)

4. How often do you get every student / pupil to participate in the lesson?

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5. What do you do about students who are silent or not participating?

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6. How do you usually respond when a student gives a correct answer?

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7. How do you usually respond when a student gives a partially correct answer?

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8. How do you usually respond when a student gives an incorrect answer and why?

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9. What type of questions do you usually ask during class interaction and why?

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10. Do you usually ask objective (display) questions or open ended questions in class?

Why?

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11. How do you feel about using praise and criticism when you respond to student

answers?

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12. What percentage of your class time would you estimate is spent using a teacher

question/student answer format?

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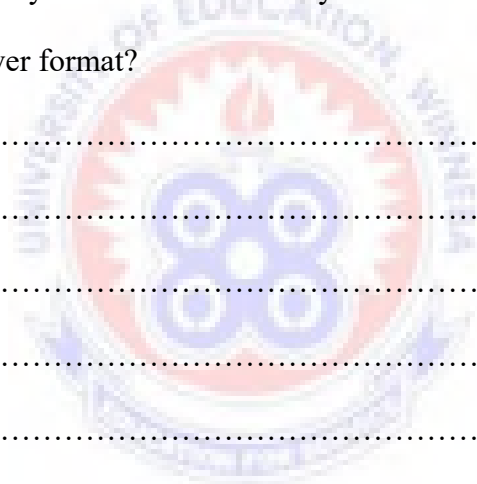
b. Does it depend on the subject?

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c. Do you prefer this format?

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13. What methods do you use to solicit student participation, and how do you ascertain whether or not students are understanding the lesson?

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Thanks so much. I really appreciate your help!

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What's is your name?

2. Could you give a brief introduction of yourself?

3. Are you a trained teacher?

4. How many years of teaching experience can you boast of?

5. What is your area of specialty?

6. What particular class level have you mostly taught after your training?

7. Any particular/special reason(s)?

8. For how long have you taught your current class?

9. Do you actually enjoy what you do as a teacher?

10. What has been your main objective as an English language teacher?

11. What are your specific approaches to achieving the stated objectives?

12. What has been your favourite teaching methodology?

13. Do you like classroom interaction?

14. What is classroom interaction?

15. What type of classroom interaction do you usually prefer?

16. How do you prepare your students for the day's activities?

17. How do you make learning through interaction a fun for your class?

18. How does that impact your teaching?

19. How do you handle classroom discipline?

20. Do you usually have the same linguistic background with your students?

21. What has usually been the linguistic background of your students?

22. How does that impact on your students' rate of acquisition of the English language?

23. What type classroom interaction do you usually employ in your teaching?

24. Why your preference of the type of classroom interaction?

25. How do you solicit responses from your students?

26. Why that approach?

27. How do you measure student performance in your classroom?

28. In what ways do you encourage creativity in your classroom?

29. As a language teacher, what daily routines do you incorporate in your teaching?

30. What type of questions do you usually ask during classroom interaction?

31. Why your choice of the type of questions?

32. Do you think one's linguistic background affects his/her rate of acquisition of a second language?

33. How does learner's background impact on his/her level of acquisition of the English language?

34. Do you think the teacher's linguistic background also have some impact on the learner's language acquisition?

35. How does that impact the learner?

36. How about the learner's social environment?

37. What role(s) do you play as a teacher during classroom interaction?

38. Do you go to the class with some premeditated feedback to the responses intend to solicit from your students?

39. What effect do you think your feedback to your students have on their rate of acquiring the English language?

40. Any other ways by which the teaching of the English language can be made simpler for the learner?