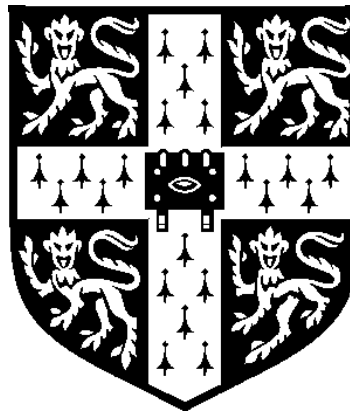**Learning to talk and talking to learn: how spontaneous teacher-learner interaction in the secondary foreign languages classroom provides greater opportunities for L2 learning.**

Rachel Hawkes

Homerton College

A dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge

January 2012

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University of similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

Finally, I confirm that this dissertation does not exceed the prescribed word limit.

Date: 5 January 2012   Signature:

Name: RACHEL HAWKES

Summary

This study sets out to investigate classroom interaction within the secondary foreign languages classroom, analysing spontaneous teacher-learner L2 interaction in three classes of beginner learners of German. The lack of spontaneous L2 interaction in secondary foreign language classrooms in England has been of central concern for as long as Communicative Language Teaching has been the dominant pedagogical approach. Professional and pedagogical impetus for an enquiry into L2 talk in the English school context is provided by OFSTED school inspection report findings that spontaneous L2 interaction is all but absent, and the knowledge that the classroom typically represents the main, if not only, source of language experience for learners in England.

Whilst the precise nature of the relationship between interaction and L2 learning remains undetermined, it is nevertheless broadly accepted within the field of Second Language Acquisition that greater opportunities for interaction benefit L2 learners. Within a sociocultural approach to learning, talk is especially privileged as the locus of learning itself, and yet in spite of the theoretical imperative of talk for learning, the vast majority of L2 studies to date have focused on conceptual gains in language learning through dialogue *about* the L2, rather than meaning-focused interaction *in* the L2. Furthermore, the context for learning has most often been one-to-one tutorial or peer-peer interactions rather than whole class teaching.

This study is an interpretive, comparative case study of three classes (two project classes and a control class) of secondary school learners of German in their second year of study. The flexible Action Research design combines instrumental case study with a quasi-experimental element, involving an intervention programme of teacher strategies designed to promote higher levels of spontaneous L2 talk in whole class teacher-fronted interaction. Its overall purpose is to contribute to the development of a theory of L2 use within classroom-based foreign language teaching and learning, with respect to the role of spontaneous teacher-learner interaction and in particular to the role of the teacher's dialogic support in L2 learning. The intervention strategies were based on a synthesis of empirical classroom interaction research studies and sociocultural theoretical perspectives. The general principles, however, relied on individual teacher interpretation and elaboration in the classroom and the interactions generated as a result were analysed.

An initial descriptive analysis identified key patterns of interaction, thereafter a fine-grained microgenetic analysis of episodes of spontaneous talk, supported by secondary data from teacher and learner interviews, revealed L2 development in linguistic and

communicative competence, and pinpointed aspects of teacher talk that scaffold learner contributions.

The study's findings provide evidence that participation in spontaneous talk initiates learners into a broader range of interactional practices that they enjoy within IRE-dominated classroom discourse. In addition, conversational interaction affords learners opportunities to acquire new lexis and to gain greater control over their existing linguistic resources. Strategic teacher-talk moves that trigger increased and improved learner L2 talk are identified. They extend and refine the construct of 'scaffolding', showing how the teacher's dialogic support is enacted in L2 classroom interaction. The dyadic teacher-learner interactions played out within the whole class setting represent, furthermore, a rich cultural artefact for other learners in the class, who interact with it, and other forms of mediation, creating their own ZPDs and benefitting vicariously from the learning situation.

In its analysis of spontaneous teacher-learner L2 talk in the secondary foreign languages classroom, the present study captures 'in flight' instances of learning to talk and talking to learn. The contribution to L2 development of such talk is sufficiently supported by the study's empirical findings as to suggest that they might justifiably be projected onto similar contexts in instructional settings, with the expectation of similarly positive outcomes.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Mark and children Emily and Tom, whose unfailing faith

in me gave me the perseverance to complete it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Michael Evans, without whose advice and guidance, wisdom and experience, patience and encouragement, the work presented in this dissertation would not have been possible.

I am also deeply grateful to the three teachers who collaborated with me in this action research study. Their energy and enthusiasm before, during and since the project helped to sustain my commitment to this work. I am further indebted to them for sharing the thoughtful insights into language teaching that they developed along the way and for continuing to develop their own and others' classroom practice in spontaneous talk. I want also to thank Silke Pfannkuch, colleague and friend, who gave freely of her time to aid me in the transcription process.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to the students I teach for providing me with the initial source of interest in this research project and, in addition, to the three classes of learners that became the focus of it. Without their learning processes there would have been no reason for mine.

The Faculty of Education has offered a great deal of support and I would like to extend my thanks in particular to the library team and the PhD administrator.

And finally, I would like to thank my parents, my husband and my children, who have always given me unconditional love and support in everything I do.

The teacher's paradox:

"We seek in the classroom to teach people how to talk when they are not being taught."

Edmondson (1985:162)

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Abbreviations

CAQDAS	Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software
CILT	National Centre for Languages
CEFR	Common European Framework for Languages
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
DES	Department of Education and Science
FL	Foreign language
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
KS3	Key Stage 3
L1	Native language or mother tongue
L2	2nd or other foreign language
NC	National Curriculum
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SLA	Second language acquisition
TL	Target language

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The study of interaction in Foreign and Second Language Acquisition (hereafter F/SLA) research is not new. It is not possible, even briefly, to describe all of the different ways in which the broad, multi-faceted concept of interaction has been interpreted and applied in this field. Broadly speaking, the majority of researchers accept that interaction can provide opportunities for language acquisition. There is, however, neither consensus as to the precise nature of the relationship between interaction and acquisition nor an agreement as to how much or what interaction is best for F/SLA.

All theories of second language acquisition seek to account for the way in which learners acquire a second (third or subsequent) language within a variety of social and institutional settings. They all employ metaphors to represent the invisible learning processes involved. Selecting the most resonant theory to explain the phenomenon of language learning is fundamentally a question of emphasis and perspective. This is not to diminish the importance of theoretical perspectives. The preference for specific terminology is significant because deeply-held convictions are couched within superficially simple metaphors. Furthermore, these metaphors can, consciously or subconsciously, shape avenues of inquiry leading researchers to prefer (or dis-prefer) certain areas of study.

Spoken interaction holds a position of importance in many (though not all) theories of SLA. In general terms, the relative importance attached to spoken interaction, whether teacher-learner, learner-learner or native speaker-non-native speaker interaction, varies in inverse proportion to the emphasis a particular SLA theory ascribes to internal mental processes. That is to say, theoretical models of F/SLA have traditionally aligned themselves with the basic assumption that language learning is inherently an individual mental process. Whether drawing on the linguistic theory of Universal Grammar (Chomsky, 1968; Cook, 1997) or cognitive theory (Anderson, 1980) interaction viewed from this perspective is seen, at one end of the spectrum as one source of 'input' which is the primary, if not sufficient, condition for stimulating the learner's innate language-processing mechanisms for linguistic development (Krashen, 1982) and, at the other end of the spectrum as 'output', whereby the learner makes use of the opportunity to test out his/her hypotheses of structure and/or meaning (Swain, 1985).

For some researchers therefore, spoken interaction is unnecessary, although potentially helpful, for language acquisition (Krashen, 1981; 1998; 2004), as comprehensible input alone is considered a sufficient condition, so that, according to Krashen (1982) it is "theoretically possible to acquire language without ever talking" (1982, p.60). For adherents to this theory, although learner spoken output can play a minor supporting role by providing an additional

source of 'auto' input to the learner, it plays no direct role in acquisition. Criticism of Krashen's theory has been wide-ranging, some writers citing the lack of direct evidence in support of the Input Hypothesis and the fact that its concepts can neither be operationally defined nor its propositions empirically tested (Jordan, 2004). Other research identifies contradictory evidence from immersion classrooms, in which learners develop high levels of fluency and comprehension but show flawed development in their spoken/written output (Swain, 1985, 1998). Further research has demonstrated that the correct acquisition of certain linguistic features remains stubbornly impervious to comprehensible input (White, 1987) and that some focus on form facilitates the acquisition of these aspects in SLA (Ellis, 2002). Finally, although there continues to be enthusiastic support for all of Krashen's ideas in some quarters (Ponniah, 2008) and whilst the importance of comprehensible input is accepted by all as having a role in SLA, there are problems applying the theory in the classroom, not least because of the difficulty with knowing what i+1(or input just beyond the current level of learner competence) is (Payne, 2011).

An enhanced role for spoken interaction is assumed by advocates of Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996), which proceeds from the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1981) – also since described as the Comprehension Hypothesis (Krashen, 2004) – to theorise that learners benefit from interaction, particularly interaction in which there is negotiation for meaning or form, as this represents opportunities for enhanced input. Much research has been undertaken in pursuit of those types of interaction that present the greatest opportunities for negotiation and modified output, both within laboratory and classroom settings, whether it be type of interactional task (Nakahama, Tyler & van Lier, 2001; Nassaji, 2007; Nakatani, 2010, Gass, Mackey & Ross-Feldman, 2005) or the identity of the ideal interlocutor (Sato, 2007; van Lier & Matsuo, 2000; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos & Linnell, 1996).

The dominance of acquisition-based models of L2 learning (where L2 is a language known or being learnt in addition to one's native language) set the focus of SLA research firmly on interactions that led to meaning comprehensibility (Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987; Pica, 1994b). This naturally favoured the singling out of particular interactional moves that came into play to remedy moments of incomprehensibility and much empirical work was devoted to comparing the relative effectiveness of these mechanisms in attaining the end goal of comprehension. Embedded within this theoretical framework, it is fair to say that the empirical focus on interaction was intense, yet narrow. Whilst interactionist approaches have broadened more recently (Mackey, 2007), expanding the field of interactional SLA to ask more expansive questions about how interaction creates opportunities for learning, the 'isolation for comparison' approach still characterises much of the empirical work in this

paradigm. Nakatami (2010) observes that research on oral communication often isolates only those communication strategies that involve negotiation for meaning. This reductionist approach to the study of L2 acquisition is tightly bound up with the theoretical commitment to viewing cognition as a quintessentially individual endeavour. Whatever the significance of interaction for L2 acquisition, the focus still rests predominantly with the learner as input recipient, and analysis proceeds from this perspective.

Critics of the view that input is a sufficient condition for language acquisition (with or without negotiation) and proponents of an output-dependent theory of L2 learning accord, unsurprisingly, greater significance to oral interaction (Yule & Tarone, 1991; Swain, 1985, 1998). Situations in which a learner's linguistic resources are stretched and s/he needs to attend to the form as well as the meaning of what s/he says are a necessary supplementary condition for acquisition (Swain, 1985, 1995, 2005). Swain (1995) argued that output pushes learner to process language more deeply than input alone. This view resonates with van Patten's Input-processing Hypothesis too, which claims that learners naturally process language semantically and require additional targeted stimuli to push them towards structural processing (Van Patten, 1990, 1996). There are therefore ompelling theoretical and empirical grounds for exploring the value of output in interaction for L2 learning and oral interaction is an important site of learning, primarily in the sense that it pushes the learner to focus on form in meaning-focused communication. I am convinced that L2 interaction that enables learners to understand what they are hearing whilst pushing them to focus on the forms they use to respond and make themselves understood in return is valuable to L2 acquisition and many studies have sourced these theories as a springboard for the investigation of aspects of interaction. I argue, however, that there are several limitations inherent in these theories of SLA, even the Output Hypothesis, which I view as having greater explanatory power than the Input and Interaction Hypotheses alone.

The first limitation of the Input and Interaction hypotheses concerns the reliance on comprehensibility as sufficient evidence of SLA, with all the convergent doubts that this position entails. A second, and consequent, limitation is the lack of importance attributed to learner language in SLA studies within this paradigm. Learning is assumed to take place as a result of comprehensible input so learner language is not examined for signs of L2 development. Thirdly, I view the commitment of the Interaction Hypothesis to focusing predominantly on the opportunities for negotiation for meaning in moments of communicative failure as a serious constraint. This approach rules out other aspects of interaction that may well contribute to SLA. Foster and Ohta (2005) found that an interactional analysis based on negotiation for meaning ignored utterances that encouraged the

interlocutor to continue talking, and suggested that signaling understanding as well as misunderstanding might in fact contribute to L2 learning. Fourthly the fact that this approach persists in viewing F/SLA in purely psycholinguistic terms (Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007) reduces interaction to a source of 'input' or an opportunity to practise 'output'. With the learner's individual cognitive processes as the focal point of this research, there has not been room to foreground the role of social and cultural context in L2 interaction and its relationship with L2 learning. Despite appeals to re-balance SLA research in favour of socio-lingustic (Tarone, 2000; 2008) and socio-cultural perspectives (Hall & Verplaestse, 2000; Hall & Walsh, 2002; Hall, 2010), these aspects remain marginalised. It is telling that Swain (2000) extended her own concept of 'output' and reframed spoken interaction as 'collaborative dialogue', drawing on sociocultural theory. She has since investigated linguistic problem-solving and hypothesis-testing interactions that play out in spoken (and written) communication and prove valuable to L2 learning, viewed as both cognitive and social activity (Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2002; Swain, Brooks & Tocalli-Beller, 2002; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2007). The final limitation is common to all acquisition-based theories of SLA. The concept of acquisition on which they are based is restricted to grammatical/linguistic competence and these theories do not explain how second language learners learn to communicate competently in the L2 (Jordan, 2004).

Krashen (1998) said 'a problem all output hypotheses have is that output is rare (p.175). I would agree that output is rare but I see this as a pedagogical more than a theoretical problem. In the UK secondary classroom context in particular, the affective dimension in L2 interaction is key to overcoming the barriers to learner L2 talk, whether as a result of the limitations in the interactional architecture of the classroom or as a consequence of the natural reluctance that adolescent learners have to interacting in their L2 in front of their peers. In my view, the importance of volition in the process of L2 learning and the interplay between affect and conscious noticing and uptake mean that the most resonant theoretical framework will foreground the affective dimension in its metaphors and constructs.

During the last twenty years there has been increasing interest in the social aspects of interaction and their impact on language learning. Increasingly, researchers have looked outside the dominant paradigms in search of theoretical perspectives to support a redressing of the perceived imbalance between the cognitive and social aspects of language learning (Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007). Some researchers have come to embrace the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1962, 1978), hereafter SLT, which resonates with their key concern with language learning as essentially a social as well as a cognitive process. There is now a substantial body of research in F/SLA which is located within this framework (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994;

Donato, 1994; Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Antón & DiCamilla, 1997; DiCamilla & Antón, 1998; Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Ohta, 1995, 1999, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2002; Storch, 2002; Foster & Ohta, 2005; Smith, 2007; Todhunter, 2007; Gánem Gutiérrez, 2008; Van Compernolle, 2010; Lantolf & Poehner, 2011).

To locate my own research in a theoretical framework which accords interaction a fundamental role in L2 development and further, to underpin the notion that interaction in which the teacher uses supportive dialogic means to guide the pupils to higher levels of language production is particularly fruitful in terms of the opportunities it represents for L2 development, I too have drawn on the SLT emanating from the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978), as well as that of others who have elaborated and extended its application to language learning and use, both within a formal educational setting and in more naturalistic settings (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976; Bruner, 1985; Cazden, 1985; Wertsch, 1985; Wells, 1999; Donato, 1994, 2000; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

In this introductory chapter I detail first the overarching focus and research purpose of this study, placing it within the context of a body of F/SLA research in which the role of spoken interaction in the target language within the context of the foreign language classroom has much greater significance. I refer most particularly to recent F/SLA research studies that have adopted a sociocultural or Vygotskyan theoretical framework. Of central importance here is the notion that learning is essentially a socially situated activity. Higher-order cognitive functions are internalised through social interaction with more competent others. The mediated support provided in this interaction is therefore fundamental to the learning process. In short, talk is where all learning happens.

In spite of the theoretical imperative of talk for learning, empirical studies in SLA carried out from a sociocultural perspective and which operationalise sociocultural theory have tended to explore foreign language learning in peer-peer interactions (often, though not exclusively in the learners' L1, or native language,) *about* the foreign or target language (L2) (Donato, 1994; Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Ohta, 2000, 2001; Storch, 2002; 2004; DiCamilla & Antón, 2004; Gánem Gutiérrez, 2008) or in one-to-one teacher-student contexts, in which oral feedback on written work has been the main focus (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Nassaji & Cumming, 2000) and not in meaning-focused interaction within a whole class setting. I explore the reasons for this in the literature review that follows. There have been very few studies of whole class spoken interaction from a sociocultural perspective, in particular longitudinal studies, which could offer fuller insights into foreign language learning through spoken interaction. In addition, where whole class oral interaction has been the focus, the studies have almost exclusively been situated in university

classes of adult learners (Haneda, 1997; Antón, 1999; Consolo, 2000; Sullivan, 2000; Mantero, 2002; Nguyen, 2007; Waring, 2009; Toth, 2011) and have tended to highlight the limitations of teacher-fronted discourse for L2 learning.   Within the sociocultural framework, there is a scarcity of whole class interaction research focused on talk for learning. In addition to the few studies situated within primary classrooms (Ernst, 1994; Cekaite, 2007) and within an ESL context (Gibbons, 2003; Michell & Sharpe, 2005) there are just as few studies of whole class oral interaction at secondary level in foreign language education (Hall, 1995; Todhunter, 2007) and only one found within a UK context (Coyle, 2007).   These studies do suggest however, that teacher-learner classroom talk can lead to gains in L2 learning.

This study focuses on classroom interaction within the secondary foreign languages classroom, analysing spontaneous teacher-learner L2 interaction in three classes of beginner learners of German. Its overall research purpose is to contribute to the development of a theory of target language or L2 use within classroom-based foreign language teaching and learning, with respect to the role of spontaneous teacher-learner interaction in L2 learning.

Within the overall research purpose of the study, I identify two main aims: firstly, to examine the extent to which teachers can employ particular discourse management strategies to create episodes of spontaneous talk within whole class teacher-led interaction and secondly, to explain how these spontaneous exchanges contribute to learner L2 development within secondary foreign language classrooms.

The study is a comparative case study of three classes of secondary school German learners in their second year of learning, two project classes and one control class, involving an intervention programme of teacher strategies to promote spontaneous learner L2 talk in whole class teacher-fronted interaction. The teachers involved engaged in reflection and discussion on their teaching and perceived outcomes during and after the project.   The study thus had the additional aim of contributing to the professional practice of these teachers as reflective practitioners.

The teaching strategies that made up the intervention programme in the study operationalised SCT principles within the secondary foreign languages classroom.   The comparative element of the study set out to identify certain teacher talk moves as conducive or otherwise to higher levels of learner talk and explain the socio-linguistic and linguistic impact of these discourse strategies. In so doing, the study contributes to the body of empirical and pedagogical knowledge that informs teachers' practice in terms of oral interaction in secondary foreign language classrooms, both within the school context of the present study but also more widely within the UK secondary school context.

The context of the study, foreign language learning in secondary school classrooms in the UK, is a particular one, which has a fundamental bearing on the study and therefore requires a little further description and explanation at this stage. I expand on the role of spoken interaction and spontaneous talk in particular within the UK context in Chapter 4 but at this point I make two key observations about L2 learning in the UK context. Firstly, foreign language learners in secondary schools in Britain typically have little routine contact with the L2 outside school. The main exceptions might be a family holiday, a school exchange trip or an informal club, but it is clear that the classroom is the main source of L2 language experience for most school age learners in the UK, making L2 interaction a priority for teachers and learners. The learners in this study were no exception to this. Secondly, the UK schools' inspectorate Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education) identified a problem in their 2008 report on languages teaching in UK secondary schools (OFSTED, 2008). Following classroom observations over the three years 2004-2007, the study reports some excellent L2 use by the teacher and some appropriate pupil-teacher TL responses to questions, but cites as disappointing the lack of spontaneous use of pupil-teacher TL and as almost non-existent pupil-pupil talk in the TL:

> Overall, there was insufficient emphasis on helping students to use the language spontaneously for real situations. Consequently, too few students could speak creatively, or beyond the topic they were studying, by making up their own sentences in an unrehearsed situation. Several students said that being able to say what they wanted to say would improve their enjoyment. (OFSTED, 2008)

This report confirmed the findings of previous Ofsted research in language learning in UK secondary schools (OFSTED, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2002), and the most recent report (OFSTED, 2011) indicates a further regression in terms of L2 classroom use, arguing that all secondary schools should 'put much greater emphasis on regular use of the target language in all lessons' (OFSTED, 2011, p.8) and observing that:

> The key barriers observed to further improvement in Key Stages 3 and 4 were teachers' lack of use of the target language to support their students' routine use of the language in lessons, as well as providing opportunities for them to talk spontaneously. (2011, p.5)

Although Ofsted reports are neither written nor reviewed by academic researchers, their authority within the English school system ensures that their findings must be taken seriously. In the English secondary school context therefore, the classroom is the main, if not the only, site where L2 interaction occurs for secondary learners and yet, as OFSTED (1995, 2008, 2011) indicates, opportunities for learners to use their L2 are limited. These two factors

provide further professional and pedagogical impetus for an enquiry into L2 talk in the secondary foreign language classroom context.

Informed therefore by its overarching research purpose and additional professional and pedagogical aims, this study addresses the following overarching research question: 'What is the impact of the use of teacher talk strategies on spontaneous learner L2 oral interaction in the secondary foreign languages classroom?'

I begin now by reviewing the relevant literature on interaction both within F/SLA research from a sociocultural perspective in Chapter 2 and from a Classroom Interaction research perspective in Chapter 3 to provide a theoretical framework in which to locate this research project. I demonstrate in the review chapters that follow that SCT-inspired SLA research, despite more than three hundred published studies remains a relative newcomer within SLA, and that in the majority of studies so far, causal relationships have not been firmly established. Moreover, there have not to date been any longitudinal comparative studies within a whole class teaching context at secondary level. The studies in this review underline the nature and role of talk for learning or scaffolding within L2 development and identify reasons why the potential gains for L2 learning of teacher-led spontaneous L2 interaction are under-researched. The chapters further establish a rationale for intervening in whole class discourse to subvert the prevailing pattern of teacher-dominated talk. There are currently no existing studies within SLA research that strategically set out to do this and then explore the effects of such an intervention programme. These chapters provide therefore both a theoretical framework for my study and a justification of its overarching research purpose.

Chapter 2: Literature Review (1)

This study is based on the premise that L2 interaction has a fundamental role in L2 learning. Before I expand upon the wider theoretical framework that underpins this study and supports this premise, I first review briefly the research on L2 and L1 use within L2 learning. I return to key aspects of this debate within the English secondary classroom context in more depth in Chapter 4. Here I outline the rationale for the importance of L2 communication more generally and account for the mismatch between theory of L2 use and classroom practice.

Following the rejection of the Grammar-Translation Method, the rationale for exclusive or near exclusive use of the L2 has not been questioned (Turnbull and Arnett, 2002). The nature and purpose of the L2 interaction has evolved with each methodological development, however, and it was not until the widespread adoption of Communicative Language Teaching, or CLT, that 'real communication' in L2 was firmly on the agenda (Nunan, 1991). Three decades later, in England at least, the L2 imperative is expressed more from the learner than teacher perspective by policy makers and school inspectors, who set the bar ever higher. The latest Ofsted subject specific guidance insists that learning is outstanding when learners 'can use language creatively and spontaneously to express what they want to say, including when talking to each other informally' (Ofsted, 2012:1).

The arguments advanced for a role for L1 in the L2 classroom have often been apologetic in orientation, going against the tide of dominant thinking, though Butzkamm (2003) has been a particularly strong advocate for L1 use in specific ways.   However, many of the ways that L1 is presented as positive for L2 learning do not involve teacher and students communicating in the L1. They describe how learners might benefit from using their L1 in the thinking, planning and reflecting processes leading up to the production of L2. Many of these are individual or peer activities, rather than teacher-led interactions. They refer to the cognitive scaffolding that learners lean on to gain greater control of complex mental processes. It is unsurprising that there is empirical evidence to suggest that older learners in particular value the use of L1 (Meiring and Norman, 2002; Brooks-Lewis, 2009).   The older the classroom learner in the classroom the more likely language learning will be a more conscious, deliberate process (Holmes, 2002) and this implies the individual's use of L1 to regulate thinking processes. In the same way, fluent speakers of other languages still default naturally to their mother tongue to count or complete other basic organisational functions. Macaro's (1997) finding that it is unrealistic to exclude the L1 from the L2 classroom supports not only the findings in other studies (Meiring and Norman, 2002, Carless, 2008) that show that learners quickly resort to the L1 (in monolingual classrooms) when left to their own devices

in pair or group work but also goes further to explore the learning advantages that L1 use can have when learners work with their peers or autonomously.

These aspects of L1 use, whilst important, do not detract from the importance of L2 teacher-learner classroom interaction. There have been far fewer attempts to make a case for L1 teacher talk to advance L2 learning. One such argument is that using L1 prompts to elicit L2 from learners might 'compensate for a weakness of monolingual communicative activities, in which students are rarely compelled to use complex structures because they can use communication strategies to avoid them' (Littlewood and Wu, 2009:71). In my experience of the secondary classroom context in England, the problem that learners have such well-developed communicative competence that they are able to talk themselves out of having to use more complex structures is rarely in evidence. In fact, it is precisely this communicative competence that teachers often want their learners to develop.

Research finds, however, that teachers themselves do not, exclusively or even predominantly, use the target language or L2 in their teaching (Duff & Polio, 1990; Kim & Elder, 2005).Much empirical research has sought to establish why classroom practice in L2 use is at odds with the dominant methodological paradigms; that is, why teachers use L1 instead or as well as L2, how often, and in what sorts of situations. The three situations when it happens most often seem to be: explaining (either concept or task); disciplining or building/maintaining relationships (Mitchell, 1988; Macaro, 1997; Liu et al., 2004; Littlewood &Wu, 2009).

Seedhouse and Ustunel's (2005) article on code-switching highlighted particularly interesting examples of classroom practice, whereby teachers typically switched from L2 to L1 to translate themselves, either their questions or instructions, after a lack of learner response following a pause of more than a second. Another study (Liu et al. 2004) also found that teachers swop from L2 to L1 when they perceive their learners are having difficulty understanding them. In Seedhouse and Ustunel's study, learners tended, interestingly, to respond in the L2. Here the teacher's pedagogical aim of eliciting an L2 response was shown to be fulfilled, albeit by way of a detour through the L1. We might argue that the learner's L2 spoken output has been unaffected; his/her answer was after all produced in L2. The extent to which the interaction might conform to our notions of 'real communication' is, however, in some doubt. The finding that learners orient themselves in their choice of L1 or L2 to the perceived learning goal is supported also in Liu et al.'s study.

Liu et al. (2004) argue that, whatever the motives for the L1 use it was beneficial to students as it aided understanding in particular learning situations. It is undoubtedly the case that communication difficulties that arise can be solved quickly by recourse to the students'

L1 and that their understanding in that particular moment can be said to have been assisted by the use of L1. It is by no means certain however either that there would not have been L2 strategies that would have achieved the same resolution of communication difficulty and resulted in greater gains in terms of L2 input, or that it might perhaps have been possible to plan the learning such that the goal was for learners to communication in L2 on a particular theme, rather than for them to understand certain concepts, which needed to be glossed/explained in L1 to ensure comprehension.

One reason teachers give for not using the L2 is learners' lack of proficiency. The implication here is that one might increase the use of L2 interaction as learner proficiency increases. I do not know of studies that have shown that this actually happens. On the other hand, there is some evidence, particularly from bilingual teaching programmes that teaching from the outset with exclusive or maximal L2 use leads to L2 learning. Littlewood and Wu (2009) note that the importance of the classroom domain 'as a context for meaningful communication cannot be denied and there is obvious benefit to students when teachers establish the TL as the norm (Littlewood & Wu, 2009:73).

Undeniably, the classroom represents the only opportunity for L2 interaction for many students and it is that element of the language teacher's role that we must not forget in any discussion about the importance of teacher L2 use. Spontaneity in L2 talk is more about understanding and readiness of response than it is about the act of spoken production. An acquisition-rich classroom is one in which there is a lot of linguistic input, made comprehensible by the teacher talk, if necessary resorting to several attempts to simplify the message. Translating prematurely into L1 runs the risk of halting the work that both learners and teacher engage in to make meaning.

To provide a theoretical framework to support the position that (spoken) interaction is the primary site for all learning, I draw on Vygotsky's Theory of Mind (1962, 1978) and in particular the sociocultural theory of learning and development which has subsequently developed from it.

As the present study focuses on the relationship between verbal classroom interaction and L2 learning, a primary focus of the initial section of this review chapter is the theory of learning as socially-situated dialogic activity, the concepts and constructs that have been elaborated to describe this process and their application to empirical research studies, particularly within L2 learning, but also, where appropriate, within classroom interaction research. I first give a brief account of the origins of SCT, explain some of its key concepts, relating them to my research area and then show how SCT has been further elaborated and applied to the field of F/SLA research. I explain the dominance of form-focused studies

within SCT research on SLA and provide a theoretical rationale for meaning-focused studies of L2 learning within the sociocultural paradigm, which have, to date, been almost absent from the field.

2.1   Sociocultural Theory

SCT, a system of ideas generated originally by Vygotsky (1962, 1978), conceptualises learning as essentially a social act, embedded in a specific cultural environment.   In developing this theory, Vygotsky (1978) drew on his interpretation of the relationship between human beings and their environment.   In order for human beings to interact with, influence and change their material environment they have, throughout their history, created physical tools.   In a similar way, Vygotsky argues, humans have created symbolic 'tools' or 'signs' to organise their psychological and sociocultural environment.   The most powerful and important of these semiotic tools is language.   For Vygotsky, therefore, language and learning are first and foremost social and the origins of individual mental processes, as they are mediated through language, are by definition social in origin (Vygotsky, 1981).   From this basic premise developed his 'general genetic law of cultural development':

> Any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition. (1981, p.163)

This is more significant than it appears at first reading.   It locates the genesis of thought itself within human social interaction and makes talk the matrix of all learning.

2.2   Key concepts within Sociocultural Theory for interaction and learning

There are several important concepts which emerge from an application of the basic tenets of sociocultural theory to frame our understanding of learning and the role of interaction in the learning process.   Those most pertinent to the present study are mediation and microgenesis; the Zone of Proximal Development and the construct of scaffolding.   They are closely interwoven concepts and as such I will describe them briefly as they relate to each other as well as to learning and interaction, before focusing in more detail on the construct of scaffolding, which serves as a powerful metaphor for the dialogic mediation essential for effective learning.

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2.2.1 Mediation and microgenesis

According to Vygotsky, higher cognitive abilities such as voluntary memory, attention, problem-solving and rational thought, are mediated through social interaction with an 'expert'. They are not biological endowments, whose functioning is 'triggered' through either internal or external stimulus. The notion that learning occurs principally inside the learner's head is rejected in favour of the view that new knowledge is first encountered in social interaction. It is mediated by a more experienced or knowledgeable 'other' through collaborative use of semiotic tools, the most important of which is language, and subsequently appropriated or internalised by the learner. The dynamic process of development which takes place in this interaction is described as microgenesis and these mediated changes over time mirror the learning processes which can be observed in other social, historical and evolutionary processes.

Evidence of development through mediation is made visible not only in independent learner achievement, but in changes in assistance over time within social interaction (Lantolf, 2006a). This is because microgenesis, or learning within the sociocultural paradigm, involves a movement from other-regulation towards self-regulation, a change in participation (Young & Miller, 2004) from dependence to greater independence. For Vygotsky, studying the process of learning involved examining that which the learner could accomplish with support from a more able or experienced individual. To look for the evidence of learning in individual performance would be like examining the past; learning preceded development for Vygotsky and it is within the collaborative successes of today that we glimpse the individual achievements of tomorrow. Following Bruner (1986), Newman and Holzman (1993) argue that this is particularly true in language learning:

> In Vygotsky's theory, language acquisition 'provides the paradigm case' of learning leading development, because in this activity the 'aspirant speaker must "borrow" the knowledge and consciousness of the tutor to enter a language' (Bruner, 1986, p.78) through the fundamentally human process of meaning making in collaborative activity with other members of the culture. (Newman & Holzman, 1993, p.87)

There are clear implications for those who aim to examine the processes of human learning and development. Any such study must attempt to capture the moments of learning as they unfold in real-time mediated interactions between expert and novice. The L2 studies of talk for learning within a sociocultural paradigm that I review in the following sections, notwithstanding their differences in context, focus or scope, share a common methodological approach that includes a fine-grained discourse or microgenetic analysis of the dialogue between teacher and learner or between learners. The purpose is to illuminate the changes

that occur as learners, with the help of a more able or experienced 'other', go beyond what they can achieve independently to internalise new knowledge and skills. In order to explain how mediation relates to learning and development, we need to turn now to the constructs of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding. The ZPD is a metaphor for the dynamic 'space' in which learning takes place. The concept, central to Vygotsky's theory, is explored further in the following section.

2.2.2 The Zone of Proximal Development

The domain where learning can most effectively take place is called the Zone of Proximal Development (or ZPD). This concept denotes the existence of two developmental levels within the learner: the actual developmental level, which is what the learner or 'novice' can accomplish independently; and the potential level of development, which can be observed by what the learner or 'novice' can accomplish with the support of another or 'expert'. These two levels are explained in this definition of a learner's ZPD as:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86)

The microgenetic process of learning depends, as I have outlined, on interaction between the learner and a more experienced participant in the form of supportive dialogue. For intellectual growth to occur in the learner, the 'expert' must provide mediation through supportive dialogue within the learner's ZPD. In other words, the 'expert' must establish first the actual and potential levels of development of the learner and then structure the assistance so as to help the learner operate at his/her potential level of development. This supportive dialogue was given the metaphor scaffolding, the term having been used initially by Vygotsky but then explored and elaborated by Bruner (1978). I return to this construct in subsequent sections of this review.

The concept of the ZPD is an appealing one and there have been attempts to appropriate it to include a social dimension within more traditional approaches to SLA, aligned with established theories of language acquisition, for example, Krashen's i+1 Input Hypothesis, (Krashen, 1981); or negotiation for meaning frameworks underpinned by the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996). Researchers within SCT recognise the problematic nature of the ZPD concept, not least because Vygotsky only refers to it eight times in his writings and it remains an unfinished concept (Kinginger, 2002). However, the incompatibility of the ZPD with psycholinguistic theories of SLA is spelt out by Dunn and Lantolf (1998) and the

outcome is, usefully, a greater degree of clarity about its interpretation within its socio-historical origins. Particularly significant are its roots within a unified and dialectical learning model that is in stark contrast to the dualistic, scientific traditions that underpin Krashen's theory of language acquisition and his insistence on the absolute separation of acquisition from learning; so too the notion that new knowledge is created dialogically and equally between the participants in interaction (Dunn & Lantolf, 1998; Kinginger, 2002).

Importantly, it is this collaborative dialogue or scaffolding that constructs a learner's ZPD. This 'metaphorical space' where learning occurs is talked into being through the dialogic interaction of the participants and I explore how studies of SLA have drawn on this concept and related it explicitly to L2 learning. I then compare scaffolding to other constructs for dialogic support that are significant for mainstream SLA. First, however, I define the concept of scaffolding in terms of its origins, and examine how the concept has been subsequently expanded and defined within L1 and primary classroom interaction research.

2.2.3 Scaffolding

Scaffolding, in literal terms, is a supportive frame which strengthens existing structures whilst new building work is in progress. Its metaphorical application as verbal assistance or dialogic support was developed most significantly more than 35 years ago in a seminal study of child psychology. Exploring the characteristics of mother-child talk during problem-solving activities Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) identified six functions of scaffolding:

1. Recruiting interest in the task

2. Simplifying the task

3. Maintaining pursuit of the goal

4. Marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution

5. Controlling frustration during problem-solving

6. Demonstrating an idealised version of the act to be performed

From these six functions we discover not only more about the nature of scaffolding, but crucial information about learning itself. We can infer from functions 2, 3, 4 and 5 that the learning process is a highly challenging one; what is required cannot be achieved without significant help. There is the need to make the task more straightforward (function 2), but even thereafter the learner does not find it easy, makes flawed attempts and needs support to notice these (function 4). Furthermore we note that the six functions attribute both affective and cognitive elements to scaffolding. Functions 1, 3 and 5 aim to solicit and maintain the

learner's interest in the task, in spite of its inherent difficulty, whilst functions 2, 4 and 6 address the cognitive challenges. We infer from the six functions too that scaffolding aims to ensure successful task completion. Initially Wood et al. did not formally base their work on Vygotskyan theory, although subsequently the links were established and further developed. However, in and of themselves, these six functions are insufficient to describe effective dialogic support or scaffolding as they risk conflating learning with successful task completion.

Bruner (1985) later defined the construct of scaffolding as a 'vicarious form of consciousness' that the tutor provides to enable the learner to 'internalise external knowledge' and bring it under his own consciousness and control (Bruner, 1985, p.24-5). What emerges more clearly from this definition of scaffolding is its temporary nature. The goal of assistance here is to withdraw it as soon as the learner has internalised the knowledge sufficiently to be able to manipulate it independently. Implicit here also is a second aim of scaffolding; the co-construction of new knowledge that enables a more independent future performance of a similar task.

Other early studies of scaffolding reveal similar functions. Greenfield (1984) for example identified five functions of scaffolding: 1) creates support; 2) functions as a tool; 3) expands the range of the learner; 4) allows the learner to complete successfully a task that s/he would not otherwise be able to achieve; and 5) is used selectively to help the learner where needed. Interestingly, only function 1 alludes to the affective element of scaffolding, whilst 2, 3 and 4 relate to the cognitive support, and 5 identifies the contingent nature of the tutor's support, which resonates with Bruner's notion of its temporality. Over the past 20 years researchers working in the field of classroom-based interaction research, particularly in primary education, have further developed and defined the construct. The results of this work have been expressed as criteria by which particular instances of support might be considered scaffolding. In one study Maybin, Mercer and Stierer (1992) presented four criteria, two of which they felt could only be tentatively applied. The first two were: evidence of the teacher's commitment to the learner's achievement, and evidence of the teacher 'tuning in' to the learner's current level of understanding. The two tentative criteria were: evidence that the learner had, with support, achieved a particular task and finally that the learner had achieved a higher level of understanding or competence through better independent performance on a subsequent task. A further study (Mercer & Fisher, 1992) identified three criteria for scaffolding: first, that it should enable learner to accomplish a task they would not have managed alone; second, it should bring learners nearer to a level of competence with which they would, at some future point, be able to complete such a task on their own; and third, that

there is evidence that learners have achieved this higher level of independent competence as a result of the scaffolding. The researchers recognised however that evidence for the third criterion is hard to obtain.

These studies establish considerable elements of concurrence with reference to scaffolding. The dual aims of successful task completion in the face of significant challenge, and the co-construction of new knowledge leading to greater independence in future task performance, are consistent themes. However, the construct in these studies eludes comprehensive definition and still seems too general and imprecise. Of course, the appeal of metaphor is the ideational 'Spielraum' or room for manoeuvre it permits but this can also be a weakness. Stone (1993) criticised the construct as too vaguely defined and in need of precision with regard to identifying the communicative moves that constitute it and their effectiveness.

As it stands there could be an inherent tension between the two overarching aims of scaffolding. If the pursuit of successful task accomplishment involves more support than is needed by the learner, then it is difficult to see how the scaffolding might move the learner closer to a position of self-regulation. It could be difficult to claim the effectiveness of scaffolding if it cannot demonstrate the critical difference between getting the 'right answer' and leaving the child with enhanced conceptual understanding that s/he can apply to similar questions at a future time (Cazden, 1985).

To resolve this tension we need to involve a further concept, the Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD, which I described briefly in the previous section. It is the relationship between these two constructs that gives scaffolding its 'contingency' and gives it validity as a construct for dialogic mediation or talk for learning. Drawing together the ideas from child psychology and classroom interaction research, I can therefore summarise a definition of scaffolding as help which the teacher provides through dialogic interaction with the learner so that s/he is able to complete successfully a task s/he could not manage alone. Critically, this help is both affective and cognitive in orientation, provided within the learner's ZPD and is temporary, contingent and in continuous adjustment. The teacher's aim is always to withdraw support as soon as the learner is able to take over some, or all, of the task independently.

This definition of scaffolding is consistent both with the sociocultural theory of learning that underpins it and the research studies reviewed. However, there are two key things that it does not do. Firstly, it does not specify how the learning is scaffolded i.e. the precise features of the discourse involved. Secondly, it does not outline how the construct can be operationalised in an empirical study with sufficient clarity that the benefits of L2 learning are discernible. For this I turn now to a review of L2 studies of talk for learning within the

sociocultural paradigm that have developed the scaffolding construct in ways that are relevant to my study.

2.3   L2 studies of talk for learning within a sociocultural paradigm

L2 studies of talk for learning within a sociocultural paradigm have sought to show how scaffolding or talk for learning takes place in different instructional settings, including one-to-one tutorials, pair and group work and whole class teacher-fronted instruction. However, most studies have focused either on the context of corrective oral feedback on written work (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Antón & DiCamilla, 1997; DiCamilla & Antón, 1998; Nassaji & Swain, 2000), or peer-peer collaborative dialogue (Donato, 1994; Brooks & Donato, 1994; La Pierre, 1994; Platt & Brooks, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 1999, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2002; Lynch & Maclean, 2001; Alcón Soler, 2002; Storch, 2002; Foster & Ohta, 2005; Smith, 2007; Gánem Gutiérrez, 2008). They have involved predominantly adult learners although a few studies included learners of different ages, above all in the teacher-fronted classroom studies (Ernst, 1994; Verplaetse, 2000; Gibbons, 2003; Michell & Sharpe, 2005; Coyle, 2007; Todhunter, 2007) but also in a few peer-peer collaborative dialogue studies (La Pierre, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2002) and one study of teacher-learner collaborative writing (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000). Here I review the most relevant findings of the key studies of L2 talk for learning, highlighting both the importance of their findings in terms of a more precise definition of scaffolding within L2 learning and the benefits to L2 learning, as well as considering their limitations.

2.3.1 L2 development through scaffolding as corrective feedback

Following the initial study that identified scaffolding in terms of six functions of dialogic assistance provided within mother-child talk during problem-solving activities (Wood et al., 1976), studies within L2 learning have developed the metaphor in several ways. Certain studies have applied the scaffolding metaphor to L2 feedback, further defining its contingent and temporary aspects within the tutor-learner context. One particular study (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994) was ground-breaking in its approach, identifying an implicit – explicit continuum of feedback moves that constituted effective scaffolding to L2 learners within their ZPD and led to L2 learning.

   Previously, studies of L2 feedback had undertaken to categorise feedback as a range of possible responses to unsuccessful oral utterances (whether in form or meaning or both) and

to measure their effectiveness in terms of learner uptake, essentially through learner repetition, of the correction. These feedback moves, identified as implicit or explicit, and conceptualised within the 'input-output' model, could not address in a direct way whether or not feedback of a particular kind led to L2 learning. Studies made their claims based on indirect evidence, whereby it was assumed that 'comprehensible input' resulted in acquisition so that if feedback resulted in evidence that input had been made 'comprehensible' then acquisition could be considered to have taken place (Long, 1996).

The Aljaafreh and Lantolf study (1994) rests on the theory that learning begins intermentally and relies on dialogic mediation. This theoretical perspective allowed learning to be demonstrated in interaction in which a learner required progressively less support to achieve a given task, showing a development from other- to self-regulation. Within this model, successful feedback was measured in terms of its contingency, whereby the aim was always to provide the least possible support needed to the learner to enable successful completion of a given task. Within such a model, there are no particular moves that are better or worse *per se* as effectiveness depends on the individual learner response; successful interaction is a collaborative endeavour. One strength of this innovative study was that learning was demonstrated as it unfolded during mediated interaction in which the scaffolding fulfilled its primary goals of enabling both successful task completion and the progressive 'handing over' of responsibility from expert to novice. A further strength was the way in which the scaffolding was specified as a hierarchy of teacher feedback moves that was not applied a priori but emerged from the data itself.

There are some limitations to the study, however, that provide a motive for further studies of scaffolding within an SCT framework. Firstly, it explored scaffolding as feedback, i.e. as response to unsuccessful L2 use and is therefore only partial in its application of the metaphor; scaffolding can also take place in the absence of learner error or unsuccessful L2 use. Secondly, the context of the study itself was limited in two respects: it was oral feedback on written work and it was a tutorial with one-to-one teacher-learner feedback. Thirdly, learning was demonstrated by the learner's ability to correct with greater independence specific morphosyntactic features within written language rather than showing spontaneous language use in other situations. Fourthly, there was no comparison with other types of feedback to provide a counterpoint to the progress demonstrated within the study. Finally, as is appropriate to the paradigm, the findings of the study, including the regulatory hierarchy of verbal scaffolding, apply only to the specific situation of this study itself and cannot be deemed transferable to other situations, without further studies.

In spite of these limitations, and also because of them, there have been several studies that have since drawn on the study's five levels of regulation, adapted from Wertsch (1985) to measure microgenetic development (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Ohta, 2000; Gánem Gutiérrez, 2008) and the 12-stage hierarchy of implicit to explicit scaffolding (Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Ohta, 2000). Although the length of this review precludes a detailed analysis of these studies, Table 2.1 gives an overview of their design, methodology and main findings. I include in the table only those studies that focused on scaffolding as corrective feedback as I review further SCT studies of L2 talk in the following sections on peer-peer collaborative discourse, meaning-focused interaction and classroom interaction.

Table 2.1: Summary of L2 studies of scaffolding as corrective feedback

Study	Data collection	Analysis	Main Findings	Details
Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) Adults	Audio recording (3 students x 1:1 x session over 8 weeks)	Microgenetic Macrogenetic	Increased self-regulation Subsequent use of target forms correctly – in other situations (written)	12 scale implicit – explicit scaffolding 5 transition levels (Wertsch 1985a)
De Guerrero and Villamil (1994) Adults	Audio/Video recordings (20 x 2 interactions of dyads, 1 month apart)	Microgenesis Revised written essays	Learners benefited from the revision sessions in terms of their correct use of language. Dyad relationships were symmetrical/asymmetrical based on level of individual regulation during each episode Many successful revisions were subsequently incorporated by writers in their re-drafted essays. Longer term data for interlanguage development	Adapted levels of regulation (from Wertsch 1979b)
Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995)	Audio recordings (same data as 1994 study)	Microgenesis	The focus of this study was to account for regression within learners' interlanguage during expert/novice negotiation within the ZPD. The study also reinforces the need for negotiated help to be first as implicit as possible, graduated, contingent and temporary.	12 scale implicit – explicit scaffolding 5 transition levels (Wertsch 1985)
Nassaji and Swain (2000) Adults	Audio recording – 4 x tutorials x 2 students	Microgenetic Macrogenetic Written essays Post-tests	The student who received need-sensitive assistance within ZPD showed greater relative development in terms of the quantity and quality of help required . Post-test measured performance on items for which help was provided during tutorial sessions. Random help was most useful when it was explicit but not as effective as ZPD assistance.	12 scale implicit – explicit scaffolding

In general terms, scaffolding as corrective feedback is shown to provide effective help for L2 learning, leading to increased independence and accuracy in the use of a particular structure. Three of these four studies were one-to-one tutorials in which the role of the teacher or tutor was fundamental in providing 'graduated' feedback that was intentionally the minimum required by the learner at any moment. The fourth study focused on dyadic peer revision sessions (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994). In this study, the researchers found that the expert/novice asymmetry of teacher-learner interactions was replicated in the peer interactions, although the roles were interchangeable within the sessions. I will consider peer scaffolding more fully in the following section of this review and compare it with teacher scaffolding. First I consider how the construct of scaffolding differs from other verbal feedback within mainstream SLA.

As mentioned previously, within the psycholinguistic paradigm it is the process of making language input 'comprehensible' through meaning-focused interaction that leads to acquisition. In its later version the Input Hypothesis (Long, 1996), one of the most prominent theories in mainstream SLA, encompasses a pivotal role for spoken interaction. The response to a breakdown in communication, which includes a comprehension, confirmation check or clarification request (Long, 1980), leads to a reformulation of the original message, known as 'modified output'. This process of 'negotiation for meaning' is theorised to provide a particularly fruitful source of input for L2 learners, as it implicitly draws the learner's attention to form precisely when s/he is involved in making meaning. There have been many studies focused on identifying the ideal context, conditions, tasks and interlocutors for generating 'modified output' through negotiation for meaning (Long, 1985; Pica & Doughty, 1985; Varonis & Gass, 1985; Pica, 1987, 1991, 1994; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Loschky, 1994; Foster; 1998).

As a construct for verbal assistance to the learner, scaffolding differs from 'negotiation for meaning' in important ways. Foster and Ohta (2005) found, by analysing the same dyadic interactions from both cognitive and sociocultural perspectives, that clearly identifiable 'negotiation for meaning' interactions were relatively rare but that learners supported each other's talk much more frequently in the absence of any communicative breakdown using a variety of communicative moves that could count as scaffolding. The theory underlying scaffolding allows it to be much broader in scope for several reasons. Firstly, it can be involved in all communicative situations where the learner is not capable of independent success, not only as a response to a communication problem. Secondly, the dialogic support is provided in response to learner need within his/her ZPD and this implies that a wider range of responses may be appropriate, including more explicit support moves than those implicated

in 'negotiation for meaning'. Re-casts, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation or explicit correction are not precluded from the model of scaffolding. The key determinant for effective feedback is contingency. Finally, proceeding on the basis that *all* learning is social and mediated through dialogue, scaffolding applies to all aspects of L2 learning, both implicit and explicit, procedural and declarative, knowledge. In these key differences we see that, in defining the construct of scaffolding the crucial factor is not whether the target knowledge is implicit or explicit, nor whether the focus is on meaning or form. The effectiveness of the scaffolding is determined by what the talk achieves, as measured jointly by the successful completion of the task in hand and the growth in individual capacities for future participation. This makes scaffolding a vastly different construct from 'negotiation for meaning' and explains why it has developed as a concept and been applied more widely to studies of peer and group collaborative interaction, and to classroom interaction.

I argue that, with their lens focused solely on moments of communication failure, interaction studies within the cognitive paradigm run the risk of capturing only partially the value of dialogic interaction for L2 learning. It is sociocultural studies that are able, through microgenetic analysis of whole interactions, to provide greater insights into the learning benefits of moments of successful L2 collaborative communication. I turn now to a review of L2 studies within a sociocultural framework that have focused on scaffolding more widely as dialogic assistance for L2 learning. I explain the way in which the construct of scaffolding has been extended to include learner-learner assistance, the benefits to L2 learning that these studies identify, and finally outline their limitations as studies of the role of L2 talk for learning within the sociocultural paradigm.

2.3.2 L2 development through scaffolding as peer-peer collaboration

Within sociocultural research, it is in the area of peer and group scaffolding that most studies have been conducted. More than half (nineteen) of the thirty seven studies I review focused on learner-learner interactions, a further two explored the role of private speech, (which might be considered as learner self-directed scaffolding), six were studies involving one-to-one tutor-learner interactions, and ten were based on teacher-fronted whole class interaction. Of these studies, only three focus exclusively on scaffolding as corrective feedback. All of the others, to a greater or lesser extent, focus on scaffolding or talk for learning as the collective co-construction of meaning; dialogic assistance not in response to error but a 'sharing' of knowledge to create successful communication where one individual's attempt would have been partial or unsuccessful. Table 2.2 gives an overview of the distribution of L2 talk for learning studies included in this review:

Table 2.2: Distribution of L2 studies of talk by context and focus of the scaffolding

Learning context	Scaffolding as corrective feedback	Scaffolding as collaborative co-construction
One-to-one Expert/Novice Tutor/Learning	3	3
Teacher-fronted whole class	0	10
Peer-peer (dyadic)	0	16
Peer-peer (group)	0	3
Private speech	0	2

Several studies applied the six functions from the Wood et al. study (1976) to L2 discourse in peer-peer or group interactions (Donato, 1994; Antón, 1999; McCormick & Donato, 2000; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). In addition to their effectiveness in broadening the construct's application to learner-learner interactions, these studies have been instrumental in showing how the metaphor includes dialogic assistance provided in the absence of communicative breakdown, in addition to providing a useful source of corrective feedback. General functions of this assistance, such as encouraging participation, hypothesis-testing and experimentation have been identified in these studies, as well as particular mechanisms such as prompting, repetition, reformulations, questioning and confirmations. The studies have identified how these contribute to L2 use within peer and group interactions, showing that learners collaboratively produce more and better L2 contributions than they would have been capable of producing alone. Table 2.3 gives an overview of 19 L2 studies of learner-learner collaborative discourse, including the age and number of learners, the design and methodology of the study and the main findings.

Table 2.3: L2 studies of peer collaborative talk within a SCT framework

Study	Learners	Data	Analysis	Main findings
Donato (1994)	Adults	Audio recording (1 hour)	Microgenetic Macrogenetic	New language knowledge generated collaboratively and subsequently internalised for future use in individual performance 1 week later. Longer term evidence of language development not available.
De Guerrero and Villamil (1994)	Adults	Audio/Video recordings (20 x 2 interactions of dyads, 1 month apart)	Microgenesis revised written essays	Revision sessions improved learner correct use of language. Flexible symmetrical/asymmetrical roles emerged based on level of individual regulation during each episode. Many successful revisions were subsequently incorporated by writers in their re-drafted essays. Longer term data for interlanguage development not available.
Brooks and Donato (1994)	Secondary age learners	Audio recordings of 8 x dyads x 1 task	Microgenesis	Researchers looked beyond the meaning-focused communication at the meta talk. They identified gains from talking in L1 (partially L2) about the task and the talk.
Platt and Brooks (1994)	Adults and secondary age learners	Audio recording (3 dyad extracts)	Microgenetic	Article argues for a broader conceptualisation of what interactional talk achieves between learners when completing problem-solving tasks - little focus on their use of language though
LaPierre (1994)	Middle school learners	Audio recording	Microgenetic (LREs) Post-test	80% of the correct solutions negotiated during LREs were reproduced by individuals in the post-tests
Ohta (1995)	Adults	Audio recording 1 x 100 min session	Microgenetic	The interaction opportunities within teacher-fronted and learner-learner discourse are explored. Greater opportunities for learning in peer discourse observed. Effective scaffolding within learners' ZPD creative an environment conducive to learning.
DiCamilla and Antón (1997)	Adults	Audio recording 3 x 5 dyadic sessions	Audio recording 3 x 5 dyadic sessions	Focused on the role of repetition within the scaffolded discourse. Role of repetition helped learners to 'hold on' to what they were creating collaboratively.
Antón and DiCamilla (1998)	Adults	Audio recording 3 x 5 dyadic sessions	Audio recording 3 x 5 dyadic sessions	Focused on the use of L1 to enable reflection on L2 forms in meaning-focused written task. L1 used to construct mutual scaffolding establish intersubjectivity and in moments of private speed (attempts at self-regulation).
Swain and Lapkin (1998)	Middle school learners	Audio recording	Microgenetic (pre and post test element)	New knowledge about language and greater control over existing language resources resulted in improved performance.
Ohta (1999)	Adults	Audio recording (14 hours – 4 different teachers) Observation	Microgenetic Macrogenetic (1 student case study – Candace)	Teacher-fronted discourse confirmed dominance of IRF and lack of access to 1st and 3rd turn for learners. Peripheral participation in 3rd turn teacher alignment moves surfaced in learner-learner interactions as evidence of increasingly independent and active participation in one particular interactional routine.

Study	Participants	Data Collection	Analysis	Findings
De Guerrero and Villamil (2000)	Adults	Audio recording (1 x peer revision session)	Microgenetic Written essays	Both learners gained from the interaction. Improvements made during the revision session were subsequently included by the writer in his revised writing.
Ohta (2000)	Adults	Video and audio recording – 1 x lesson	Microgenetic	Through a grammar translation, interview and reporting tasks, one learner's IL developed through scaffolded peer assistance.
Lynch and Maclean (2001)	Adults	Audio recording (6 x consecutive interactions on same poster)	Microgenetic	Gains were noticed in successive performances in terms of phonology, syntax and lexis following spontaneous questions that followed each presentation round.
Swain and Lapkin (2002)	Secondary school age learners	Audio recording (jigsaw task, discussions and interviews)	Microgenetic pre-test and post-test (draft and redrafts of story)	Collaborative dialogue about a reformulation of a written story leads to noticing and reflection on language form and meaning.
Storch (2002)	Adults	Audio recording (3 task types 10 dyads over 1 semester)	Microgenetic	Outcomes of dyadic interaction on L2 independent performance showed that the collaborative and expert/novice interactions provided more examples of transfer of L2 knowledge and fewer 'missed opportunities'.
Alcón Soler (2002)	Adults	Audio recording Pre and post-tests	Microgenetic Quantitative – descriptive analysis of discourse moves pre-post test	Mediational strategies differed in teacher-led and peer-peer interaction but no statistically significant difference in measures of pragmatic competence in making requests observed. Final dialogues revealed qualitative differences between the 2 groups however.
Foster & Ohta (2005)	Adults	Video recording (2 x classes in dyadic tasks)	Descriptive Quantitative (incidence of negotiation for meaning) Microgenetic (for peer assistance)	There were very few examples of NfM, but lots of occasions where learners encouraged, supported and built on each others' utterances in the absence of communicative breakdown.
Smith (2007)	Bi-lingual school children	Video recording	Microgenetic	As the children played specially designed board games in small groups, there were several instances of private speech within the group talk. A microgenetic analysis of the talk revealed that some utterances had both an intermental and intramental function.
Gánem Gutiérrez (2008)	Adults	Audio recording (5h 20)	Microgenetic	The study highlights moments of microgenetic development in vocabulary, spelling, morphology and syntax arising in collaborative dyadic interaction during three different tasks.

My analysis of these L2 studies highlighted limitations as well as benefits of peer-peer scaffolding. The question arises as to whether the dialogic support that learners lend each other is as 'graduated' and 'contingent' as that provided by a teacher. Learners can and do scaffold each other's language use and facilitate L2 learning as a result. However, younger and older learners may not always be consistently adept at orientating to each other's ZPDs and opportunities for learning may be missed (LaPierre, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; 2002; Storch, 2002; Smith, 2007), although this is also possible within teacher-learner interactions (Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995). Nor are learners always able or willing to take up the scaffolds that are provided (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994).

There is also some evidence that learners can scaffold incorrect solutions for each other (LaPierre, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2002). It is also clear that not all peer-peer relationships are the same. Certain dyadic relationships are much more conducive to establishing effective dialogic support than others (Storch, 2002) and it is not always possible to determine appropriate pairings. Finally, there are a number of studies that indicate the benefits of L1 talk for L2 learning (Brooks & Donato, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Antón & DiCamilla, 1997; DiCamilla & Antón, 1998). Younger, less proficient learners may tend to use the L1 to gain control over the task itself and to regulate their own thinking in relationship to the task and the talk itself.

Whilst L1 use in such situations is natural and evidence of cognitive development in its own right (Brooks & Donato, 1994), it may not be the optimum use of the scant opportunities for L2 interaction within the classroom, given the goal of instructed FL teaching in secondary classrooms, which is to enable learners to understand and use the foreign language for making meaning independently and effectively. Even with adult learners there are signs that, although some 'off-task' talk can be highly constructive and lead to L2 learning, this is not always the case, particularly for less able learners (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994). Table 2.4 summarises the benefits and potential limitations of peer-peer scaffolding identified within these L2 studies:

Table 2.4: Benefits and limitations of peer-peer scaffolding for L2 learning

Benefits of peer-peer scaffolding	Limitations of peer-peer scaffolding
Offers appropriate affective support	Can be inconsistent and does not include an overt commitment to learner success
Includes a range of implicit and explicit communicative mechanisms for support	May not be 'fine-tuned' to learners' ZPDs

Cognitive support mainly leads to successful task completion	Cognitive support may fossilize errors or lead to task abandonment or regression
Improvements in language use (including vocabulary, spelling, syntax and morphology)	Can lead to the appropriation of errors
Collaborative language use can become independent language use	
L1 talk facilitates L2 learning	L1 talk may reduce the opportunities for L2 interaction necessary for progress within instructed L2 settings
Talk about the talk (metalinguistic) or about the task (metacognitive) can also benefit L2 learning	Talk about the talk or task may lead to gains in conceptual knowledge but decrease the time available for meaning-focused interaction

The L2 studies of peer-peer dialogic interaction reviewed above have helped to clarify the purpose and effectiveness of the construct of scaffolding in explaining the nature of the verbal assistance that L2 learners make available to each other. They underline the integrated nature of this dialogic activity, which can be less overt in one-to-one teacher-learner interactions.

In the SCT studies of L2 one-to-one tutorials and learner-learner interactions, scaffolding as dialogue for learning is seen to benefit learners and lead to gains in L2 use. However, I have identified some limitations with these studies and I re-iterate these briefly here. Firstly the construct of scaffolding, whilst it functions effectively as corrective feedback, need not be confined to moments of unsuccessful communication as it is in the 'tutorial' studies. Secondly, peer-peer interactions lack the expertise of the teacher, which I argue has potential limitations for the effectiveness of scaffolding for L2 learning as identified above. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the learning 'scaffolded' in these interactions is largely grammatical knowledge and the interactions are overwhelmingly form-focused in orientation. Of the 37 SCT studies of L2 talk included in this review, less than one third focus on meaning-oriented interaction. Of those, apart from the classroom-based studies of scaffolding, which I review in a subsequent section, there are two studies that offer particular insights into the learning opportunities afforded in L2 communicative activity. I review these studies in the following section.

2.3.3 L2 development through meaning-focused interaction

Van Compernolle's recent study (2010) focused on a 35-minute speaking test between a teacher and adult student in French (Van Compernolle, 2010). Over the course of the OPI (oral proficiency interview) van Compernolle traces the microgenetic development in the

learner's use of the idiomatic structure 't'aimes pas', initially misunderstood and a locus of communicative difficulty. Later in the same interview the same structure is understood and later still responded to without hesitancy. Finally, the student uses the first person equivalent of the new form 'j'aime pas' in his spontaneous speech. This study is particularly significant because it is spontaneous teacher-learner interaction that leads to improved L2 use rather than talk about language use as in the previous studies. Although this conversation was conducted as part of a formal assessment, it is the sort of interaction that could occur in communicative language classrooms. As the learning occurs within a single interaction, it is not possible to make claims about macrogenetic L2 development but it is a clear indication of the cognitive function of intermental talk and supports the claim that social talk has same mediational function as conceptual talk. As Wells (1999) argues, 'by contributing to the joint meaning making with and for others, one also makes meaning for oneself, and in the process, extends one's own understanding' (1999, p.108).

Nassaji and Cumming's (2000) longitudinal study over 10 months of the journal communications between a six-year old ESL learner and his teacher focused on scaffolding within the ZPD of interaction, whose primary goal was communication rather than specific language forms. This study highlights how Ali, the learner, appropriates some language functions (e.g. questioning) that emerge in his written output over time. Aspects of the teacher's language that constitute scaffolding are her use of whole sentences as well as her short summaries of the previous turn to model language and make it available to Ali for future use. In addition there is the teacher's use of questions to promote higher levels of language use, which are graded, initially requiring only 'yes/no' responses and later requesting clarifications, further details and reasons. Finally, the teacher's re-use of Ali's language builds up the sense of shared purpose and gives value to his words by repeating and recycling them, incorporating them into the shared discourse.

This study is, like the previous study of oral interaction, of particular significance, since the authors suggest that the learner appropriates features of the language through the teacher scaffolding of their journal-based dialogic interactions. These are the only empirical studies I am aware of that make meaning-focused interaction the focus of both learning within the ZPD and its claims to demonstrate L2 development. As 'exploratory and paradigmatic' (Nassaji & Cumming 2000, p.116) as their findings may be, they indicate nevertheless that within educational discourse between expert and novice there is the opportunity for learners to internalise not only linguistic forms but other functional, pragmatic and social aspects of language knowledge.

These two studies are important. Even within other studies that feature meaning-focused interaction, researchers base their claims for L2 development most frequently on the metalinguistic feedback or incidental focus-on-form episodes that take place during task-based interactions. Figure 2.1 shows the interactional matrix of the 37 empirical studies of L2 talk within a SCT framework reviewed here:

Figure 2.1: Interactional matrix of SCT studies of L2 talk for learning

	Meaning-focused interaction L2 as tool	Form-focused interaction L2 as object (using L1)	Form-focused interaction L2 as object (using L2)
1:1 Expert-to-novice / Tutor-learner	Nassaji and Cumming (2000) Output = written	Adair-Hauck and Donato (1994) Output = oral	Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994, 1995) Output = written Nassaji and Swain (2000) Output = written
Teacher-fronted whole class	Ernst (1994) Output = oral Verplaetse (2000) ESL Science Gibbons (2003) ESL Science Michell and Sharpe (2005) ESL (Y7 Maths and English lessons) Todhunter (2007) Output = oral Coyle (2007) Output = oral	Antón (1999) Output = oral Consolo (2000) Output = oral	McCormick and Donato (2000) Output = oral Toth (2011) Output = oral Alcón Soler (2002) Output = oral
Peer-peer (dyadic interaction)	Ohta (1995,1999) Output = oral Storch (2002) Output = oral Foster and Ohta (2005) Output = oral	De Guerrero and Villamil (1994, 2000) Output = written Antón and DiCamilla 1997) Output = written DiCamilla and Antón (1998) Output = written Brooks and Donato (1994) Output = oral	Platt and Brooks (1994) Output = oral La Pierre (1994) Output = written Swain and Lapkin (1998, 2002) Output = written Ohta (2000) Output = oral Gánem Gutiérrez (2008) Output = oral
Peer-peer (group work)	Lynch and Maclean (2001) Output = oral Smith (2007) Output = oral	Donato (1994) Output = oral	
Private speech (Learner self-directed speech as scaffolding)	Appel and Lantolf (1994) Output = oral		Lantolf and Yañez-Prieto (2003) Output = oral

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the relevant literature on interaction within F/SLA research from a sociocultural perspective. I have drawn on both theoretical writing and empirical studies to define in detail the key constructs within SCT and their role in explaining the role of talk in L2 learning. In particular I concentrated on 'scaffolding' and demonstrated the breadth of this construct in comparison to other forms of verbal feedback within mainstream SLA studies. In a detailed analysis of the L2 studies of talk conducted within an SCT paradigm, I then highlighted particular aspects that are under-represented in the research to date, most notably meaning-focused interaction.

I return to the issue of meaning-focused L2 classroom interaction in section 3.2 of the following review chapter, which examines spontaneous talk. First however, in the second

chapter of this literature review, I address another key focus of my study, classroom interaction. The SCT L2 studies of talk for learning are almost exclusively adult learners, university learners, and almost always of English. The classes usually have fewer than 10 students and as such resemble small groups rather than classes and, as we have seen, the focus is predominantly on one-to-one, pair or small group interaction. The findings of such studies, although interesting and important, will not resonate with a majority of language teaching practitioners, all of whose teaching is conducted with an average class of 30 or more learners, where the most frequent mode of classroom organisation is whole class teacher-fronted activity. I need therefore to turn to research studies that address the L2 development opportunities that may be facilitated or inhibited through classroom discourse as it might realistically occur within a modern foreign language classroom of 30 or more pupils in a secondary school.

Chapter 3: Literature Review (2)

3.1 Classroom interaction and classroom discourse

Extensive research in classroom interaction has shown that learner participation is inhibited by the dominant pattern of classroom discourse (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988). This pattern of discourse has been identified and defined most notably as the IRE/F pattern of teacher initiation – pupil response – teacher evaluation/feedback (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988, 2001) or triadic dialogue (Lemke, 1985). It has been shown to account for more than 70% of all classroom discourse (Mehan, 1979). Cazden (1988) refers to the IRE/F exchange as the "default' pattern - what happens unless deliberate action is taken to achieve some alternative' (Cazden, 1988, p.53). In this work Cazden reviews research findings which demonstrate that deviations from the IRE/F pattern of discourse are rare and fleeting. Instances of pupil self-initiation, spontaneity, conversational-type discussion, symmetrical interactions, pupil-pupil exchanges are unusual occurrences and yet seem to yield most in terms of level of pupil engagement and exploratory talk giving rise to real thinking (Cazden, 1988). The detrimental nature of such strongly asymmetrical discourse as instantiated in the IRE/F pattern of interaction is clear if we are working from a sociocultural perspective of learning, creating, as Wood (1992) notes, 'a powerful barrier to the achievement of interactions in which children display initiative, curiosity or negotiation' (1992, p.207).

There has been much work done, particularly through collaborative action research projects in primary education, to increase pupil participation and develop pupil talk for learning: for example, The National Oracy Project. In FL/SLA research there have been some calls for work in this area. As Kramsch (1987) maintains, it is 'only by broadening their discourse options in the classroom that learners can stop being foreign-language consumers and become the active architects of interpersonal and cultural understanding' (1987, p.28). I first examine the IRE/F and relate it to classroom interaction research in general, then F/SLA research more specifically.

3.1.1 Initiation – Response – Evaluation/Feedback

As stated above, classroom talk is predominantly teacher talk (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988, 2001; Alexander, 2006) and the majority of this talk orients to a 3-part sequence comprising an initial teacher question (usually closed) that implicates a (usually brief) learner response, which is followed by the teacher's indication as to the suitability (or otherwise) of the response. Studies in F/SLA research in teacher-learner interaction in whole class teaching confirm the findings in the broader field of classroom interaction with regard to the

dominance of the IRE/F pattern of discourse. Furthermore, several L2 studies underline the negative effects on levels of learner participation observed in teaching dominated by teacher talk following an IRE/F pattern (Consolo, 2000; Lin, 2000; Mantero, 2002a). I review these studies subsequently in more detail, but it is important not to apply too simplistic a typology to the discourse pattern that accounts for so much classroom discourse (Lee, 2007) and I focus initially on a closer analysis of the IRE/F.

3.1.2 The Evaluation/Feedback move or third turn

Several studies focusing on the teacher third turn have found that it can include a much wider variety of functions than the term 'evaluation' (or even 'feedback' as it is also sometimes referred to) indicates. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods and looking at a large corpus of data taken from an earlier Action Research project involving the video taping of science, English and some history lessons, Nassaji and Wells (2000) found that the nature of the third turn in triadic dialogue was crucial to either restricting or stimulating pupil involvement in the discourse. Specifically, they found that third moves in which the teacher evaluates the previous learner utterance suppress student participation in the talk but those which ask for further clarification encourage further participation, extending the talk.

   Hall and Walsh (2002) refer to a study of a Spanish foreign language class where Hall found that subtle changes by the teacher to the third part of the triadic dialogue could create significantly different language learning environments. Specifically, more opportunities for greater student participation came when the teacher used follow-up questions to extend the communication or gave students the opportunity to initiate. She found that third moves which were limited to a teacher evaluation curtailed pupil participation. Similarly Waring (2008) found that third moves that are positive evaluations serve to close interactive sequences and discourage any further learner participation, comments or questions.

   Continuing to explore variations in the third turn, Haneda (2005) suggests a continuum with IRE (monologic) at one extreme and IRF (dialogic) at the other. The 'F' for Follow Up or Feedback is shown to be very varied in the forms it can take (comment, reformulation, request for elaboration, request for explanation etc.). In this study Haneda focuses on the criticism of triadic dialogue as limiting participation but seems to conceptualise this solely in terms of students' willingness to answer. She cites several studies including her own where students continue to show high participation levels despite frequent, even negative, teacher evaluations of their answers. For me this represents only one aspect of the difficulty with triadic dialogue, however. Further limitations not addressed within this study are the

curtailing of communicative opportunities dictated by short responses and the lack of variety of discursive roles implicit in the learner as respondent.

I have not found in the literature studies in which teachers set out purposefully to increase the relative levels of learner talk in whole class interaction, whether by intentionally subverting the IRE/F sequence or by other strategies. However, several studies of whole class interaction did reveal aspects of teacher behaviour and teacher talk that seem to stimulate higher levels of learner participation in whole class discourse. For example, Cullen (2002) posits two main features of the third move in the IRE/F sequence: evaluative or discoursal. Discoursal feedback focuses on content and aims to prolong the talk with learners. Cullen identifies several strategies that one teacher uses in discoursal feedback - reformulations, elaborations, comments and repetitions (of various kinds including echoic) and identifies a general quality of 'responsiveness' which he describes as two-fold in nature: firstly, it is the teacher's genuine interest and enthusiasm which encourages the continuation of interaction and secondly, it is the teacher's moment-by-moment reactivity to the learners' level of linguistic competence that enables the right decisions about what to say in response to their initiations (Jarvis & Robinson, 1997).

In a further study, Verplaetse (2000) looks at three different teachers and analyses their interaction in terms of the elicitation, response and feedback moves which constitute them. Elicitations are divided into initiation and scaffolded. Scaffolded initiations are defined as those interactive moves by the teacher which either prolong interactions already satisfactorily concluded or those that repair faulty or incomplete pupil answers. The teacher who is viewed as promoting the highest levels of pupil interaction uses more scaffolded elicitations than the other two teachers and more open-ended scaffolds. His questioning strategy is characterised by a sort of 'wondering out loud' and he makes display questions (known answer questions) appear as referential questions. In terms of feedback acts, this teacher displayed a higher frequency of acceptance acts (repetitions, back-channels, paraphrasing) and often feedback moves were without evaluation. The researcher focused in particular on the interaction levels of LEP pupils (limited English proficiency) within the class as they typically had very low levels of whole class participation. In this respect, the teacher does two things to boost the interaction levels of these pupils: firstly, he calls on them to answer every time they volunteer and secondly, he drafts them to answer only when he already knows that they know the answer.

In this section, I have focused on the studies of classroom interaction that have specifically focused on the teacher's third turn. Whilst some possibilities for modifying the E- or F-move and thereby extending the discourse have been identified (Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Cullen,

2002; Hall & Verplaetse, 2000) its limitations are also well-researched (Hall, 1995, 2007; Consolo, 2000; Lin, 2000; Mantero, 2002; Waring, 2008, 2009; Rivera, 2010), whilst making changes to the default pattern is difficult (Myhill, Jones & Hopper, 2006).

Furthermore, as I point out in the introduction to this chapter, language learning is to be seen when learners are operating within their ZPD. IRE/F interactions which limit the learner to one turn which is then closed down with a brief teacher evaluation are unlikely to be compatible with the ZPD, in which interactions would typically involve several turns as the teacher assists the learner in the formulation of a given utterance, providing help that is responsive to and contingent upon the level of expertise demonstrated at each turn by the learner. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) confirm that there is 'very little about the IRE sequence that would structurally support creative and developmental progress in areas other than those of formal accuracy and mimicry of prescriptive norms of form and style' (2006, p.275).

It is difficult to consider the IRE/F for too long without examining the role of teacher questioning in more detail and it to this that I now turn.

3.1.3 Questioning

Teacher talk has been widely researched, and teacher questioning particularly thoroughly investigated (Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1994). Questioning plays a dominant role in classroom discourse (Wood, 1998; Tsui, 1995), with Wood finding that in two studies 'the frequency of teachers' questions as a proportion of all their utterances was 47 per cent and 43 per cent respectively' (Wood, 1998, p.174). Research into the types of teacher questions has distinguished between display ('known answer', recall or test) and referential, and between closed and open questions. Closed questions are implicated in brief, even monosyllabic responses (Kerry, 1982) that may discourage the participation of learners (Lynch, 1996); whilst open, referential questions are credited with generating longer, more elaborated responses (Tsui, 1995). Closed questions are asked more often than open questions (Ellis, 1994; Wood 1998) and display questions far outnumber referential questions (Brock, 1986; Shomoossi, 2004).

Display questions typify the first move in the IRE/F sequence and yet Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur and Predergast (1997) in a large pre-test/post-test study demonstrated that authentic questions, those that are open-ended and may have alternative equally valid answers, led to higher levels of learning and successful understanding (Nystrand et al., 1997). The vast majority of studies of teacher questioning support the view that display or 'known answer' questions constrain the opportunities for negotiated interaction, learner output and language

learning, and that referential questions are to be preferred (Brock, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983; Cullen, 1998; Nunn, 1999; Lynch, 1991, Pica & Long, 1986; Ernst, 1994; Tan, 2007).

From a sociocultural perspective, the value of particular questions is determined by their mediational quality; that is, their ability to assist and lead learning (van Lier, 1988). Answering the call to analyse the practice of questioning not in terms of simple dichotomies of type but rather in terms of the overall quality of learning opportunities afforded by the interactions (van Lier, 1988), Lee (2006) seeks to reconceptualise display questions in terms of the instructional work they do as talk-in-interaction within the L2 classroom setting. Citing previous research studies into teacher questions as process-product in orientation, the researcher gives several examples of analysed talk in which display questions are suggested to accomplish far more than simply eliciting known information. Missing from this analysis are examples of display questions that elicit longer, unpredictable responses from learners. Nor are there instances where interactions involving display questions generate learner initiations, questions or other voluntary participations. Absent too from the discourse are longer exchanges with one student over several turns; the established practice seeming to prefer a broad 'questioning to all' rather than a deep 'questioning to one' approach as confirmed elsewhere in the literature (Myhill et al., 2006).

Overall, the interactive impetus resides so conclusively with the teacher that the learner role is (at its most active) still only to interpret the communicative purpose of the teacher's question and how to respond to it appropriately.

3.1.4 Teacher-learner discourse roles

Within the dominant psycholinguistic models of SLA the native and non-native speaker identities are all-pervasive. Reacting against what is perceived to be an artificial, mechanistic approach that minimises or ignores the social context entirely, Firth and Wagner (1997) called for a more 'emic' or learner-centred approach that would broaden the basis for enquiry and guard against the perception of the 'FL speaker as a deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 competence, striving to reach the "target" competence of an idealized NS' (1997, p.285).

The power differential within the teacher and learner roles mirrors the linguistic inequality of the NS and NSS identities but is compounded by the additional weight of the instructional setting, and this impedes active participation. With the IRE/F structure in place as the logical interactional sequence for instruction, teachers are seen to play all the interactional roles and deploy almost all of the verbal functions (Rivera, 2010); to manage topics (Nathan & Kim, 2007); to initiate repair and to ask questions (Wood, 1998). As a consequence, learners are

limited to responding to the teacher's initiations (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982) and their answers are 'generally brief (one or two words), composed of mere repetitions, and little elaboration' (Ernst, 1994, p.314).

Responding to the call from Firth and Wagner (1997), and in line with sociocultural (van Lier, 1996; Kinginger, 2002), sociohistorical (Hall, 1995) and sociolinguistic (Yule & Tarone, 1991; Tarone, 2008) approaches within SLA, work has been done to take account of participant roles within the classroom discourse, and in addition, to examine the relationship between teacher and learner identities; discourse roles and the moment-by-moment participation of both teachers and learners in classroom oral interaction, with the purpose of making more informed judgements about the conditions for classroom interaction that are most conducive to L2 learning (Antón, 1999; Toohey, Waterstone & Julé-Lemke, 2000; Verplaetse, 2000; Gil, 2002). I now review a few of the most salient of these studies.

3.1.5 SCT-based studies of teacher-learner interaction in whole class teaching

These studies vary greatly in emphasis and specific focus but share the goal of illuminating the role of teacher-learner interaction in L2 development from a sociocultural perspective. I examine here studies, which underline the findings of classroom interaction research discussed in the previous section, that teacher-dominance inhibits learner participation and learning. For example, Mantero's study (2002) of classroom dialogue in a Spanish literature course describes 75% IRE/F discourse with many instances of the teacher asking and answering her own questions, as well as additional 'teacher monologue' that gives explanations but discourages interaction. The same study found no instances of student-initiated talk or student-student communication.

Lin (2000), in a rather different study of Cantonese learners of English, highlights a scenario in which pupils attempt to regain some control over the language within the classroom through subversive, often disruptive interruptions in a mixture of L2 and L1. Lin observes that learners alienated such a way are unlikely to engage positively with the language.

In one further example, Consolo (2000) examines the classroom interaction of nine teachers and adult learners of English as a foreign language in Brazil. Despite relatively high levels of talk, the pattern of interaction is almost exclusively IRE/F and student initiations are very occasional. The researcher noticed however that there seemed to be higher levels of interaction in the lessons of one particular teacher and highlighted features of the teacher role

which might account for this: the teacher solicits students' verbal contributions intensely and gives importance to them; she departs from her lesson agenda to develop the topics being discussed according to the students' opinions. Consolo also notes the humour created and fostered by the teacher and a learning atmosphere in which students feel able to disagree with the teacher and express their own views. Such engagement presupposes the taking up of active roles in interaction by the students, as for example, the initiation and finishing of exchanges, as well as having some sort of topic control (Consolo, 2000, p.105).

A further study that points up the potential significance of student initiations in the L2 for language learning and uptake from other students within the interaction is Slimani's study of classroom oral interaction (Slimani, 1989). In summary, the author notes that 'though the discourse initiation appears to be predominantly in the hands of the teacher, it looks as if, given the chance, the informants benefit more from topics initiated by the learners (1989, p.227).

So far in this review of SCT-based studies of teacher-led classroom interaction, I have highlighted the ways in which classroom discourse constrains a learner's dialogic participation. As I have demonstrated, spontaneous initiations, learner questions and extended contributions are rare, both in classrooms in general, and within L2 classrooms in particular. In section 2.3.4 of the previous chapter I explored the factors that may explain why there is a preference for form-focused interaction in SCT-based L2 research and established theoretical support for a study of meaning-focused talk. In this section I have described the conditions that militate against L2 conversational discourse within classrooms. In the final section of my literature review, I present the theoretical and pedagogical case for spontaneous L2 talk, reviewing briefly mainstream SLA perspectives and proceeding to examine spontaneous talk from an SCT perspective. I define conversational discourse within the literature more broadly, and include further implications for the present study.

3.2 Spontaneous or unplanned talk within mainstream SLA

Spontaneous talk has the following features: it is not planned nor controlled nor restricted in form (in the sense of a grammar drill); it is communicative and meaning-focused, and responsive to other interlocutors. Spontaneous language use represents unconscious, unanalysed language (Ellis, 2006) in which learners are not able to focus on form, that is, unable to access their explicit knowledge. (Kadia, 1988). It is widely considered to be the most reliable way to measure implicit L2 knowledge (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

3.2.1 Spontaneous or unplanned talk within SCT

Within SCT the importance of dialogic interaction and its relationship to learning in general has been described in a previous section of this review, but the implications for the role of spontaneous L2 talk within classroom language learning need further analysis. Talk in L1 about L2, mediated through teacher-led feedback (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Ohta, 2000) or peer-peer collaborative dialogue (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2001; Myers, 2000) has been shown to lead to L2 development, but there is relatively little research focusing on L2 learning through meaning-focused communication (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000; Takahashi, Austin & Morimoto, 2000; van Compernolle, 2010). The specific role for spontaneous L2 talk within instructed SLA must therefore proceed as hypothesis from SCT itself. I present a central role for spontaneous oral classroom interaction in L2 learning based on 3 fundamental aspects of SCT: the distinction between 'scientific' and 'spontaneous' knowledge; the central role of dialogic interaction in all learning and the concept of internalisation.

For Vygotsky, instruction must move ahead of development and should not merely confirm what is known:

> Instruction is only useful when it moves ahead of development. When it does, it impels or wakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation lying in the zone of proximal development...Instruction would be completely unnecessary if it merely utilized what had already matured in the developmental process, if it were not itself a source of development. (1987, p.212)

As far as language learning is concerned, we should understand under 'whole series of functions' all that pertains to linguistic (implicit and explicit), communicative and interactional L2 competences. Whilst Vygotsky was clear that the primary goal of instruction was 'scientific' or explicit conceptual knowledge, he was unequivocal in his requirement that conceptual knowledge, if it is to be functional in its richest sense, must be connected to concrete communicative (spoken and written) activity, the site of 'spontaneous' knowledge (Lantolf & Johnson, 2007; Lantolf, 2008). If a language learner is going to achieve sufficient independent control of his/her explicit knowledge so that it can be available for meaningful communication, guided spontaneous talk offers the ideal context for *praxis.*

At the same time, meaning-focused spontaneous talk constructed with an 'expert' other produces language forms, language functions and language use that are available for appropriation, over time, by both the individual learner-interlocutor and the other learners in the class. In Vygotsky's unified and dialectical theory of learning, there is no need to separate learning from acquisition (Dunn & Lantolf, 1998). Participation is a metaphor for learning and engagement in teacher-led spontaneous interaction envisions future levels of self-regulated, independent participation. Errors and approximations are part of the process of

acculturation and initiation into a body of successful L2 practice. Contingent feedback, responsive to learner need as displayed in the talk as it unfolds, guides the learner to say more than s/he is able to produce independently (Ohta, 2001) and leads him/her to internalise new L2 language and move from other-regulation towards self-regulation: 'Speaking is the exercise of control of objects, of others, and of self' (Frawley & Lantolf, 1995, p.42).

Finally, spontaneous L2 talk posits a more equal distribution of responsibilities for initiation, topic management and organisation and questions and offers the learner the opportunity to learn aspects of the 'how' and well as the 'what' of L2 communication, that is, to develop his/her interactional competence.

3.2.2 Spontaneous talk in instructional settings: learner initiations

A classroom is acquisition-rich when learners have the chance to control the discourse (van Lier, 1988). High input generators (Seliger, 1977) generate more learning opportunities for themselves (Rivers, 1987). However, as has already been identified, there is a significant gap between theory and classroom practice. Teachers themselves do not, exclusively or even predominantly, use the target language or L2 in their teaching (Duff & Polio, 1990; Kim & Elder, 2005). The propositional case for high levels of spontaneous meaning-focused L2 learner use (Nohara, 1999), whether to enable learners to follow up on new words and use them in meaningful contexts (Pica et al., 1996); to promote greater fluency (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005); to enhance their communicative confidence and skill (Rivers, 1972, 1973); to establish form-meaning mappings (van den Branden, 2006) or to integrate listening and speaking into real communicative activity (Pawlak, 2000; Roebuck & Wagner, 2004) is similarly confounded. Studies are inconclusive about instruction's impact on spontaneous language use and views are divided, with some advocates of a more naturalistic approach (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Neil, 1997; Breen, 2001; Norman, 1996; Ernst, 1994) and others in favour of more controlled practice (Brumfit, 1980; Widdowson, 1984). Finally, spontaneous interaction is difficult to achieve in the classroom, even if the teacher seeks to promote it (Todhunter, 2007; Myhill, 2006). Employing the IRE/F discourse routine it is very easy to avoid 'ceding the floor' to learner contributions, whether because they are a perceived threat to the instructional goal (Yoshida, 2007) or an unwanted distraction from curriculum coverage (Bunno, 2005).

3.2.3 Conversation

Spontaneity characterises the specific form of oral interaction known as conversation. I turn

now to a brief review of the literature relating to conversation within SLA research. In light of the focus of my study, I provide as a useful starting point a list contrasting some of the main features of conversation and the IRE/F discourse sequence:

Table 3.1:   Features of conversation and IRE/F discourse structures

Conversation	*IRE/F*
social	instructional
unrestricted	controlled
meaning-focused	form-focused
spontaneous	recitative
responsive/contingent	evaluative
symmetrical	asymmetrical
open/referential questions	closed/display questions
learners or teacher initiate	teacher initiates – learners respond
topics and turns collectively managed	teacher nominates topics/manages turns

It would not be unreasonable to assume that the importance of conversation for L2 learning were simply an extension of the theoretical positions on spontaneous L2 talk. However, there are notable, unresolved disagreements amongst researchers about the value of conversation relative to other interaction tasks. On the one hand, some researchers subscribing to the Interaction Hypothesis perceive conversation inferior to other modes of oral interaction, such as information gap or problem-solving tasks, on the basis that they may not provide as many opportunities for negotiation or modified output. Long (1996) is robustly critical: '... the role of free conversation is notoriously poor as a context for driving interlanguage development ... in contrast, tasks that orient participants to shared goals and involve them in some work or activity produce more negotiation work ...' (1996, p.148).

There have been some studies undertaken that indicate that this might be the case (Nassaji, 2007). However, there is other empirical work that suggests that the interactional opportunities afforded in free conversation are considerable; for example, sustained listening and greater attention to the discourse as a whole, rather than listening out for specific, lexical items within a typical information gap activity (van Lier & Matsuo, 2000; Nakahama, Tyler & van Lier, 2001). The advantages to the learner of extended listening within conversational discourse are noted elsewhere in the literature too (Roebuck & Wagner, 2004; Crichton, 2009).

Seedhouse (1996) makes a convincing case that the instructional goal of all L2 teaching and the social goal of conversation are irreconcilable. Defending the IRE/F as the most

appropriate and natural discourse structure for instruction, he can only foresee conversation occurring in the classroom when the lesson, that is the instructional focus of the lesson, is suspended. This particular observation is borne out in Todhunter's (2007) study, where spontaneous conversational exchanges emerge at the beginning, end and at transitional moments between lesson activities, although other researchers argue that instructional and social goals can be effectively, although not without considerable effort, aligned within one discourse (Kumaravadivelu, 1993; van Lier, 1996; Gil, 2002; Mantero, 2002; Richards, 2006; Nguyen, 2007).

Van Lier, whilst recognising all the factors that militate against symmetry and contingency in the classroom, urges teachers to aim for 'interactional authenticity' (van Lier, 1996, p.143). Kinginger (1994), applying a van Lier coding scheme to determine levels of learner initiation across 4 different pair/group task types, found that as structural constraints decrease the level of learner initiative increases, and interaction approximating conversation emerges (Kinginger, 1994). Seedhouse (2004) himself qualifies his own position, stating that when the instructional goal is meaning-fluency related then learners can exhibit more control over turn-taking and topic nomination. I agree with Seedhouse (2004) that the pedagogical goal and form of interaction have a reflexive relationship, but I argue that if the pedagogical goal is to develop communicative competence, as indeed it is within the secondary school system in England, then conversation as discourse type is correspondingly fit for purpose. Furthermore, I maintain that it might be possible for classroom discourse to be characterised by a greater number of learner initiations, questions and comments.

3.3   Conversation and/or dialogue

Having drawn the distinction between conversation and the IRE/F it is important to discuss briefly the relationship between the concept of 'conversation' that I develop here to describe the L2 classroom talk examined in this thesis and that of 'dialogue' as used in the substantial body of research on classroom talk and 'dialogic teaching' (Alexander, 2004; Scott, 2008; Alexander, 2006; Alexander, 2008). Framed within Vygotskyan sociocultural theory, this important work is also motivated by identified deficiencies in teacher-learner interaction in English classrooms. From observational data taken from more than 166 lessons from over 100 schools from five countries (England, France, India, Russia and the United States) classroom talk is shown to be dominated by interaction involving rote, recitation and instruction and there are scant examples, particularly in English classrooms, of discussion or scaffolded dialogue (Alexander, 2004:23). Identifying the asymmetry of UK classroom interaction, in which 'students are in the majority, but teachers do most of the talking'

(Alexander, 2006:12), the researcher elaborates the concept of classroom dialogue that presumes a high level of reciprocity. In this dialogue, teachers ask questions but so do students. Questions have a variety of possible answers and are not known-answer questions. Ideas are exchanged not merely transmitted in this dialogue and students sometimes introduce new knowledge of which the teacher is unaware of and in which s/he shows interest. The concept of 'conversation' in this thesis shares all of these dialogic features. This is perhaps not surprising as the terms 'conversation' and 'dialogue' are often employed synonymously in more general contexts.

To this point, I have focused on the high level of correlation between the two conceptualisations of classroom talk. Where there is a key difference is in their purpose. The 'dialogue' in dialogic teaching is not simply a conversation in the classroom with more input from students, nor is it about communication skills. "Beyond the dialogue of voices, then, is a dialogue of *minds*" (Alexander, 2006:13). The principal purpose in this model of classroom talk is the collaborative construction of new conceptual knowledge. The distinction (previously discussed) between spontaneous and scientific concepts is pertinent here. In dialogic teaching, as instantiated in empirical studies to date, the focus is on the development of scientific or conceptual knowledge, sometimes with an explicit focus on the connection to learners' extant spontaneous knowledge (Scott, 2008). In L2 learning in secondary foreign language classrooms, the starting point is typically very different. L2 learning often proceeds consciously and conceptually from the outset in tandem with the development of spontaneous knowledge. Classroom L2 talk therefore represents both method and outcome.

This point is significant, and merits further clarification. Mantero (2002a) explores the concept when he examines two different definitions of 'communicative': firstly, he describes the view that language is first learnt and then used in communication; and secondly, he outlines the view that 'communicative' describes a process of learning by talking, or put another way, it is by using language to make meaning that we acquire it. 'Conversation' in this thesis then has a different emphasis to 'dialogue' as described in the research on classroom talk. It is concerned with the development of communication skills for the dual purpose of sharing more freely, fluently and confidently what is already known or partially known. The 'conversation' is therefore an objective in its own right, not simply the tone and register of the interaction, but also the development of the linguistic skills involved in participating in spontaneous L2 discourse. I now conclude my review of the literature with a summary of its purposes.

3.4 Conclusion

In the detailed review of the literature and research to date in this and the previous chapter I described a theoretical perspective, sociocultural theory, which asserts that all learning is social before individual, intermental before intramental, shared and co-constructed before appropriated and internalised. Language, as everything else, is learnt through collaborative talk. Learning is achieved through assisted dialogic performance or scaffolding within the learner's ZPD. Learners can mediate learning with and for each other, but teachers play an arguably unique role, especially within an instructional setting.

I have drawn on two main bodies of research in this review, namely F/SLA research and classroom interaction research. From them I have refined my concept of scaffolding and explored some of the important considerations for facilitating the high levels of learner interaction, upon which successful learning from a sociocultural perspective depends.

Within L2 learning, teacher-led spontaneous talk is theorised to be particularly rich in terms of L2 learning opportunities as long as teachers can elicit higher levels of learner initiations, as these may recruit and sustain learners' (including other learners') interest. This talk will provide useful opportunities for learners to get one-to-one feedback within their ZPD. The opportunities for learners to produce language in communicative activity may give them greater awareness of the language they are using. Internalisation may be facilitated through such interactions. The ease with which learners may orient to the context may free up some attention for noticing the form of their utterances as well as the meaning.

Spontaneous talk is beneficial also for the teacher, who will be able to pinpoint the current developmental levels of the learners and tailor dialogic support to meet learners' needs. This talk is hard to achieve in classrooms because of the dominance of IRE/F patterns of discourse, (which are incompatible with scaffolding), and the extant teacher-learner asymmetry. For this reason specific strategies are required to subvert the dominant discourse patterns and construct alternative, and ultimately more productive, patterns of discourse.

The present study shares with the studies reviewed in this chapter a qualitative, case study approach using microgenetic analysis. The study takes as its point of departure the IRE/F discourse pattern, but with the aim of identifying alternative patterns of discourse that do not conform to its structure. In seeking to specify the communicative moves that constitute scaffolding within the context of spontaneous talk episodes within teacher-fronted classroom interaction, my study aims to explain how these scaffolded interactions contribute to L2 learning within the secondary foreign languages classroom. The study's preliminary aim, to

determine the extent to which teachers can employ specific discourse management strategies to elicit spontaneous L2 talk is in essence hypothesis-testing, but it is a subsidiary aim and subordinate to the principal aim of the study, which is to explain how spontaneous talk episodes contribute to L2 learning. This principal aim is theory-building in orientation and seeks to add to a theory of target language or L2 use within instructed foreign language learning within the secondary school context in England.

I turn now to examine in more detail the way in which teacher-learner interaction, in particular spontaneous talk, is conceptualised within the English context, drawing on relevant policy documents and inspection findings from the last 30 years to the present day. From this review, I define more precisely what is meant by spontaneous talk, leading to a clearer, more context-appropriate construct definition that supports the central focus of this study.

Chapter 4: L2 talk in the secondary classroom context in England

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I extend the review of L2 talk for learning by examining its development within instructed secondary settings in England, with particular reference to the last 30 years. I focus on the main methodological developments over this time period, and the role that education policy has played in these developments, drawing out from the relevant literature what is understood by spontaneous L2 use. In so doing I examine the issues that have emerged with regard to L2 classroom talk and the attempts made to resolve these. I begin by considering the communicative approach to language teaching, widely considered the 'norm' in English classrooms since the mid-1980s.

4.2 Communicative Language Teaching

The prominent use of the target language in language teaching and learning began in the early 1900s with the Direct Method, a reaction against and firm rejection of the Grammar-Translation Method, which had enjoyed an unparalleled methodological monopoly up until this point (Macaro, 1997). Seeking to be everything the Grammar-Translation Method was not, the Direct Method insisted on exclusive use of the L2 and shunned explicit focus on form. The basic premise of the Direct Method was that students would learn to communicate in the L2 through learning techniques that linked meaning and language directly, without recourse to L1. A key objective was spontaneous oral production, although the aim of spoken output was grammatically correct full sentence utterances, rather than authentic communication. Memorisation and rehearsal were fundamental and typical classroom activities included the presentation of new language in the L2 supported by visuals or direct demonstration, question and answer routines involving full-sentence responses, dictation, reading aloud and gap-fill activities (Larson-Freeman, 1996).

Although the popularity of the Direct Method was relatively short-lived, the importance of the L2 (or target language, as it is referred to in the context of instructed language learning in England) was upheld in all of the methodological developments that succeeded it. It would be some time, however, before meaning-oriented communication was sufficiently differentiated from form-focused communication. First the Audiolingual method held sway, with its emphasis on the overlearning of structural patterns and set phrases through repetitive drills, and its core aim to enable learners to manipulate language in the production of error-free utterances (Brown, 1994).

In contrast to the carefully defined, prescriptive methods that preceded it, Communicative Language Teaching emerged in the early 1980s as a broad approach to language teaching, which emphasised learning to communicate through interaction in the target language (Nunan, 1991). Whereas target language use had, up to this point, been 'largely rehearsed and automatised' (Meiring &Norman, 2002, p.27) CLT heralded, in theory at least, 'a more spontaneous, improvised oral/aural register' (Meiring & Norman, 2002, p.27). Within this approach, which prioritised meaning making, the idea was that learners would be encouraged to communicate from the very beginning, to experiment and create language independently through trial and error, in the belief that the target language system is best learned through the process of struggling to make oneself understood (Finnochiaro & Brumfit, 1983).

Spontaneous L2 communication has therefore been an objective of language teaching since the emergence of CLT. However, CLT's status as approach rather than method has permitted a wide variety of methodological interpretations and CLT can at most be viewed as an umbrella term for many different methods that share a commitment to language learning as the development of communicative competence. It is certainly the case that there is a much clearer consensus on 'what' language teaching should achieve than 'how' it should achieve it. In the educational literature of the time, including policy documents that I refer to in subsequent sections of this chapter, communication is relatively consistently understood:

The characteristics of communication are:

- Has a purpose – meaning-orientated message – usually an information gap
- Degree of unpredictability
- Two or more involved
- Nature of message conditioned by social, cultural, emotional roles and setting
- Coherent discourse
- Degree of personal commitment (Salter, 1989, p.4)

In addition to a relatively unified understanding of what constitutes communication, a consensus as to the required competences to achieve it emerged in Canale's (1983) widely-accepted model of communicative competence. The model broadened the understanding of 'communicative competence' from accurate production of linguistic messages to a fuller conception with four main elements: grammatical competence, comprising an awareness of and ability to manipulate structure; strategic competence, or the ability to make meaning when one's linguistic resources are stretched; socio-linguistic competence, essentially a sensitivity in language use to the situation and social context; and discourse competence, which involves the learner in more sustained communication whereby s/he needs to take the

initiative, introduce new ideas into a discussion or conversation and sequence ideas coherently (Canale, 1983).

With a consensus regarding the core aim of language teaching and learning, it might seem surprising that CLT spawned such a variety of teaching methods. The differences have been most apparent in two aspects of pedagogy: grammar teaching and the use of the target language. In terms of grammar teaching, at one end of the spectrum, practice in classrooms has retained an explicit focus on form, an adherence to a synthetic, grammar syllabus, with structured drills, and a significant use of L1 particularly for grammar instruction and explanation, whilst at the other an awareness of form has been promoted implicitly through exposure to target forms in authentic texts and an inductive elicitation of patterns. As regards use of the target language, practice and debate have been polarised around the exclusive use (or otherwise) of the L2 by the teacher as well as the relative emphasis given to controlled practice over more creative language use. In the English context it has been education policy more than language learning theory that has influenced language teachers' classroom practice and I therefore consider now in detail the policy decisions and educational initiatives that have shaped teachers' classroom practice over the last 30 years.

4.3 Educational policy and the use of the target language

As I have outlined, Communicative Language Teaching upheld and developed the status of L2 use within classroom language teaching. In the English context, the importance of the target language was reinforced firstly through the graded objectives movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Harding, Page & Rowell, 1980), with its insistence on practical communication defined as 'the use of language in ways in which it is used in natural circumstances outside classrooms' (King, 1991, p.7). This fed into the national criteria for the then new GCSE exam, which determined that activities should be 'authentic and valuable outside the classroom' (King, 1991, p.7). The most unequivocal advocacy of target language use in language teaching, however, surfaced as policy in the *National Curriculum Orders for England* (NCC, 1991) and supporting guidance (NCC, 1992). Whilst these policy documents do not relate explicitly to theories of language acquisition, they strongly support not only the role of speaking and target language use in general, but more significantly the spontaneous use of L2 for language learning.

Documents leading up to the first version of the *National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages* (NCC, 1991) deal in some detail with the sorts of interaction opportunities learners should experience in their language lessons:

In the classroom the foreign language should be the natural medium for teaching and learning. It should be constantly heard and used for general instructions, for conveying the content of the lesson, for practising specific skills and for communication between pupils or with the teacher. (HMI, 1987, p.11)

As well as teachers using the L2 for all planned aspects of teaching and learning, it is made clear that they should also take a lead in using the language spontaneously in the classroom, using supportive strategies as appropriate to ensure learner comprehension:

They [teachers] can create and exploit opportunities to speak spontaneously, whilst using all the means at their disposal, such as simplified language, paraphrase, mime and visual material, to ensure that pupils understand them. (HMI, 1987, p.19)

Learners, for their part, should be encouraged to initiate and make unsolicited contributions in the L2, and teachers are advised not to insist upon correct, whole sentence responses, which might inhibit spontaneous language use:

Speaking should be made as natural as possible: insistence that responses should always be in the form of complete sentences, for example, tends to inhibit spontaneous communication. On the other hand, after appropriate preparation, some pupils can be expected to speak at greater length, for example by giving unsolicited information, several items of information, or a longer explanation. (HMI, 1987, p.21)

This early document is interesting because it goes beyond a straightforward requirement for exclusive teacher use of the target language in the classroom. The vision of L2 talk presented here is highly interactive; the teacher seeking actively to build in opportunities for spontaneous L2 interaction and inviting learner initiations from the outset that over time will become more extensive. This vision is later enshrined in the *National Curriculum for England* (DfEE/QCA, 1999), in which the level descriptors of the Attainment Target 2 (Speaking) describe the progression expected from structured to unstructured, scripted to unscripted, prompted to unprompted, familiar to unpredictable talk, and brief to developed conversations. The associated Programme of Study document has learners 'communicating in the target language in pairs and groups and with their teacher', 'using everyday classroom events as an opportunity for spontaneous speech' and learning 'strategies for dealing with the unpredictable (unfamiliar language, unexpected responses)' (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p.16).

In view of its emphasis on methodology rather than content, Macaro (1997), in his extensive review of target language use in secondary classrooms in England, wondered if the name 'National Methodology' might not be a more apt description for England's National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages. Be that as it may, the development was initially welcomed by a great many teachers, and the gains in terms of target language use lauded as one of the principal strengths of the National Curriculum Orders in the results of a questionnaire conducted by the Association for Language Learning, (the UK's major subject

association for those involved in teaching foreign languages at all levels) after its first year of implementation. School inspectors were also similarly impressed in the early days of the National Curriculum, reporting a rise in standards owing to increased use of the target language (OFSTED, 1993). However, it soon became clear that an increased quantity of teacher L2 use would not automatically lead to a corresponding increase in learner target language use. It is to an account of the issues with L2 use in secondary classrooms in England as identified by those charged with investigating standards that I now turn.

4.4 Inspection findings: teacher and learner L2 use

It was not the case, even following the implementation of the National Curriculum, that there was a consensus amongst teachers for exclusive use of the target language. There continued to be the same polarity of practice as had always existed within CLT. Much of the methodological debate of the early 1990s concentrated therefore on teacher use of the target language, sharpened by the force of the National Curriculum Orders and, implicitly, acquisition-based theories of language learning. The resulting debate was unsurprisingly more strongly in favour of exclusive L2 use (Krashen, 1981; Franklin, 1990; Chambers, 1991; Halliwell & Jones, 1991) with those arguing against 100% target language use cast in the role of apologists for L1 use (Butzkamm, 2003). The debate shifted in the mid-1990s to pupil use of the target language, although as early as 1994 it was a cause for concern among inspectors. The introduction to James, Clarke and Woods' (1999) collection of 12 action research projects seeking to increase pupil use of the target language refers to the 1994 OHMCI publication *A Survey of Modern Foreign Languages in the National Curriculum in Wales,* which identified speaking as the weakest skill, with few students 'able to use it spontaneously and fluently' (OHMCI 1994, cited in James et al. 1999, p.1).

   The succession of OFSTED reports and inspection findings from 1994 until 2008 describe an unchanging picture, as far as pupil L2 use is concerned, with the main issue identified as learners' inability and unwillingness to use the target language spontaneously (Dobson, 1998; OFSTED, 2000, 2001, 2002a). It was from 2002 onwards, however, that there was a perceptible difference in the comments made by inspectors with respect to the use of the target language in secondary classrooms. In the report of an OFSTED subject conference held on 13 March 2002 at CILT, the National Centre for Languages in England, the following comment was made about good languages teaching:

> Good teaching is obviously based on providing a consistently fluent and accurate model of the foreign language for pupils to emulate. The target language is used predominantly, but English has its place. Where English is used, teachers have a clear rationale for doing so, such as to explain a particular point of grammar. Pupils benefit

> in this way on the one hand from sustained exposure to the foreign language and on the other from clear understanding of structures and the way language works.
> (OFSTED, 2002b, p.3)

Although the position on the 'exclusive' use of the target language within the National Curriculum had been softened to allow for a 'maximal' and then an 'optimal' use in subsequent versions (Macaro, 1997), the explicit mention of a strategic role for the L1 linked to an explicit focus on structure was a significant departure. This was followed in the following year's OFSTED report by the observation that 'exclusive use of the foreign language by teachers does not of itself guarantee effective learning if pupils are not shown how the language operates and how to use this knowledge to create their own sentences' (OFSTED, 2004) and the acknowledgement that this might lead to a greater use of English. If we consider the next big initiative in education policy we can begin to appreciate how the strategic use of English came to be sanctioned in secondary language teaching in England.

The weakening of the requirement to use the target language exclusively in secondary foreign language teaching was in part ushered in with the Key Stage 3 Strategy (national strategy for learners aged 11-14) initiative and the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 2001). What began as an indication within the National Curriculum guidance that it might occasionally be useful to compare the differences between L1 and L2 in the 1999 revised version of the National Curriculum, became more explicit in the Framework for Languages at KS3 (DfES, 2003) where what matters most 'is that teaching is effective and that pupils make progress' to which end 'teachers may need to use some English judiciously' (DfES, 2003, p.26).

Apart from this general statement acknowledging that it might be challenging for teachers to fulfil some of the objectives without recourse to English, the Framework does not specify methodology as regards use of the target language. There is much that is left up to teacher interpretation and in this methodological vacuum it is apparent that many teachers preferred to use English. With respect to the influence of the overall KS3 Strategy we must remember the scope of the initiative, which aimed to provide much greater continuity of experience between KS2 and KS3 as well as a more consistent approach to teaching and learning in general across all curriculum subjects at KS3. This consistency went beyond issues of literacy and extended to pedagogy initiatives such as Assessment for Learning, Learning to Learn and Thinking skills. Many senior leadership teams in schools viewed the Key Stage 3 Strategy as a tool for raising standards of teaching and learning in general and insisted that all subject teachers plan their lessons in accordance with the framework. As a result it was not uncommon for languages teachers to be expected to conduct significant parts of their lessons in English, whether it was setting the learning objectives, formatively assessing progress, including some

metacognitive reflection or leading the lesson plenary. The net effect of the KS3 Strategy was undoubtedly an increase in L1 use in the classroom.

Against the backdrop of the developments in foreign language education policy in England in the late 1990s and early 2000s there was the publication in 2001 of the most comprehensive European document on language teaching and learning, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe, 2001). Though sharply criticised by some for its 'methodological neutrality' (Saville, 2005, p.282), The Common European Framework of Reference, published in 2001, describes a range of methodological options and in place of advocating one particular approach, it asks pedagogical questions of teachers, learners, text book writers and policy makers. In terms of spontaneous language use, for example, teachers are asked to consider the extent to which learners should be expected to learn 'by simple participation in spontaneous activities' (CoE, 2001, p.147). However, it has been pointed out that not all methods are congruent with the outcomes described in the progressive scales within the CEFR (Little, 2011). In terms of L2 use, Little points out that a teaching approach favouring 'a combination of presentations, explanations, (drill) exercises and exploitation activities, but with L1 as the language of classroom management, explanation, etc.' (CoE, 2001, p.143) would not enable learners to 'enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life' (CoE, 2001, p.26), for which he claims they would need to be comfortable with the L2 as the usual means of communication in the classroom (Little, 2011). The level of communicative competence described here is B1, equivalent in British qualification standards to higher level GCSE, or National Curriculum level 7+. Implicit then, within the CEFR, there is perhaps a stronger advocacy of spontaneous L2 use in the classroom than is apparent in the taxonomy of teaching methods contained within it.

Returning to the English context, both the *National Curriculum* (QCA, 2007) and the *KS3 Framework* (DfES, 2009) documents were comprehensively revised between 2003 and 2011. Interestingly the term 'spontaneous' which was in the original KS3 Framework and all previous versions of the National Curriculum Programme of Study, and which has appeared in almost every OFSTED report or inspection findings for modern languages since 1993, is missing from the new documentation. Whatever the rationale for omitting the term 'spontaneous', the commitment to developing learners' communicative competence in terms of their ability to interact spontaneously in both the Framework and the National Curriculum Programme of Study has not dimmed. If anything the Framework offers more precision in its guidance. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, the objectives strand relating to unplanned spoken interaction is now titled 'Talking together' and the term 'speaking' is absent. The type of

interactions described in these objectives are 'conversations' and 'discussions' and the subject of these exchanges is to be social as well as pertaining to learners' work. Learners are to initiate conversations in the target language with their teachers, in pairs and in groups. From Year 8 onwards these interactions are not going to require written prompts, but unfold 'unscripted' and 'unrehearsed'.

Figure 4.1: Unplanned speaking objectives from the *Renewed KS3 Framework for Languages* (DfES, 2009)

1.4 Talking together

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
• construct and generate language, using a stock of words, phrases and sentences for social communication and to talk about their work	• initiate and participate in unrehearsed pupil–teacher and pupil–pupil exchanges	• make extended and/or frequent contributions to classroom talk
• make effective use of simple verbal or visual prompts in order to take part in conversations and discussions	• plan and carry out unscripted conversations and discussions, taking into account the views, preferences and ideas of each group member	• deal effectively with unexpected responses in order to sustain conversations and discussions

In terms of the statutory requirements in the National Curriculum, Table 4.1's extracts from the Programme of Study show that learners at Key Stage 3 are, as previously, expected to 'initiate and sustain conversations' and 'deal with unfamiliar language, unexpected responses and unpredictable situations'. There is therein the same aspiration that learners will develop sufficient competence in the target language to enable them to communicate effectively in unplanned situations.

Table 4.1: Extracts from the *National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages* (QCA, 2007)

Extracts from the National Curriculum Programme of Study for Modern Foreign Languages (2007) pp. 166-9
1.1 Linguistic competence   a. Developing the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a range of situations and contexts.   b. Applying linguistic knowledge and skills to understand and communicate effectively.   **1.2 Knowledge about language**   a Understanding how a language works and how to manipulate it.   **1.3 Creativity**   a Using familiar language for new purposes and in new contexts.   b Using imagination to express thoughts, ideas, experiences and feelings.   **2.2 Developing language skills**   c respond appropriately to spoken and written language

d use correct pronunciation and intonation
e ask and answer questions
f initiate and sustain conversations
k deal with unfamiliar language, unexpected responses and unpredictable situations.
3. Range and content
a the spoken and written forms of the target language
4. Curriculum Opportunities
a. hear, speak, read and write in the target language regularly and frequently within the classroom and beyond
b. communicate in the target language individually, in pairs, in groups and with speakers of the target language, including native speakers where possible, for a variety of purposes
c. use an increasing range of more complex language
g. use the target language in connection with topics and issues that are engaging and may be related to other areas of the curriculum

Since 2003 two 3-year reports of OFSTED inspection findings have been published; one in 2008 and one in 2011. Two key findings with respect to the use of the target language have been made. Firstly, learner use of the target language has not increased. The OFSTED report of inspection findings from 2004-2007 concluded:

> Overall there is insufficient emphasis on helping students to use the language spontaneously for real situations. Consequently too few students could speak creatively, or beyond the topic they were studying, by making up their own sentences in an unrehearsed situation. (OFSTED, 2008, p.12)

Secondly, the spectre of teacher use of the target language has returned to haunt the profession, with the 2011 3-year OFSTED report into language learning in English classrooms finding that:

> In many of the secondary schools visited, opportunities for students to listen to and communicate in the target language were often limited by many teachers' unpreparedness to use it. Too often, students were not taught how to respond to everyday requests and thus routine work in the target language and opportunities to use it spontaneously were too few (OFSTED, 2011, p.6).

If inspectors are to be believed, the latest instalment in the saga of L2 use in English classrooms tells us that not only have the past 30 years of CLT, supported by the 'shot in the arm' (Mellor & Trafford, 1994, p.2) to target language use provided by the National Curriculum, resulted in no recognisable progress in terms of learner use of the L2, but that the gains noted in terms of increased teacher use of the target language have been eroded in the past 18 years such that its current level is considered (by inspectors) a barrier to learner progress within secondary classrooms in England. This is a bleak picture of learner spontaneous L2 use in English secondary classrooms. In this review of education policy I have alluded to two possible barriers to learner L2 use: low teacher use of the target language and a disproportionate amount of L2 classroom time given over to L1 tasks focused on learning about language or about how to learn language as a result of the Key Stage 3

Strategy. In light of the strength of the statutory national curriculum requirement promoting L2 use for both teachers and pupils, these two factors seem unlikely to account for the persistent lack of learner spontaneous L2 use noted. A broader consideration of the more general issues militating against learner L2 talk is required.

4.5 Barriers to spontaneous learner L2 talk

Let us first consider teacher use of the target language. Although already a key feature of language teaching in English classrooms there is no doubt that the introduction of the National Curriculum in the early 1990s did increase teacher L2 use in classrooms. Even in the earliest stages of National Curriculum implementation, however, there were indications that teacher use of the L2 was no guarantee of learner L2 use, with evidence that 'pupils do not spontaneously respond in the foreign language even if the teacher manages the lesson in the foreign language' (Chambers, 1991, p.30). Research evidence continued to reveal no consensus as to the desirability of 100% teacher use of the target language, although there was a clear imperative to maximise pupil L2 use (Chambers, 1991; Macaro, 1997; Jones, 2002).

A second means to account for the lack of learner spontaneity is that teachers spent far too much time on pre-communicative activities, leaving scant opportunities for the real communication tasks these were designed to prepare learners for. Getting learners to use the target language in pre-communicative tasks appeared to be relatively unproblematic, but the challenge was in 'moving pupils on to re-apply language for the general communication needs of the classroom' (Chambers, 1991, p.30). Halliwell and Jones (1991) observed the 'wide gap between carefully controlled classroom practice and the unpredictability of real language encounters' (Halliwell & Jones, 1991, p.1) and this echoes the observation from Salter (1989) made pre National Curriculum:

> Teachers do not always distinguish sufficiently between practice and use of the foreign language. The highly controlled exercises which are typical of the former should enable the pupil progressively to use more of the foreign language in less predictable situations; too often however, they become an end in themselves and the purpose of the whole process is lost. Nowadays most teachers use some pair work and role play is very common. But both are usually controlled practice exercises and do not involve genuine use of the language for communication to convey important and real meanings. (Salter, 1989, p.7)

Then as now, the prevailing teaching model in most secondary school classrooms in England involves the 3Ps: presentation, practice and production. In the early days of CLT, pre-communicative activities, i.e. tasks in which elements of language knowledge or skills are isolated for practice, according to Littlewood (1981) accounted for the majority of learning

activities found in textbooks and learning schemes 30 years ago. In these activities, the learner's main purpose is 'to produce language which is acceptable (i.e. sufficiently accurate or appropriate) rather than to communicate meanings effectively' (Littlewood, 1981, p.85). It may therefore be that teachers still spend disproportionately too much time on the 'presentation' and 'practice' elements and stop short of the independent 'production' stage, whether this is as a result of time pressure or lack of expertise about how to lead learners from practice to production.

Initially, suggestions as to how teachers might move learners from 'automatic and pre-learnt phrases such as 'Excuse me, I don't understand' and 'I've forgotten my exercise book' to spontaneous individual use of language (Chambers, 1991, p.30) were certainly rather woolly. It was suggested that teachers could ascertain the different language needs of pupils within the classroom and provide appropriate language support, which might include displays or the introduction of a 'request box' for learners to signal their language needs, or additionally that teachers might want to introduce a system of rewards to motivate pupils to make more frequent L2 contributions (Chambers, 1991). In time, there were funded projects that set out to promote pupil L2 use (James et al.,1999; Harris, Birch, Jones & Darcy, 2001) as well as additional publications to encourage teachers in this respect (Macdonald, 1993; Jones, Halliwell & Holmes,. 2002). There were also grass-roots teacher-led projects in the mid to late 1990s to encourage spontaneous learner talk, such as the Talk Project led by Janeen Leith.

One such body of work, described by Harris et al. (2001) in their book *Something to Say?* makes some useful contributions to the debate about spontaneous L2 classroom talk. It establishes that small changes can be made to quite traditional approaches to language teaching; that is to say, a 3Ps model following a scheme of work based on a standard textbook, to elicit interactional language from learners alongside topic language. The project also shows how opportunities for learners to recycle that interactional language and use it spontaneously for games or problem-solving activities in pairs and groups can be motivating. Its principal limitation is perhaps the fact that the spontaneous interactions emphasise the recycling of known language rather than the generation of new utterances. This limits the language learning potential for learners in two ways: firstly, the demand on them as receivers is relatively insignificant and secondly, the requirement for them to construct new meanings is minimal. This is always more likely to be the case when learners interact in peer groups of the same or similar language experience and ability. It is for this reason that we must not lose sight of the role of the teacher in relation to spontaneous learner L2 talk.

Given the small, yet significant, contributions these projects made to stimulating learner talk in classrooms, it seems possible that one reason for low levels of learner talk is simply that the balance of oral activities is wrong, and insufficient time is allocated in language lessons to communicative tasks that would lead learners to convert language rehearsal into language use.

So far we have considered that an over-emphasis on pre-communicative tasks might account to a certain extent for learners' inability and unwillingness to use the L2 spontaneously. Another possibility is that the changes to foreign language assessment in England in the introduction of the GCSE in 1988 and prior to that the graded objectives movement favoured the memorisation of formulaic phrases in transactional scenarios over the creative construction of new meanings. Pachler (2000) views this as a problem particularly associated with the English brand of CLT:

> In its UK variant, CLT has tended to neglect the generative potential of language by downplaying awareness of and knowledge about language by focussing too narrowly on transactional, situationalised language in narrowly defined context and idealised discourse patterns, thereby limited learners', and in particular more able learners', potential to express personal meaning and to use the FL creatively and spontaneously' (Pachler, 2000, p.34).

This lack of awareness of structure was what the *KS3 Framework* (DfES, 2003) was designed to address, but as we have seen, there has not been an increase in learners' spontaneous L2 use.

In broader terms the general tension that exists between the more formal aspects of language instruction, for example, explicit grammar teaching, and activities focused on language use, might represent another barrier to spontaneous L2 use in the classroom. The prevailing view in the English context seems to be that, in L2 classroom learning, instruction is necessary and inevitable but it is also a barrier to spontaneity that teachers must seek to overcome. As Bernadette Holmes (Jones et al., 2002) writes:

> Unlike first-language acquisition, second-language learning in anything other than a bilingual environment is likely to be a more deliberate and conscious process. Our aim, as teachers, will be to provide appropriate learning opportunities in order to make the use of the target language by our pupils increasingly more natural and spontaneous' (2002, p.46).

The need to balance an awareness of pattern and structure with use of the target language for real communication is identified by Eric Hawkins (1987) as fundamental to progress in language learning. Language teaching and learning simply needs to achieve both:

> We should do everything we can to awaken and develop insight into pattern while providing as much opportunity as possible for pupils to alternate their formal studies of language structure with activities which call for the expression of personal

meanings and the solving of personal problems' (1987, p.255).

As I mentioned at the start of this section, the evidence indicates that, whilst research is inconclusive on the impact of teacher use of the target language on learner spontaneous L2 use, clearer evidence exists for the benefits of pupil L2 use (Macaro, 1997). One further, significant factor inhibiting learner L2 talk seems to be the prevailing discourse architecture in the traditional classroom where the teaching controls everything, including the turn-taking, wait time and discourse structure (Macaro, 2000) as well as what language is used and when, the topic, content, vocabulary and phases of the interaction (Westgate, Batey, Brownlee & Butler, 1985). One suggested way forward has come from advocates of task-based language learning (Ellis, 2003) who suggest that teacher-dominated classrooms cannot be fully interactive and that only pair and group tasks provide the level of interaction required for acquisition. Indications from both SLA and classroom interaction literature which were considered more fully in the two previous chapters of this thesis indicate that in teacher-led classrooms where IRE/F interactions are the norm, learner talk is minimal. Macaro notes that 'early production of language and learner-initiated dialogue, essential for the development of language proficiency and confidence, appear to be inhibited by whole class oral exchanges' (Macaro, 1997, p.202) and this leads him to propose that teachers traverse a 'methodological threshold' (Macaro, 1997, p.130) and explore alternative strategies of collaborative and autonomous learning. This view is increasingly shared by many who see in peer/group work the principal way forward for generating higher levels of pupil L2 talk.

There are, however, problems with this view. One of the 'central dilemmas in encouraging spontaneous language use' (Harris et al., 2001, p.97) is that 'the very process of becoming genuinely interested in what they are talking about means that pupils may want to move beyond the language that has been so carefully identified, presented and practised' (2001, p.97) and L1 is the result. The risk with learners relying solely on each other for support as they struggle to express meaning with their limited interlanguage is that the attempt breaks down and the interaction spills over unchecked into L1. Another perspective recalls the sociocultural theoretical perspective on interaction as the site of all learning and the role of the teacher to scaffold spontaneous interactions, co-constructing meaning with the learner. This role for the teacher is conspicuous in its absence from most of the English educational literature and policy documents but is reflected in statements in the 1987 HMI report that pre-empted the National Curriculum Order, i.e. that the teacher would create opportunities for spontaneous interaction, soliciting learner initiatives and supporting them. Whilst there are compelling reasons to introduce peer and group tasks to give more opportunities for learners

to engage in authentic L2 interaction, there are also persuasive arguments to consider the role that teacher-learner interaction might play in the generation of higher levels of spontaneous L2 use.

In summary, there are likely to be several obstacles to spontaneous learner L2 talk in secondary classrooms in England. Overwhelming evidence points to the limiting effect of prevailing teacher-fronted discourse structures. Added to this, I argue that various aspects of languages pedagogy load classroom learning experiences too heavily in one or other aspect, whether pre-communicative tasks, transactional scenarios or explicit focus on form, and thereby underplay communicative activities that require learners to use language creatively for their own purposes in unrehearsed situations.

4.6 Conclusion

Salter's (1989) observation that language 'practice' should lead to language 'use' but doesn't, sums up neatly the last 30 years' experience of languages teaching and learning in England. In this chapter I have considered language learning in the context of secondary classrooms in England. I have shown that methodological and policy developments in this time period have overwhelmingly supported the spontaneous use of the target language by both teachers and learners, whilst inspection findings from classrooms have shown a scarcity of spontaneous learner L2 talk, and most recently a reluctance to use the L2 amongst teachers. In identifying potential reasons why there is such scant spontaneity in learner L2 use I re-iterated the evidence that prevailing discourse structures limit learner initiations, but argued in addition that teachers may be overemphasising those tasks and learning activities that do not lead to unplanned L2 use. Finally, whilst acknowledging the validity of the case for more peer and group talk in L2 classrooms, I considered some potential drawbacks of this approach and presented the view that there is a need to re-construe the role of the teacher in promoting spontaneous learner talk in the classroom. With this the aim of my study of language learning in three classrooms of L2 German learners in an English secondary school, I now describe my research design in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The literature review in Chapter 2 provided the theoretical framework in which to situate this study and to investigate its research questions. Chapter 3's review of classroom interaction highlighted the problematic nature of classroom discourse as it relates to teacher-learner interaction and L2 learning. Chapter 4 provided a critical review of classroom talk within secondary foreign languages classrooms in England, from which emerged a fuller understanding of spontaneous talk, as conceptualised for the purposes of this study, as well as the clarification of the central 'problem' that motivated this research project. Crotty (2003) is clear that the point of departure for much research is the identification of a question or problem, asserting that "we plan our research in terms of the issue or problem or question" (2003, p.13). He also argues that there should be coherence between the epistemological stance invoked and the methodological approach adopted that the researcher needs to provide in his/her justification (Crotty, 2003). The assumptions about knowing and learning that underpin this study are explored in detail in the preceding chapters. The first part of this chapter, however, focuses on the link between my research design and the preliminary understanding of classroom talk, the object of its enquiry, developed through my review of the literature and the previous empirical studies conducted within the sociocultural paradigm. It sets out the link between the methods of data collection and analysis and the overall methodological paradigm and epistemology that support them. The main part of this chapter describes in detail the design and use of the research methods, procedures, setting and tools used in this study. The final sections consider the validity and reliability of the research described in this thesis and detail its ethical considerations.

5.2 Methodological paradigm

Sociocultural theory is an essentially constructionist theory of learning. Contrasting with the positivist view that knowledge is embodied in an objective reality that can, provided the correct methods are used, be discovered or revealed, the constructionist view is that knowledge is context- and time-dependent, open to myriad interpretations, and constructed through social interaction. Constructionism is, according to Crotty (1998), 'the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context'(Crotty, 1998, p.42).

The type of knowledge available or what can be known within this view of the world is situation-specific and partial, yet the pursuit of such knowledge aims to yield greater understanding about a given phenomenon through the cumulative addition to previous knowledge of the same. The detailed study of one particular situation or 'case' is the approach that has been pursued in the majority of sociocultural studies of L2 learning.

The specific knowledge sought in this study was a greater understanding of the ways in which more learner talk can be generated in the classroom and the learning opportunities such talk affords the learners. I therefore adopted a case study approach involving three classes of secondary German learners, aged 13-14 and at the start of their second year of learning German. Novice learners of German, this was their second foreign language, all having studied Spanish already for two years at secondary school, with most having had in addition an introduction to Spanish at primary school. Describing reality in this study involved interpreting social action, the talk and the behaviour of teachers and learners within the naturalistic context of the classroom. The reality that is socially constructed in the classroom was made accessible through repeated interrogation and interpretation of videoed lessons drawn from the classroom situation and their transcriptions. In line with other sociocultural studies of L2 learning, it was in the minute description and microgenetic analysis of individual interactions that I aimed to understand more fully the role of L2 talk in L2 learning.

The influence of sociocultural theory in shaping the research design of this study is discussed further in reference to specific elements of the methodology in later sections of this chapter. At this stage, however, I note a further influence on the overall design of the study; that is, its purpose as research for change. In addition to the goal of understanding there was the aim to promote change. Action research is an approach that has improvement as its goal. As Robson (2002) writes, 'there is, first, the improvement of a *practice* of some kind; second, the improvement of the *understanding* of a practice by its practitioners; and third, the improvement of the *situation* in which the practice takes place' (Robson, 2002, p.215).

The justification for an action research 'intervention' element in my study is related to the theoretical argument for the centrality of talk for learning in chapter 2, and to the empirical evidence within classrooms generally in chapter 3 and in the English secondary foreign language classrooms in chapter 4 that learner L2 talk is heavily compromised and restricted. These preceding chapters, together with the introduction to this thesis, establish the rationale for pedagogical intervention, designed to subvert the dominant pattern of classroom discourse. Sociocultural theory informs both the methodology and the pedagogy, specifically the intervention strategies, of this study. In chapter 6 I detail the overarching principles and

specifics of the intervention but I turn now to my research questions and the key aspects of research design.

The purpose of my study was to examine teacher and learner talk in the secondary foreign languages classroom, operationalising a SCT-based approach to language teaching. This overarching aim was the basis upon which the following research questions were formulated and the point of departure for the detail of my research design which follows. In the next section of this chapter I list my research questions and describe the key elements of my research strategy. I then describe the methods I used in the study, the data that these generated and the ways in which the data were analysed.

5.3   Research questions

To provide a framework for this chapter and the basis for the detail of my research design, I list here the overall research question and associated sub-questions:

Overall research question

What is the impact of the use of teacher talk and behaviour strategies on learner L2 oral interaction in the secondary foreign languages classroom?

Sub-questions

1) Does experience of the intervention programme result in a higher ratio of learner: teacher L2 output?

The purpose of this research question was to assess the effectiveness of the intervention strategies in increasing the quantity of learner L2 talk in the whole class learning situation. The intervention programme aimed to subvert the IRE/F pattern of interaction to facilitate greater learner involvement in the discourse. An initial step in measuring higher levels of learner involvement was to ascertain whether learners talked more, both in comparison over time within the same groups and in comparison with the control group in this study. This was achieved through a process of quantifying the lesson observation data. The result was a descriptive analysis, involving the calculation, display and comparison of the proportion of types of spoken interaction.

2) Does the L2 talk produced by the intervention groups in whole class interactions reveal qualitative evidence of improvement in the language produced?

This question addressed possible improvements in both linguistic and interactional competences that might result from the teacher talk strategies and consequent higher levels of

spontaneous learner L2 talk in classroom interaction. Although the analysis was mainly in the form of qualitative fine-grained textual analysis, some descriptive analysis (frequency counts of types of utterance from the open coding) contributed to the identification and salience of patterns within the interaction. All of the teacher-learner talk was transcribed from 18 lessons observed at one month intervals over a six month period. In addition, supplementary evidence was provided from learner stimulus-recall interviews.

This question was also key to establishing the contribution this study makes to the development of sociocultural theory as a theory of L2 learning. In addition to broadening the development of SCT by applying it to the UK secondary foreign language classroom context, this study extended the scope of the theory's pedagogical application to spontaneous L2 talk and the learning affordances of this classroom talk.

3) How do teachers perceive the impact of the intervention strategies on learner L2 talk and on their practice?

This question concerned the application of SCT-inspired intervention strategies to the secondary foreign languages classroom from the perspective of the practitioner. It acknowledged the fundamental role played by teacher beliefs and perceptions on classroom practice and addressed the practical considerations of implementing talk strategies in the classroom. Even if the teacher intervention strategies designed to stimulate higher levels of learner L2 talk were proven successful, the question would remain as to the long-term effectiveness of such strategies as well as to the practicality of their sustained implementation within the secondary foreign languages classroom. To explore the question of how the teachers involved perceived the relative effectiveness of the intervention strategies I conducted semi-structured interviews during and after the intervention period with all three teachers involved in the study.

5.4 Research strategy

In chapter 6 I detail the overarching principles and specifics of the intervention but I discuss first the implications of my research design, its relationship to different paradigms of educational research, and the advantages and disadvantages of its mixed design.

As described above, this study's overall research design is a composite model involving case study and action research, including a pedagogical intervention experienced by two of the three classes. The third class in the study was taught without the intervention and was a 'control group', adding a further layer to the design in the form of a quasi-experimental element. Even in studies informed by a unifying theoretical framework there can be

substantial difficulties associated with a complex research design (Bryman, 2008; Niglas, 2004). Problems particularly, though not exclusively associated with complex, composite models can be:

- aspects of incompatibility, tensions and/or incongruence between aspects of the different strategies used
- a lack of clarity in the approach leading to a mismatch in terms of the research questions and the data generated to answer them
- the greater likelihood of unpredictable outcomes
- a difficult or unclear interrelationship between different methods of data collection and/or analysis
- potential discord between sampling and data analysis if quantitative analysis and statistical significance tests are used in the framework of a mainly qualitative strategy and sampling
- unsupported assumptions of generalizability from quantification of qualitative data
- a greater danger of making unsubstantiated claims
- data redundancy

I discuss the particular advantages and disadvantages of the individual components in my research design in more detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter. However it is useful at this point to address the wider debate surrounding mixed design, in particular the quantitative / qualitative divide, to present the rationale for my mixed method design within the context of that debate, and to outline clearly the extent to which my research design is, in fact, mixed in its approach.

The main argument against mixed methods research, which I define here as 'designs where elements of quantitative and qualitative approach are combined in various ways within different phases of the study' (Niglas, 2004:11) relies on the acceptance that philosophical and epistemological commitments have direct and determinate implications for research design (Smith: 1983,1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). At the other end of the spectrum other researchers hold (and held) the view that research endeavour need not be divided along dualist paradigmatic lines (positivist / quantitative vs interpretive / qualitative), that the supposed incommensurability is non-existent and that the choice of research strategy must be judged more by how well it fits the research purposes than by the extent to which it conforms to an orthodox set of conventions (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990, Gorard, 2010). At its height, some 30 years ago, this debate was referred to as 'the paradigm wars' (Gage, 1989; Hammersley,1992) and although debate is still active in some quarters (Brannen, 2005) it is felt that, to all extents

and purposes 'peace has broken out'(Bryman, 2006b). There have been several content analysis studies conducted to ascertain the ways in which researchers are mixing methods (Niglas, 2004; Bryman, 2006a). In her study of 145 mixed methods educational research articles, Niglas found that 44% studies combined case study and/or action research with a quantitative component, whilst 30% combined quasi-experiments with a qualitative component.

The difficulty here is that between the view that quantitative and qualitative approaches are incommensurable and the argument that, methodologically, anything goes as long as it serves the overall research aims, there is a lot of open water. So that a realistic account of what was done is not passed off as principled methodological innovation, there must be some norms to guide the researcher as to best practice (Hammersley, 2005, 2011). In this post-paradigm war phase of pragmatism (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005), it is the research question that is the most determinative influence in the research design (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990; van Meter & Stevens, 2000; Bryman, 2006b; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). Approaches are not considered mutually exclusive or competing but can complement one another. The success or otherwise of any research design depends then on the clarity of research purpose that generates questions that (at least for educational research) inform educational practice, matched to the adequacy of research methods and analysis to answer those questions.

Tempting as it might be to justify my research design solely on the basis of its match of methods to questions, this oversimplification is risky. Masked by superficial methodological similarities, Action Research espouses different epistemological perspectives about the nature of knowledge, particularly its purpose – who/what is it for and who constructs it, and it is this that is the most important source of tension between Action Research and other research within the qualitative tradition.

5.4.1 Action Research and Case study

It is simple to state that my study was motivated by two research aims: change and understanding, and to declare them compatible. Sheltering under the ontological umbrella of constructivism, however, are sets of different philosophical commitments which had implications for my study. It was not a question of one or other, or even finding a stable middle position, but rather a continual process of defining emphases and finding balance. Although I have presented these as aspects of tension between case study and Action Research, I am mindful that there are many definitions of both of these research strategies. On one level these multiple definitions can make it appear deceptively easy to accommodate

mixed designs. On another level it complicates the attempt to explicate superficial from more profound differences. The comparisons I have drawn here between case study and Action Research could be similarly presented for different models within Action Research, i.e. Outsider / Insider Action Research. Notwithstanding these labelling differences, Table 5.1 shows the different layers of my research design and the aspects that I consciously negotiated and reconciled during the study:

Figure 5.1 Balancing Action Research and qualitative inquiry

Methodological layers		
Ontological	Constructivism	
Epistemological / Philosophical	commitment to understanding	commitment to change
Research strategy	case study (non-interventionist)	Action Research (intervention + quasi-experimental element)
Sampling	purposive (other-selected)	purposive (self-selected)
Key processes / general approach	reflection	planning – action - reflection
Data collection	scheduled	flexible / on-going
Data analysis	researcher (+participant) perspective	participant (+researcher) perspective
Role of the researcher	expert/outsider	participant/insider
Findings / claims	in-depth understanding of the case contribution to the field	in-depth understanding of the case contribution to participants' professional knowledge

Identifying areas of incongruity in the research design is a first step. Submitting each to a critical appraisal, deciding how to respond and judging whether the results meet the norms of the paradigm sufficiently so as still to warrant its definition is also critical. In my study this process was not linear, nor was every aspect achieved in advance of the study. As other researchers have noted, the process is often messy and contradictory. In my study there were advantages and disadvantages at every turn. Most aspects of tension can be viewed in terms of the different perspectives arising from the dual purposes of change and understanding. Who was the knowledge for and who had responsibility for constructing it? I now explore specific aspects of my research design and the methodological decisions taken, in the light of this acknowledged tension.

5.4.2 Identifying the research 'problem' and formulating the questions

The first area of difficulty was in the identification of the problem or question. As Elliott (1981) notes, 'Action Research investigates everyday problems'. This puts the emphasis

firmly on the teacher participant for identifying the focus, as reflects the overarching purpose of Action Research, which is the empowerment of the participant(s) (Elliott, 1991). The issue of identifying the research focus is bound up with the larger question of who carries out the research. Here we must acknowledge a multiplicity of different models and debate surrounding which constitute 'real' Action Research. Since Action Research was first conceptualised (Lewin, 1946), leading exponents have produced definitions with different emphases (Zeichner, 1993). Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) stress practitioner agency whilst Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) allow for collaborative researcher – teacher models of Action Research, at the same time stressing its core purpose of identifying, understanding and resolving problems in a specific teaching and learning context with a view to improving that specific situation. In most models of Action Research the key emphasis is intervention for improvement at a local, often individual, level (McNiff, Lomas and Whitehead, 1996). The sense is one of immediacy of response to need. Perhaps a more likely question for my study would have been: "There is not enough target language talk from students in my classroom. What can I do?"

As already noted at the start of this chapter, the identification of the problem in this study was accomplished more formally by me as researcher, drawing on theoretical issues, empirical evidence from classroom interaction and SLA studies, as well as a critical review of policy documents and inspection reports from foreign language secondary classrooms in England. This is fully compatible with an approach to framing a case study that aims to contribute to the wider body of knowledge about L2 learning. I needed to judge the extent to which the process as well as the outcome was in line with the principles of Action Research. I considered this before embarking on my study and acknowledge that one contributory factor was the need to fulfil the academic requirements of academic research, which involved taking responsibility and perhaps a greater degree of ownership of parts of the research process than the principles of practitioner research might otherwise had led me to do. However, there were circumstances that made the focus of this study an authentic one, of real, immediate concern and relevance to the project teachers. As well as sharing my knowledge and view of the national context with respect to classroom talk, as close colleagues they were also aware of my previous classroom study (Hawkes, 2003) and we had had an on-going dialogue about target language talk and interaction over a period of several years. This meant that the project teachers shared the commitment to changing the pattern of L2 classroom interaction, which is embodied in the research questions.

5.4.3 Intervention

Case studies are often conceived, like qualitative research in general, as non-interventionist in design. Bassey reconceptualises case study research within educational settings and includes a model of Action Research case study, which is carried out with a view to making beneficial changes to practice (Bassey, 1999). The Action Research case study is also concerned to understand by describing, interpreting and explaining so that it too conforms to Bassey's overall definition of case study as 'a study of a singularity conducted in depth in natural settings' (Bassey, 1999:47). The obvious advantage of combining Action Research and case study approaches was firstly that there would be something 'new' to understand, (whether or not the outcomes generated by intervention were expected or unexpected), and secondly that the commitment to generating rich descriptions of the classroom interactions would lead to an in-depth understanding of the change. This advantage should not be underestimated given that a stated aim of educational research is to inform educational practice.

Nevertheless, just because intervention is an imperative of Action Research does not make it automatically compatible with a study that is essentially qualitative. But here is it important to separate what was done from the data that were generated, and in turn how they were interpreted. I discuss the important aspects of data collection, data analysis and findings in subsequent sections but first I consider the intervention. Any teacher intervention must be fit for purpose, not solely in terms of meeting the requirements of the overall research purpose and questions, but also in terms of meeting the needs of the teachers carrying it out. In Action Research, the changes to practice are usually in the hands of the classroom practitioner, though it might be expected that in research involving an outside researcher there would be a degree of collaborative involvement. In this study, the intervention principles were drawn up by me and the two experimental teachers were asked to incorporate them into their teaching. The list of intervention strategies may appear rather prescriptive. To judge how they were perceived, it is important to understand something of the degree to which teachers in general can appreciate 'expert' input from a credible colleague and that this can contribute to rather than detract from empowerment (Radford, 2007) and furthermore that in some instances the expectation of expert input might exist (Lam & Kwong, 2012). My credibility as an 'expert' with the project teachers was a combination of my perceived research expertise and my status as practitioner / lead teacher. The discussion we had about the intervention strategies convinced me that teachers valued their access to a knowledge base that framed the research problem and that this led them conceptualise their practice in terms of the bigger picture of L2 learning. It became clear to me at other points during and since the study that this was a defining function of my role as researcher.

Having noted the value brought to the intervention by the researcher-perspective, I need also to mention briefly the role of teacher autonomy in its adaptation and implementation. I discuss this further in chapter 6, but recognise that the challenging formulation of the intervention programme relied on the particular teachers involved and their predisposition to taking risks in the classroom, and to research activity in general, as well as the history of collaborative professional work that we shared.

5.4.4 Sampling and the quasi-experimental element

In terms of sampling, it is purposive in both case study and Action Research, although with the latter participants tend to self-select. This was an area of tension within my study. In Action Research the interests and professional learning of the participant teachers is of central concern. This was none the less the case with my study but there was a difficulty here. The most problematic aspect for me was the quasi-experimental element and its involvement of a control group. A disadvantage of the control group design was the temporary exclusion of one colleague from the collaboration and teaching innovations in the intervention programme (I deal elsewhere in this chapter with other issues concerning the control group). I considered this carefully in view of the individual teacher concerned. I put compensatory strategies in place following the intervention / data collection period of the study. Teacher 3 was involved in subsequent development work and ended up leading a separate spontaneous talk project with other teachers, described more fully in chapter 11 of this thesis.

The other difficulty with the quasi-experimental element is its general incongruence with a qualitative approach. Concerned with determining the effect of a pedagogical intervention that sought to change the patterns of classroom L2 talk, however, it was appropriate to frame research questions that measured as well as understood the change. This, in turn, suggested the inclusion of a control group, as comparison. This is compatible with several definitions of case study, notably Stake's (1995) model of instrumental case study, whereby the purpose of the case study is 'to understand something else' (Stake, 1995, p.3). The case may be a teacher or class but the aim is to illuminate something other than the peculiarities of the case itself. The 'instrumental' aim in my case study was to understand teacher-learner L2 spontaneous classroom talk through the examination of a particular case, or cases. . Yin (2003) argues that, all things being equal, it is always preferable to have a multiple-case rather than single case approach, claiming 'analytic conclusions independently arising from two cases, as with two experiments, will be more powerful than those coming from a single case (or experiment) alone' (Yin, 2003, p.135). The inclusion of an intervention within the overall research design

suggested the inclusion of a further case, a control group. Analysis of the interaction in all three classrooms was the main focus for cross-case analysis. The inclusion of an experimental element within case study work is also allowed for within Denscombe's model of a case study (2007). Within his summary of case study uses, he includes within theory-led case studies the use of a 'case study as a test bed for experimenting with changes to specific factors (or variables)' (Denscombe, 2007, p.38).

5.4.5 Data collection and data analysis

The main data collection instruments (classroom observation and semi-structured interviews) are compatible with the overall qualitative frame of this study, with the approaches of case study and action research. I describe these data collection and analysis processes fully in the relevant section of this chapter. Here I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of methods used in light of my composite research design.

My three research questions called for descriptive data allowing for the comparison of three classrooms and three teachers. The first question entailed a measurement in terms of overall talk in interaction and types of talk in particular. The second question targeted qualitative differences in the spoken interaction in the three classrooms and a greater understanding of the teacher talk that triggers different patterns of L2 learner talk, whilst the third question sought to understanding L2 classroom interaction from the teacher perspective.

The action research imperative of 'action for change' entails the need to measure that change in some form. The inclusion of an intervention and quasi-experimental elements in my study implicated some quantitative methods of analysis. Equally there was a need for clarity of approach and the right emphasis, as there is the risk that quantification of qualitative data can unbalance the overall nature of qualitative research

The disadvantages of using quantification within a qualitative study, as mentioned at the start of this chapter, are that there is the tendency to make claims that are misleading and incongruous within an otherwise qualitative study. Numbers are often seen as the enemy of qualitative research with their potential for distorting the 'voices' of participants (Hays & Singh, 2012). It was therefore important to guard against placing undue emphasis on the significance of any statistical analysis and to frame this quantification as servant of the qualitative analysis of classroom talk.

The advantages of employing quantitative analysis were three-fold. Firstly, the purpose was to make explicit the counting that helped to identify the frequency and prevalence of types of talk and types of utterance during the coding process of the lesson data. This level of implicit quantification usually takes place at some level during the identification of themes

during the coding of textual data (Bryman, 2008). Secondly, the descriptive data served to contextualise the microgenetic analysis of lesson data, giving an overall sense of the prevalence or scarcity of particular features, so that the reader was first conscious of the overall extent of the aspects of classroom talk under investigation in the study. This is relatively common practice is much predominantly qualitative work (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Lazaraton, 2000; Niglas, 2004; Bryman, 2008). Thirdly, the quantitative analysis was the first method employed to measure the change implicated by the intervention element in the study.

5.4.6 Role of the researcher

The role of the researcher is a complex balancing act in all qualitative research (Hays & Singh, 2012). To a large degree the issues I addressed in my research design were similar to those faced by action researchers evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the outsider / insider role within Action Research (Elliott, 2003; Fryer, 2004; Humphrey, 2007). I have already alluded to the particular issues of this study. Its mixed design set up a potential tension between researcher-participant roles embodied in the joint aims of understanding and change and the research strategies most appropriate to fulfil these purposes. In the framing of research questions, design and implementation of the intervention strategies and data analysis methods I found a balance that I believed would support teacher empowerment whilst facilitating a level of understanding that would add to the body of empirical work in the field of L2 learning.

   As the project proceeded, it was a case of continually balancing the tensions between the two purposes. As a collaborative action research case study, I felt much would be gained by adopting a supportive role, 'encouraging practical deliberation and self-reflection on the part of the practitioners' (Zuber-Skeritt, 1996, p.4-5). On the other hand, I was very aware that the instrumental nature of the study, with its primary focus on the spontaneous classroom talk generated as a result of implementing the talk strategies, would involve me as researcher in an intensive period of microgenetic discourse analysis during which I might run the risk of disenfranchising or cutting the teacher participants off from the post-intervention phases of the project. One consequence of this might be to diminish the relevance of the study to their professional practice, a key pedagogical aim and one of the principal motivations of the project. There was also the uncertainty of not knowing what findings the project would generate and if these would be well received by the teachers. Clearly this is something one can never be sure about, but it is more of a consideration when you are researching colleagues that you will continue to work with after the research is complete.

The main safeguard in this respect seemed to be clarity about the different roles and responsibilities within the project. I had clearly initiated the research process, providing the theoretical background and identifying the research questions. In addition, I had drawn up the principles of a pedagogic intervention from a synthesis of empirical classroom interaction research and sociocultural theoretical perspectives. However, the study was open and visible at all times to the two practitioners involved in teaching and implementing the intervention programme. The teachers themselves had autonomy in transforming the overarching principles into classroom practice. The teaching and learning that resulted from the intervention programme were as a result practitioner-driven. The interpretation of the impact of the talk intervention strategies and of the classroom talk that emerged during the study were based on my interpretation of raw lesson data, but teacher self-report data provided multiple perspectives that were also brought to bear, particularly on the pedagogical implications of the study. Needless to say, responsibility for overall analysis, findings and authoring the report remained solely mine. This partnership was explicitly negotiated between me and the other practitioners involved. All three teachers involved in the study (including the teacher of the control group) agreed to participate on this basis and were fully aware of the study's purpose and destination.

An unexpected advantage of the study was the way in which the collaborative learning fed into my own teaching. Whilst at the outset it may have appeared that the flow was one-way and that a dualistic knowledge giver / knowledge receiver relationship was asserting itself (Webster & John, 2010), as the study progressed the development was much more democratic and learning was mutual and collaborative (James, 2007; Elliot, 2007). Furthermore, the commitment in Action Research to teacher empowerment and to increase the ownership and agency of other practitioners (Winter, 1987; Barazangi, 2006) was borne out by the developments in the expertise and autonomy of all three project teachers, as described in chapter 11. In this way it can be seen that the personal journey aspect of Action Research remained intact and participant perspectives are at the heart of the study, producing layers of meaning that were fully reflected in its analysis and findings.

The acid test of this study was the extent to which the knowledge gained served two masters; the professional development of the teacher participants (including myself) and the field of L2 education and second language acquisition. Elements of mixed methods research are visible in the formulation of my research questions, the data analysis and data interpretation stages, although the priority is given to qualitative analysis. It is the analysis rather than the collection of data that is mixed method. The relative prominence given in the

study to the qualitative analysis and the framing of inferences from the data analysis are in line with the dominant qualitative nature of this study.

In a study whose research methods are sufficiently far removed from conventional norms to raise questions, the rationale for the research design must be more clearly explicated than might otherwise be necessary. Deciding what counts as good educational research involves disentangling questions of definition from questions of validity. In the preceding discussion I hope to have demonstrated that in the formulation of my research design I have achieved a cogently developed fit between valid research questions and appropriate methods. In the sections that follow, Following the summary of my research design, I describe the methods used in more detail and detail the contenxt of the case study, the school, the classes, the teachers and the learners.

5.4.7 Summary of research design

My research design comprised an action research case study situated within a sociocultural framework that informed the study's theoretical and pedagogical purposes, including its quasi-experimental intervention element. The following table provides a summary of my research design, including the principal methods:

Table 5.1:   Summary of research design

Research question	Research aims	Research approach	Research methods
1) Does experience of the intervention programme result in a higher ratio of learner: teacher L2 talk?	To determine the effect of teacher intervention on the levels of learner L2 talk in the foreign languages classroom	Action Research Case Study	Video recording of lessons Full lesson transcription Coding Descriptive analysis
2) Does the L2 talk produced by the experimental groups in the task interactions reveal qualitative evidence of improvement in the language produced?	To examine the nature of the learner L2 talk and analyse it in terms of overall L2 performance and learner motivation and confidence	Action Research Case Study	Microgenetic analysis of lesson transcripts
3) How do teachers perceive the relative effectiveness of the talk strategies on	To explore the perceptions of participants in the intervention programme to	Case Study Action Research	Self-report data Teacher interviews

their practice?	analyse its perceived effectiveness for FL methodology within the secondary languages classroom.		

I describe the methods used in the study in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter. First I consider the context of the case study, the school, classes, teachers and learners.

5.5 Context and sampling

Many researchers argue that the classroom setting is the most appropriate for studies of interaction since the interaction situated there is not contrived or controlled as it is in a laboratory setting (Lyster, 1998; Foster, 1998; Morris & Tarone, 2003), particularly if SLA research aspires to 'feed into teaching methodology' (Foster, 1998, p.21). My setting accordingly records learners interacting with their teacher and peer learners in a whole class instructional setting. The three classrooms from which the data in this study derived were from one 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in Cambridgeshire.

In my selection and description of context and cases for the study, I was mindful that the instrumental focus motivating the study was more important than the case.   "The more the case study is an instrumental case study, certain contexts may be important but other contexts important to the case are of little interest to the study" (Stake, 1995, p.64). In the sections that follow, I describe the process by which I selected the cases for inclusion in the study and detail relevant contextual information.

5.5.1 Selecting the 'cases'

The first criterion in the selection of cases is 'to maximise what we can learn' (Stake, 1995, p.4). For my study (and most case studies), the central concern was not the representativeness of the sample so I began by thinking about which choice of case, i.e. which teachers would yield most in terms of understanding the teacher and learner talk in the classroom. Stake points out that time and access are important considerations, but also that cases need to be receptive to the project. My aim was to identify teachers who would be prepared to reflect on their practice, and who would have the confidence to make changes in their pedagogy. With my focus on L2 teacher-learner interaction, I needed teachers who I knew had a strong commitment to using the target language, and who were already doing so in their practice.

There was certainly an aspect of 'theoretical sampling' (Glaser & Straus, 1967) in my choice of participants. According to Brewer (2004) this is 'when an optimal case is selected as the fieldwork site where the processes being explored can be expected to happen' (2004, p.315-6). It was clear from an early stage that the teachers I could be most sure of in this respect were those whose work I already knew well. This realisation had further implications, which I describe in the section of this chapter devoted to the ethics of my study. At this point I confirm only that, after balancing reservations about researching the work of my own colleagues with the advantages of selecting the best possible cases for my study as outlined above, I decided to proceed to approach three colleagues in the department to invite them to be involved in the study.

5.5.2 Setting

The classes involved in this study were all from one secondary school in Cambridgeshire, where I was at the time of the study and continue to be employed as a teacher of languages and senior leader. The school enjoys a position as a successful, over-subscribed fully comprehensive community school. It is situated in a relatively prosperous catchment area, compared to national averages, in a village location to the west of the university town of Cambridge. Although the pupil profile has changed slightly in recent years, the vast majority of students are from white British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. At the time of the study the school had 1373 pupils of whom 13.6% were from ethnic minorities, which was roughly the national average. The proportion of students with SEN was 14.1%, compared with a national average of 18.5%.

5.5.3 The learning context

Foreign language learners in secondary schools in Britain typically have little routine contact with the L2 outside school (Myles, Mitchell & Hooper, 1999; Ellis, 2008a). The main exceptions might be a family holiday, a school exchange trip or an informal club, but the classroom is the main source of L2 language experience for most school age learners in England. The learners in this study were no exception to this. A further aspect of the learning context relevant to this study is the homogeneity of learners with respect to their L1. All learners were L1 speakers of English. Even in cases where there were additional home languages spoken by learners in the classes, English was spoken by all fluently and, were it not for the specific intervention of the teacher, English would have been the preferred language of interaction for the students.

5.5.4 The teachers and style of teaching

All three teachers were full-time language teachers at the secondary school. At the time of the study they had between 3 and 7 years of teaching experience. None of the three teachers was a native speaker of German but all teachers had joint language degrees where one of the two languages was German. In terms of teaching methodology, all three teachers espoused what can be broadly termed a commitment to communicative language teaching and to using the target language as the main means of communication within the classroom. All three teachers had a strong interest in reflective practice and in particular in exploring aspects of pedagogy relating to target language use by both teachers and learners. In fact, the only reason why one particular teacher was allocated to the control group was because at the time of setting up the study the teacher was yet to join the school and it therefore made more sense for the two existing teachers to undertake the initial meetings about the intervention strategies. The rationale for having a control group and the implications of this decision are explored further in the section of this chapter dedicated to ethical considerations.

Teaching in the two experimental group classrooms aimed to implement the intervention strategies described in chapter 6 of this thesis. Lessons were predominantly conducted in the L2 and it was expected that the teacher would usually signal to the class before any code-switching from L2 to L1. Pupils were explicitly encouraged to participate in the L2 according to the ways in which the two experimental class teachers operationalised the intervention strategies.

5.5.5 The learners

The classes were year 9 classes of German. The experimental classes were two sets of German and the control class was one set of German. The German experimental classes were sets one and two of three and the control class was set three. At the time of the study the pupils studying German were all in their second year of studying German. All learners were between 13 and 14 years of age. All of the learners were dual linguists, that is to say, they were also learners of Spanish, which they had begun on entry to secondary school, at the age of 11. The choice of classes was determined by availability as these were the only classes of German in Year 9. It was important for comparative analysis purposes to have all three classes of the same foreign language. Equally important, given the participant nature of the research, was the need to involve teachers who were keen to collaborate in this study. Ultimately, this factor determined the classes to be included in the study, and which groups

were the experimental and which the control groups. It would otherwise have been advisable to try to achieve a more homogenous sample of classes in terms of ability. The three classes were the top three of five sets grouped by ability in this half year cohort, but of the three groups, it was sets one and two that were the experimental groups, and set three the control group. These three classes were the only classes learning German as their second foreign language, as sets 4 and 5 in the cohort were single linguist groups which learnt only Spanish. I argue that this limitation did not constitute a significant drawback, however, as the purpose of study was to intervene to try to change the interactional patterns of whole class talk and to understand the learning affordances that emerged. The study did not set out to measure or compare gains in attainment between classes, only differences in interactional patterns between them.

5.6 Research methods: data collection

There is no prescribed set of methods appropriate to action research or more particularly to an action research case study. Researchers working within this research paradigm are governed by the notion of 'fitness for purpose'. Implicit in my review of the research in chapter 2 of this thesis were several key considerations with regard to the way in which research within a sociocultural theoretical framework should proceed. From an SCT perspective learning is in the process of social interaction itself. In SLA studies operating within a sociocultural framework, there are compelling arguments made for a holistic approach to data collection that centres on the learning process and the L2 output as it unfolds in real time. If we accept that 'scaffolded performance is a dialogically constituted interpsychological mechanism that promotes the novice's internalisation of knowledge co-constructed in shared activity' (Wertsch, 1979, cited in Donato, 1994, p.41), then to understand the nature of L2 development as it occurs in teacher-learner L2 interaction we must devote our attention to the oral interaction itself as the location of the learning. Furthermore, Donato (1994) refers to Morrison and Low (1983) who "contend that to understand L2 production, we must observe the utterance-building process as it unfolds in real time" (Morrison & Low, 1983, p.232). This is consistent with the original development of sociocultural theory and Vygotsky's own views (Vygotsky, 1978).

   Further support for an holistic approach to research which centres on the learning process and not the outcomes of that learning is provided in an article outlining a vision for a 'theory of practice' for F/SLA (Hall, 1997). A genetic method of research, which takes account of social and classroom contexts, "requires minimally the examination of an individual's use of

his or her symbolic resources over time in their actual contexts of use, that is, in his or her communicative practices" (Hall, 1997, p.302). Drawing on the work of the psychologist Wertsch (1991), Hall elaborates further that we need to focus on the dialogic interaction itself because:

> It is the process of appropriation itself that is theoretically compelling. In this process, communicative moments are taken as the fundamental unit of analysis, as they provide the context where both individual behaviour and the sociocultural processes by which it is shaped can be studied." (Wertsch, 1991, cited in Hall, 1997, p.304).

Added to this are the methodological considerations suggested by my choice of case study design and the naturalistic setting of the classroom from which much of the primary data originated.

The overall research design of this study therefore, whilst it did not fully satisfy the criteria for any one paradigm or approach, was a flexible, composite model situated within the paradigm of action research. I adopted an exploratory and analytical case study approach with a quasi-experimental element and used discourse analytic methods to analyse primary data. The two data collection methods I employed were videoed lesson observation and semi-structured teacher and learner interviews.

5.6.1 Data collection: linguistic data

In line with the theoretical considerations detailed in the previous section, the primary aim of the data collection from the classroom was the talk itself, more specifically the teacher-fronted whole class talk. The purpose of the data collection was to enable a microgenetic analysis of the classroom talk which would require the accurate recording of spoken interaction, using either audio or video recording instruments. The decision to use video was motivated by the following considerations: firstly, I wanted to capture as full a picture as possible of the interaction, including gestures and other paralinguistic detail. Teacher scaffolding in the classroom can involve 'indexical' and 'inscriptional' modes that complement the linguistic support (Michell & Sharpe, 2005) and these might contribute to the process of understanding its significance for language learning; secondly, prior experience of transcribing from my master's study and from the pilot study for this research, which is reviewed in section 5.8 of this chapter, had shown that the process of transcription was more straightforward from video than from audio data alone.

At this stage I was mindful of balancing the advantages of video with the potential disadvantages, including the ethical considerations. I reflected in particular on the notion of the Observer's Paradox, first identified by Labov, who recognised that his aim of collecting

spontaneous, everyday or 'vernacular' speech was frustrated when explicit observation introduced a self-consciousness that caused his subjects to alter the mode of their expression, noting that 'the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation' (Labov, 1972, p.209).

There were several issues particular to the school context, and the languages department, teachers and learners in my study that, I argue, largely neutralized this effect. The first was the school's status as a training school and its ethos of 'open classrooms'. For a number of years the school had been building links with the local research community, encouraging its teachers actively to pursue educational research and welcoming university researchers to collaborate in classroom research projects with its staff. At the time of this study, around 20 teachers were in the process of completing or had completed masters' degrees in educational research. One net effect of this culture of research activity was the habitual presence of observers in many classrooms, and the recording of classroom interaction using video equipment. For the Year 9 learners in these classrooms, therefore, there was no observable novelty effect from the video camera, as I verified during both my master's and pilot studies.

The second was a related issue, namely the specialist status of the languages department in particular. A specialist language college since Easter 2006, the department regularly received visiting observers, including potential language teacher trainees, interested parents, language teacher colleagues from local schools, and various government-funded agencies filming elements of language teaching practice, including the QCA, CILT, and the DfES. In addition, in the course of my work preparing teacher training workshops and conference presentations, I had also filmed samples of teachers' classroom practice. I reserve the issue of informed consent for section 5.10 of this chapter, the discussion of the ethics of the study, but to summarise briefly the points made here, the potential disadvantages of videoing lessons were not perceived to be a significant obstacle in this study for reasons of the school's 'research culture' and priority learner familiarity with the practice.

I decided next how to observe the lessons I was video recording. Although I spent time examining the possibilities of several different models for classroom interaction observation schedules: Flanders (Flanders, 1960,1970); FLINT (Moskowitz, 1971); FOCUS (Fanselow, 1977, 1987); TALOS (Ullman & Geva, 1982); COLT (Allen, Fröhlich & Spada, 1984); and SCORE (Acheson & Gall, 1987), I considered the fixed structure of these models of observation schedule inappropriate for capturing specific, unpredictable episodes of classroom interaction as well as for noting the overall ratio of learner: teacher talk in the classroom. In addition, I realised that I might find it impossible to video-record the lessons as

well as complete a detailed observation schedule. I undertook therefore to make field notes during the 18 observed lessons to support the videoed raw lesson data.

Further considerations relating to the use of video in data collection were the positioning of the camera within the room, and the overall number and frequency of lesson observations. The position of the camera was motivated by two factors, both of which I explored in the pilot study (5.8). First, I was concerned to ensure that the position of the video camera that I had available to use would enable the adequate recording of linguistic data, such that would permit a detailed and accurate transcription of the verbal interaction. Second, I wanted to verify my assertions regarding the observation effect on learner talk behaviour in relation to the position of the camera in the classroom. Section 5.8 records the findings of the pilot study in more detail, but the result was that I positioned the camera at the back of the classroom focused on the regular teacher position for teacher-fronted whole class interaction, which was usually centre-right or centre-left of the classroom with the whiteboard behind and to one side.

The number and frequency of lesson observations concerned the need to identify particularly the time-specific boundary of the case. Stake (1995), following the ethnographer Louis Smith, refers to a case as a "bounded system" whereby it is helpful to specify 'that certain features are within the system, within the boundaries of the case, and other features outside' (Stake, in Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), 2000, p.436). The focus of the case study was teacher-learner interaction following the progress of teacher talk intervention strategies over the course of one academic year. After discussion with the teachers involved during stage one, it was clear that teachers felt most would be gained by observing lessons regularly but periodically during terms two and three of the academic year, that is to say, from January to June/July. During the first term teachers felt they would need time to 'get to know' their classes, establish the classroom routines, whilst they also reflected on the intervention strategies and planned their introduction. Accordingly, a lesson observation schedule was drawn up involving one lesson observation per month (which represented one lesson in eight) for each of the three classes, a total of 18 lesson observations. These details are included in the data collection summary section 5.6.3 below.

5.6.2 Data collection: self-report data

In addition to the videoed classroom observation I used semi-structured interviews for the collection of self-report data in this study. Participant involvement is central to the action research paradigm, as is the researcher's role in supporting professional reflection and

development. Within my research design therefore I included teacher interviews that took place with the two experimental class teachers half-way through the intervention teaching period, as well as interviews with all three participant teachers after the teaching intervention period was concluded. The experimental class teachers were also encouraged to record their reflections throughout the intervention period so that those notes might inform the interviews. In negotiation with the teachers themselves it was decided that these notes would not be submitted to me but would remain private documents for the purposes of teacher self-reflection.

Therefore, after approximately 14 weeks of the intervention period, but eight weeks into the observation period, and after two of the lessons for each teacher had been video-recorded, semi-structured interviews took place with each of the experimental group teachers. They were asked to comment on the intervention strategies and reflect on their practice so far in relation to each and this provided the overarching structure of the interview. Each interview was between 60 and 90 minutes duration. A year later, several months after the end of the intervention period, the experimental group teachers and the control teacher took part in semi-structured post-study interviews, the purpose of which was to provide (for the experimental group teachers) a point of comparison in their perceptions of the spontaneous talk intervention programme but also some indications as to the longer term impact of the talk strategies on their practice. These interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. All interviews were fully transcribed following the transcription of the videoed lesson data.

In addition, I had planned that a group of learners would also be interviewed once at the end of the data collection period. The selection of those learners was left deliberately open and I hoped that classroom interaction data would suggest particular learners that it would be most useful to interview. The difficulty that arose in relation to this aspect of the research design was that the identification of learners for interview emerged as a result of the microgenetic analysis of spontaneous talk episodes within the classroom data. The time that this analysis took exceeded my expectations by several months and meant that the interviews took place significantly 'post-study'. As Gass (2001) notes, Bloom (1954) found decreasing accuracy as a function of the time interval between the recall (whether stimulated or not) and the event recalled and concludes that, 'with greater time delays, it is not clear what can be claimed with regard to the memories that are being accessed' (Gass, 2001, p.227). However, having previously used to very positive effect (during my master's study) the technique of video-stimulated recall with a younger, lower ability learner, I decided to try to offset the potentially negative effects of time delay in the learner interviews by showing extracts of the learners themselves engaged in spontaneous talk and eliciting their reflections on these

interactions. Stimulated recall, employing a variety of different stimuli, has been used increasingly over the last decade in SLA research studies to gather learners' accounts and introspections on a variety of aspects of L2 learning (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Gass, 2001), including grammatical awareness, feedback (Nabei & Swain, 2002) and motivations for specific speech acts and behaviours (Hawkes, 2005). Notwithstanding the difficulties outlined above, I maintain that the insights gained from the learner interviews in this study support the primary data and justify their inclusion in the thesis.

5.6.3 Collection schedule

As described in the preceding sections of this chapter, the primary source of data were the 18 video-recorded lessons. Important secondary data were provided by the audio-recorded teacher interviews and the video-stimulated recall learner interviews. I include below a summary table of the data collection schedule for my study:

Table 5.2   Phases of the research study

Phase 1: Strategy Training and Pilot Study	Time	Research – Data collection activity
Pilot study of principal data collection method	September – October 2008	Two lessons observed, videoed and audio recorded Lessons transcribed Lesson observation schedules trialled Open coding applied → coding categories emerged Viability ascertained of method for collecting pupil talk data
Intervention planning and training – teacher briefing, strategies and approaches discussed	September – December 2008	Minutes from meeting Final list of intervention strategies
Teacher log	October - December 2008	Teacher's own reflections on lessons, learner response (for individual teacher use only)
Phase 2: Data collection – lessons and assessment tasks	Time	Research – Data collection activity
Main data collection period	January 2009 – June 2009	1 lesson per month per class videoed and/or observed = 18 lessons in total
Teacher log	January – March 2009	Teacher's own reflections on lessons, learner response
Teacher review and discussion	March 2009	Review Intervention - Discussion of learner experiences, differences between classes, identification of further strategies or approaches to trial Interviews audio-recorded

Phase 3: Interviews	Time	Research – Data collection activity
Teacher interviews	July 2009	Reflections on strategies, learner progress, L2 pedagogy and sustainability of methodology
Learner Interviews	June 2011	Data generated by pupil self-reflection in a video-stimulated recall interview

5.7 Research methods: data analysis

The purpose of the data analysis in this study was to generate knowledge about the amount and nature of learner L2 talk in the secondary foreign languages classroom, and the nature of teacher L2 talk and behaviour in this classroom interaction, examining in particular the outcomes of a particular set of SCT-based teacher talk and behaviour strategies designed to promote higher levels of learner L2 talk. Almost all of the data collected for this study were collected as raw oral data. These were lesson observation, teacher interview and learner interview data. The overall approach to analysis in this study was inductive, but it was guided by the overall theoretical framework of sociocultural theory, and the conceptual framework of spontaneous L2 talk developed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis. The key processes involved in data analysis were transcription, coding, descriptive analysis (between-case comparative analysis), interpretive pattern-finding, and microgenetic analysis (within-case analysis). I include first a table summarising the data analysis schedule and then describe each of the key analytic processes in turn in the following sub-sections:

Table 5.3   Data analysis schedule

Phase 1: Data reduction	Time	Data Analysis Activity
Data reduction: lesson observations	October 2008	2 lessons transcribed in full Pattern-analysis → open coding Learner: Teacher talk ratios all observed lessons
	January 2009	3 lessons transcribed in full and coded
Initial coding	February 2009	2 transcripts selected to elaborate coding system
Data reduction: lesson observations	March 2009	6 further lessons transcribed in full
Data reduction: lesson observations	End May 2009	6 lessons transcribed in full
Phase 2: Coding	**Time**	**Data Analysis Activity**
Further coding	July – December 2009	Code all lesson transcripts according to categories as emerged during initial coding
Phase 3: Analysis	**Time**	**Data Analysis Activity**
Interpretive analysis	January 2010 – June 2010	Data explored & patterns examined (lesson observation transcripts, observation schedules, teacher interviews, teacher logs, learner

		interaction task transcripts, learner interviews)

5.7.1 Transcription and Coding

In order to analyse the raw data they were first transcribed. This process corresponds to a preliminary analytic activity in stage one of Miles and Huberman's (1994) definition of qualitative data analysis as a concurrent three-stage process involving: '1) Data reduction, (2) Data display, and (3) Conclusion drawing/verification' (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.10).

To retain all potentially significant features of the discourse within the transcription I adopted a systematic and consistent approach in notation. As discussed previously, I aimed to include linguistic and paralinguistic features of the discourse. The transcription system that I adopted identified pauses; speech that could not be heard or understood; incomplete utterances; questions; the stressing of individual words or phrases and key information about gestures, body language, eye contact, movement given in brackets. See Appendix 1 for the transcription system, adapted from Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p.29), trialled in my pilot study and used for all lesson data in this study.

After each transcription, I imported the data into NVivo qualitative data analysis software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 2, 2002). I trialled the coding and retrieval processes using NVivo in my pilot study and describe the process I used in more detail in section 5.8. I then proceeded to code the data, using a system of open coding consistent with an inductive approach to analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), which I had also trialled during my pilot study. Adapting Charmaz (2006), I coded every utterance rather than her advocated 'line by line' coding during the process of 'initial coding', extending and elaborating my taxonomy of codes to fit all of the lesson transcript data. This was one way I remained intentionally close to all of the raw data during analysis. The full list of codes that became my coding framework for teacher and learner talk can be found in Appendix 2.

In informing this study's research questions, sociocultural theory was influential in determining where to look and what to look for. This was not the theoretically neutral 'unmotivated looking' of conversation analysis (Mori, 2004, p.539) but rather than determining codes *a priori* I was committed to coding in response to the data and not in advance of them. Nevertheless I acknowledged a number of aspects of classroom talk implicit in the talk strategies themselves, such as open/closed questions, teacher follow-up moves, extended exchanges and similarly for learner talk such as learner question and learner initiation.

5.7.2 Descriptive analysis and pattern-finding

The first research question required of my study that it demonstrate whether the use of the teacher talk strategies could lead to greater L2 learner talk in whole class interaction. The inclusion of a control group in the research design was precisely to enable a tentative probing of this cause-effect relationship by permitting a cross-case comparative analysis. The purpose of the numerical counts and frequencies were a first step; part display and part analysis. The summaries enabled initial comparisons to be made in the overall patterns of classroom interaction, but in addition they highlighted patterns that triggered further exploration using fine-grained microgenetic analysis. Foster and Ohta (2005) provide a coherent justification for such an approach:

> Quantification may be used to gain a partial understanding of a data set, but categories for quantification must emerge post-hoc from the data being analysed; application of a pre-determined set of categories to a different data set is avoided. Descriptive work is valued, and researchers work to preserve the human experience and to avoid reductionism. (2005, p.403)

Silverman (2001) argues that descriptive analysis in research that is essentially qualitative and interpretive in design can benefit both the research process and the reader, by offering a means to gain a sense of the data as a whole:

> Simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research. Instead of taking the researcher's word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a sense of the flavour of the data as a whole (2001, p.35).

To generate an overview of the interactional patterns occurring with each of the 18 lessons, I applied an observation analysis schedule to each of the 18 video-recorded lessons. I had already viewed the lessons twice by this stage, once in real time, once post transcription. With the aim of identifying overall learner L2 (and L1) output, quantities of teacher talk in L1 and L2 and other main learning activities, I generated my own interaction coding (see Appendix 3). Following established interaction analysis protocol (Ellis, 2008b), I applied this coding at three second intervals to the 18 video-recorded lessons.

This initial analysis allowed a cross-case comparison showing differences and similarities in terms of teacher and learner L2 (and L1) use. These findings are discussed fully in Chapter 7. As mentioned previously, the role of the 'counting' was to highlight patterns in the data and to indicate categories worthy of closer exploration. One example of the interplay between descriptive and microgenetic analysis was in the case of learner questions, where the highlighting of quantifiable differences led to a detailed qualitative analysis of the raw data and nature of the language used and functions of the questions within the classroom discourse

as a whole. A further example concerns learner 'longer utterances'. In this way, the descriptive analysis functioned in this study to assist the selection of relevant episodes for microgenetic analysis. Stake (1995) notes that, 'where the case serves to help us understand phenomena or relationships within it, the need for categorical data and measurements is greater' (Stake, 1995, p.77).

5.7.3 Microgenetic analysis

In their review of sociocultural methods of analysis, Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) identify three interconnected aspects of qualitative microgenetic analysis:

- Selecting relevant episodes for analysis
- Determining patterns of interaction
- Determining microgenetic growth (2005, p.236)

Having noted the part played by the descriptive analysis in highlighting episodes of talk for further analysis, I describe here how I used microgenetic analysis to examine changes in learner L2 talk that were triggered by a range of teacher talk moves. In terms of method I was guided by previous SCT studies of talk, but mindful that my research questions determined a different context for learning and therefore a different analytic emphasis. Mitchell and Myles (1998) observed that sociocultural studies of language learning were yet to provide evidence of 'learners' spontaneous oral (re-)use of the scaffolded items' and this was still the case in Lantolf's (2008) review of recent developments in sociocultural theory when he described as 'missing' the necessary observational evidence of the 'spontaneous use of the pattern in social performance' (Lanfolf, 2008, p.101). Despite the dominance of the 'participation' metaphor and what Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) refer to as the 'blurred' distinction between language use and language learning that is implicit in the sociocultural view of language learning (2005, p.229), it is clearly not unhelpful if studies of L2 learning can show that L2 development has taken place as a result of specific interactions. This was one of the two principal aims of the study and the focus of the second research question.

Selecting the non-IRE/F episodes (those interactions in which a third turn evaluation was absent) from one teacher's talk, I subjected all to a further process of coding, leading to the identification of functions within the teacher talk. From these I generated a model of teacher talk in the spontaneous talk episodes comprising three main roles or functions for the teacher talk. The aim of the microgenetic analysis was to reveal the link between these teacher talk moves and the development of learner interactional competence. The second focus of the microgenetic analysis was on the gains to learner L2 development in terms of linguistic

competence. The focus of the analysis here concerned the individual appropriation of vocabulary and structures, as well as distributed L2 development across the class and over time. The findings are presented in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

I have referred to the pilot study I undertook before beginning the main study several times during this chapter. I have reserved certain aspects of the discussion about methods for the report of my pilot study, as it was in the course of it that they were further refined. It is to a description of this pilot study that I now turn.

5.8 Pilot study

My pilot study involved the observation of three (and transcription of two) German lessons that I video-recorded. My purpose was to put to the test my data collection techniques, lesson observation proforma and my transcription and approach to coding. In the account that follows I describe only briefly the decision-making processes that developed during the pilot study, as I have already described in detail in the preceding sections of this chapter the methods of observation, transcription and analysis that I adopted as a consequence of the pilot.

5.8.1 Video recording

In the first lesson my aim was primarily to experiment with recording equipment to see if the sound and pictures were of sufficient quality as to allow accurate transcription. I also wanted to trial different methods of recording the data for future storage and retrieval purposes. Essentially, I wanted to know if it was preferable to pause recording briefly every five minutes to enable easy retrieval and interrogation of the data at subsequent stages and marry data that emerged from the observation notes. I also planned to see this class in its classroom setting and trial videoing from different angles within the classroom, paying attention to lighting, noting the limitations of the camera and defining thereby more accurately the kind of visual data that could be recorded at any one point in time. I needed to consider whether it was best in whole class teaching situations to focus the camera on the teacher and capture all of the teacher talk and behaviour or if there would be a rationale for moving the camera during the lesson. The first lesson observation in the pilot study was instrumental in highlighting many of these issues and as a result, I decided to focus the video recorder on the teacher and to record observations about learner behaviour, gestures and language in my observation notes.

5.8.2 Observation, transcription and coding procedures

In the second and third lesson observations I trialled the observation proforma and proceeded to transcribe and code the lessons. As I observed the second and third lessons I found that an attempt to record who was speaking, whether learner or teacher at set time intervals was very intrusive and did not permit a more holistic observation of the learner behaviour as planned. I realised that determining the overall interactional patterns in the lesson discourse would be more effectively achieved by subsequently analysing the video recording. In addition, the second part of the lesson observation proforma that I had designed I found was also too restrictive and I was drawn instead to a more unstructured notation of anything within the overall discourse that seemed worthy of more detailed exploration when viewing the material later.

Transcription proved difficult initially. Using the raw video footage, even with software specifically designed to aid transcription, the process was too slow, as the transcription programme InqScribe (Inquirium, LLC, Version 2.1, 2008) was unable to stop, rewind and start playing the material again sufficiently quickly. Eventually it proved best to use an audio transcription programme called Express Scribe (NCH Software, Version 4.22, 2008) that was able to slow the audio down effectively but was also quick to stop, rewind and start during the transcription process. Although the programme was audio transcription only, I found that having observed the lesson myself so recently, the audio triggered a strong 'visual imprint' of the lesson, which supported the transcription process. After transcription, I watched the video footage through from start to finish, with the benefit of the completed transcript to hand. I used this method of audio transcription shortly after each lesson supported by a further viewing of the video material together with the transcript to make additions and revisions as appropriate. This process confirmed my commitment to complete transcription on an on-going basis throughout the main study, adopting an iterative approach to analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Bryman, 2008).

The transcription system (Appendix 1) was adapted from Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p.29), was straightforward to use and provided a useful textual rendering of my oral data that was then immediately available for coding. I used the CAQDAS software package NVivo to apply coding to the raw lesson data. I describe the approach to coding that I used as 'open' although it was motivated by my theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Using this approach, I elaborated the provisional coding framework in Appendix 2. I needed to keep extending the coding framework in response to the lesson data. Appendix 4 shows the elaborated coding framework developed in response to all of the transcribed lesson data and

Appendix 5 a further coding framework generated in analysis of the stretches of interaction that were identified as non-IRE patterns.

In using NVivo I was mindful of the potential danger of de-contextualising and over-fragmenting the raw data (Bryman, 2008), which I argue is an inherent danger of the code and retrieval process of most qualitative data analysis. One way I aimed to offset this was by applying coding to every utterance in the raw data. In addition, I resolved to ensure that I revisited the raw data, both video footage and complete transcripts during the data collection and analysis period. In this way I aimed to keep avenues of enquiry and interpretation open and avoid premature conclusions.

In summary, the pilot study comprising three lesson observations and two lesson transcriptions enabled me to refine my data collection techniques, determine a strategy for videoing lessons, trial my lesson transcription method and system and improve those, and put into practice a process of open coding using NVivo to store my data. In addition, I noted the time involved in transcription and analysis and adjusted the data collection schedule for my main study accordingly.

Having detailed the epistemological and theoretical perspectives informing the overall research design of my study, as well as described in detail the methods I used to collect and analyse my data, including their development during a small pilot study, I now turn to consider the trustworthiness of its design and actualisation, both in terms of reliability and validity, as well as its ethics.

5.9 Reliability and validity

There is no consensus amongst researchers as to the right way to approach the issue of making claims about the strength or robustness of qualitative research. The constructs of reliability and validity originally pertained to quantitative studies and have specific aspects that they measure. As yet there has been no definitive adaptation of these constructs to qualitative work. What has been suggested by some researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 2008) is that different measures (and terminology) may be more appropriate in making judgements about qualitative research. In an attempt to provide as thorough as possible an account of this study's claims, I have matched Guba and Lincoln's alternative criteria for qualitative research to their quantitative counterparts and include in the discussion below every aspect of both criteria that pertain to this study. I conclude by summarising the relevant issues and potential threats to reliability and validity and the action taken to counteract these in Table 5.4 below.

5.9.1 Reliability (or dependability)

The concept of reliability within quantitative research is to do with the consistency of measurement and results. A high reliability rating would indicate that if you repeated the study or a particular measure within a study, you would obtain similar results. The measure of reliability in qualitative research usually refers in part to the clarity of research purpose, strategies and processes that underpin and inform a study such that, in theory, a replication of the study could take place. The situation of the study within the context of an existing debate helps the cause of reliability and, in addition, a connection with theory, ideas and previous research studies that provides the impetus for the research study can be useful in giving more weight to the objectives and aims of any given project.

My study is situated within a clearly defined theoretical framework, sociocultural theory. This framework was implicated in the overarching research purpose and design, the selection and development of methodological tools and the pedagogic intervention of the study. Ofsted's research findings (OFSTED, 1995, 2008) further confirm the status of learner L2 talk as an 'existing debate' and provide a relevant basis for the enquiry in the secondary foreign language classroom context.

Significant to the concept of dependability is the requirement also that the researcher document clearly and with transparency every stage of the research process. S/he should furthermore make the information available to those involved in the research and other interested parties, seeking their critical feedback. This respondent feedback is a particularly important element in establishing reliability as well as credibility or validity (Bryman, 2008). In addition to clarity of purpose and research aim laid out with detailed reference to its theoretical underpinnings, I provided earlier in this chapter a detailed description of the features of my case study, including the context of the school, selection of teachers and classes. I also made transparent the methods of data collection and analysis that I used in both my pilot and main studies. I maintained all videoed lesson and audio interview transcripts both in the 'raw' oral and textual formats.

In terms of respondent feedback, I provided samples of lesson transcripts to teachers involved in the study and conducted two interviews with them at strategic points during and after the teaching intervention to review their perceptions of changes to their practice and to learner talk within their classrooms. Their perceptions were fully represented in the final thesis, both at the design stage in the formulation of the third research question and in the analysis of their perceptions in chapter 9. To open up the process of research further still, I presented a paper emanating from this study at the IASK Teaching and Learning Conference in Portugal in December 2009 (Hawkes, 2010), presented briefly to other postgraduate

students at a university discussion seminar and fed back to colleagues in my department, including the three teachers who took part in the study.

To further increase the reliability of my analysis, I wanted to submit a portion of the raw data to repeated viewings and transcription. To this end, I involved a second person, a native speaker teacher of German from a different institution, to transcribe two of the lessons and by re-watching the raw video and checking the transcription myself I ensured that even at the first level of analysis there was a consistent approach. Finally, I investigated the 'inter-rater' reliability of the discourse analysis coding framework as I felt that this was important, given the integral role the coding process played in the substantive qualitative analysis of the study. I therefore asked each of the two experimental class teachers to code a portion of a lesson transcript. As teachers involved in the study, these two colleagues were clearly grounded in the theoretical background to the study. To re-create the procedures I had followed, I asked the teachers to watch the chosen lesson segment (approximately a third of a lesson). I then provided them with a transcript of the segment and the coding framework. By involving the teachers in the coding process, I sought to increase the collaboration of this phase of the study and open up the processes further to their professional scrutiny. Whilst it was never foreseen that the study would be completely collaborative at the analysis stage, nor did I want to risk disenfranchising teachers at this stage, given the level of autonomy they had been encouraged to exercise at the classroom intervention stage. Comparing my previous coding with that of both teachers I was able to determine a high level of inter-rater reliability.

5.9.2 Internal validity (or credibility)

In their work on reliability and validity in qualitative research, Kirk and Miller (1986) maintain that the source of most validity errors is 'asking the wrong questions' and that 'devices to guard against asking the wrong question are critically important to the researcher' (1986, p.30). One way to ensure that I was asking the 'right questions' was to make sure that the questions were congruent with the theoretical perspective that was the basis for the study and that they built upon previous studies in the field. Whilst the overarching research question motivating this study asked more of sociocultural theory than had previously been asked, the extension of this theory of learning to spontaneous classroom talk was fully supported by its conceptual framework.

Therefore, whilst it is not possible to rely on substantial empirical evidence from previous studies to support my study's observations, this is precisely because the study charts new territory by extending sociocultural theory to spontaneous classroom talk. Nevertheless, the cogent theoretical case for L2 learning emerging in guided teacher-learner interactions is

well-documented in chapter 2 of this thesis and empirical evidence from studies conducted in other contexts focusing on the development of L2 conceptual knowledge do support this stance.

Further threats to validity frequently levelled at qualitative studies concern the researcher's handling of the data. The omission of a sufficiently detailed account of the research process, the inaccessibility of 'raw' data, the selective use of 'telling examples' that support the main thesis with a concurrent failure to report on how representative of the whole data set the selected sections are, can all damage the validity of a study and make it less credible.

In addition to the points I made earlier about the dependability of my data handling and analysis processes, I can add here that in this study I took seriously a comment about my master's study that it would have been preferable to account for and code all the raw data available, rather than selecting at an early stage only those episodes that appeared relevant to the focus on the study. In the present study, to counteract the threat that only confirmatory evidence would be sought, I transcribed all of the videoed lesson observations and all available data were coded. Considerations of validity were instrumental too in my decision to quantify my coded lesson data. The initial descriptive analysis detailed in chapter 7 of this thesis, using post-hoc categories that were elaborated in response to the data, allowed patterns to emerge that would not otherwise have been easy to identify and led to the identification of foci for more detailed and illustrative qualitative analysis.

As a final point, I argue that the inclusion in the thesis of a large quantity of primary data, including lesson discourse and teacher interview data increases the dependability of the study and the triangulation of descriptive data, lesson transcripts and teacher self-report data further strengthen its overall reliability.

5.9.3 Ecological validity (or authenticity)

This aspect of validity shares several points of affinity with action research and one would therefore expect there to be abundant evidence to support my study's claims to it. First and foremost, ecological validity or authenticity concerns the relevance of the research to the everyday settings of those involved in it. As a study of L2 classroom interaction, I need to ask how closely I have aligned the study with the pedagogic concerns of language teachers, how well I have preserved the authenticity of the classroom context in my data collection and analysis, and, perhaps most importantly, how relevant are the study's findings to practising teachers.

The study was jointly motivated by theory and pedagogy. This dual purpose has had implications at every stage of the research process. The pedagogical motivation for this work

was evident in the identification of the 'problem' of L2 oral interaction and its role in L2 learning; it influenced the adoption of an action research element in the overall research strategy and the design of a pedagogic intervention; finally it guided the collaborative work with teachers during the whole project.

As documented, apart from teacher and learner interviews, all data came from naturally occurring lesson data. Successful attempts were made to preserve the authentic classroom learning environment. The two experimental teachers were given absolute autonomy in their interpretation and implementation of the intervention strategies, as befits an approach that sought to preserve authenticity in the classroom, as well as to recognise their status as professionals. The perceptions of all three teachers involved in the study confirm that involvement in it has given them the impetus to change their practice and empowered them to make further changes since. Such 'catalytic' and 'tactical' authenticity is clearly in line with the aims of action research.

The only negative element I grappled with as regards authenticity in this research design was the creation of a control group. The issues connected to the control group are explored in detail in the section below on ethical considerations. However, I can add to the discussion here that, since the conclusion of the teacher phase, all three teachers and, in fact, all 12 teachers in the languages department have shared in the findings of the study. Furthermore, colleagues in the department have been involved in shaping their own and others' practice related to learners' spontaneous talk through engagement in further project work, and this has included, for some teachers, dissemination at regional and national level. I would argue, therefore, that the findings from this study have had, and continue to have, pedagogic relevance and that this supports the study's claims to ecological validity.

5.9.4 Summary

The following table summarises the issues of reliability and validity described above as pertaining particularly to this study and the measures taken to control for them.

Table 5.4: Summary of issues of validity and reliability

Type	Threat	Compensation/Action
(External) reliability or dependability	Ability to replicate the study is made difficult by the uniqueness of the case and interpretative nature of the analysis	Clarity of research purpose supported by connection to 'on-going debate'
		Theoretical framework and constructs made explicit
		Clear documentation of every

		stage of research: Data collection methods and schedule explained Data analysis carefully detailed
		Clarity of information given regarding the status of the researcher, nature of the classes, teaching pedagogy used
(Internal) reliability or dependability	Nature of data makes re-analysis different by subsequent researcher	Transcription process shared and transcripts checked All 'raw data' maintained All transcription data coded Secondary researchers coded sample of transcribed data for inter-rater reliability
	Constraints of time/space make it difficult to present the 'thick' data such that other researchers arrive at same conclusions	Low inference descriptors in initial coding Respondent feedback On-going findings available for critical review Detailed description provided Lots of 'primary data' included in the final report Triangulation of data
Internal validity (or credibility)	The failure to ask the 'right questions' threatens the validity of all research studies	Research questions were informed by current pedagogical debate and underpinned by strong theoretical framework
	The nature of the data and its selection for analysis problematises the strength of the findings	The microgenetic interaction analysis remained very close to the primary observation data from lesson observations Secondary data from teacher and learner interviews strengthened the findings The addition of a quasi-experimental element in the form of a comparative control group enabled cause and effect relationships to be probed Descriptive analysis identified patterns for qualitative analysis Coding emerged 'ad hoc'
Ecological validity (or authenticity)	Research findings may not be relevant to those involved in the study	Study framed by pedagogical motivation Authenticity of classroom learning environment maintained All primary data obtained in normal classroom setting

	Collaborative Action Research crucial to research design Intervention supports 'catalytic' and 'tactical' authenticity Teacher perceptions confirm pedagogic and professional relevance

To conclude, this study offsets potential threats to its overall reliability and validity through a painstaking approach to transparency in the documentation at all stages of the research. The connection to current pedagogical debate and robust theoretical framing ensure a clarity of purpose that is matched in the overall research design and selection of methods, and strengthened by the inclusion of two experimental classes and a control group. At the analysis stage, every effort was made to enhance the reliability of findings through inter-rater reliability and repeated interrogation of the raw data. The inclusion of many examples of primary data in the final thesis and the initial descriptive analysis stage strengthen the internal validity of the work, and its strength as action research is underlined by the substantial evidence presented for the ecological validity of the study, which I argue is a particularly strong feature of this work. I turn now to a discussion of the ethical considerations and how these were approached before, during and since the study.

5.10 Ethical considerations

Certain considerations regarding the ethics of this study have been alluded to in earlier sections of this chapter but receive a fuller discussion here. Decisions taken at the design stage were informed by both the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2004) and the Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics (BAAL, 2000) but other ethical considerations emerged as the study evolved, and in reflection and consultation with my supervisor, I resolved each in a spirit of respect for all those involved in the study, as well as for the integrity of the research. The main aspects that I needed to consider involved issues of consent; anonymity and confidentiality; disclosure; inclusion of a control group in the research design; and my relationship to the teachers involved. I describe each of these in turn in the sub-sections that follow.

5.10.1 Consent

Informed consent for the study from the school was obtained in a meeting held with the school's Principal at the proposal stage. As mentioned previously, the school has strong links

with the local university and a well-established research culture. The Principal holds the view that classroom-based research feeds reflective teaching, is instrumental in teacher professional development and leads to innovation and improvement in pedagogy. On this basis, consent for the video-recording of lessons is sought in writing from all parents on entry to the school and this is differentiated for various levels of use and publication. Responses are collated and held centrally for consultation by teachers wishing to video-record lessons. I consulted the database of responses for the three classes chosen for this study to ensure that permissions were in place, which they were. I considered, however, that whilst this constituted permission to video-record lessons, this did not constitute informed consent to involvement in the research project as such. Given the age of the participants, I therefore drafted a letter of information about the research project and sent it to the parents and students of all three classes (Appendix 6). One further point to mention at this point is that the way that filming took place aimed to avoid intrusion and there was no disruption to normal teaching.

5.10.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

The commitment to guarantee confidentiality and maintain full anonymity was made to all participants and has been upheld. In addition, I undertook to keep all video material securely and ensure that it does not enter the public domain. The only difficulty that arose in relation to this was the fact that my authorship of this thesis and the information therein that I am a current employee of the school where the study took place represents a breach of anonymity for the school and by extension, a possible compromise to teacher, though not to learner, anonymity. However, the use of pseudonyms for all study participants and the size of the languages department which has 12 teachers, together with the informed consent of the three project teachers on this basis, were considered acceptable safeguarding in this respect.

5.10.3 Disclosure

This concerns the degree of knowledge sharing with participants about the purpose and focus of the study. In this respect, I adopted a different approach as appropriate to the role and level of engagement of the different participants. For the experimental teachers, as required by the expectations of collaborative participation within the action research paradigm, there was clearly a need for full information sharing. A feature of the study's design was the complete autonomy in terms of teachers' adaptive use of the intervention strategies as was appropriate to the notions of teacher professionalism but also true to the requirements of good teaching. I had to accept therefore that as a consequence the results of the intervention strategy might be

partly due to the success of the strategies themselves but also partly due to the heightened criticality and professional reflection and awareness of their own teaching that involvement in the study provoked. This is an issue that I return to in my analysis of teacher perceptions in Chapter 9 of this thesis. As far as the students' awareness of the precise focus of the study was concerned, I had to allow this to be governed to a certain extent by the pedagogy of the individual teachers involved in the experimental classes. The degree to which the two teachers explicitly explained their approach to their classes reflected their normal approach and what they might have done when introducing any activity or approach for the first time.

5.10.4 Control group

As the site of this study was the secondary languages classroom the nature of research was constrained by what was permissible and ethical within this setting. Of all the issues I faced, the notion of the 'control group' was the one that presented me with the most concern. I considered carefully the extent to which the experimental groups might have been advantaged over the control group in the extent to which the teacher talk strategies were a positive intervention to which the control group was, for the duration of the intervention, denied access. I defend the inclusion of the experimental element on the basis that it strengthened the overall design and the basis upon which I might be able to make claims about classroom talk regarding the impact of the teacher talk strategies. In addition, I considered the exploratory nature of the strategies a reason to be very tentative about claims about the potential gains in L2 talk. I was therefore not intentionally depriving learners of teaching strategies that I knew would work. In this case it seemed the most responsible course of action to design a study that offered the best chance of identifying those aspects of teacher talk and behaviour that do facilitate higher levels of learner L2 talk so that at some point in the future there would be findings reliable enough such that they would feed back directly into practice.

5.10.5 Researcher-teacher relationship

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, despite my conviction that two particular teachers in my department would be the best cases for this study for the reasons detailed above, I had some reservations about researching the work of my own colleagues. Knowing them well I was confident that they would not be in danger of compromising the validity of the study by giving me answers they thought I would want to hear. At the same time I was satisfied that there would be no ambiguity in their perceptions about my purpose in the classroom. In my role years earlier as head of department I had line managed both of the experimental class

teachers but at the time of the study much of my work took place outside of the languages department and I was no longer in a direct management role as far as they were concerned. In addition I was convinced that they would not take part unless they had a personal and professional interest in doing so; that they would not feel obligated to do so.

My principal concern centred on steering the most useful course as teacher-researcher. As a collaborative action research case study, I felt much would be gained by adopting a supportive role, 'encouraging practical deliberation and self-reflection on the part of the practitioners' (Zuber-Skeritt, 1996, p.4-5). On the other hand, I was very aware that the instrumental nature of the study, with its primary focus on the spontaneous classroom talk generated as a result of implementing the talk strategies, would involve me as researcher in an intensive period of microgenetic discourse analysis during which I might run the risk of disenfranchising or cutting them off from the post-intervention phases of the project. One consequence of this might be to diminish the relevance of the study to their professional practice, a key pedagogical aim and one of the principal motivations of the project. There was also the uncertainty of not knowing what findings the project would generate and if these would be well received by the teachers. Clearly this is something one can never be sure about, but it is more of a consideration when you are researching colleagues that you will continue to work with after the research is complete.

The main safeguard in this respect seemed to be clarity about the different roles and responsibilities within the project. I had clearly initiated the research process, providing the theoretical background and identifying the research questions. In addition, I had drawn up the principles of a pedagogic intervention from a synthesis of empirical classroom interaction research and sociocultural theoretical perspectives. However, the study was open and visible at all times to the two practitioners involved in teaching and implementing the intervention programme. The teachers themselves had autonomy in transforming the overarching principles into classroom practice. The teaching and learning that resulted from the intervention programme were as a result practitioner-driven. The interpretation of the impact of the talk intervention strategies and of the classroom talk that emerged during the study were based on my interpretation of raw lesson data, but teacher self-report data provided multiple perspectives that were also brought to bear, particularly on the pedagogical implications of the study. Needless to say, responsibility for overall analysis, findings and authoring the report remained solely mine. This partnership was explicitly negotiated between me and the other practitioners involved. All three teachers involved in the study (including the teacher of the control group) agreed to participate on this basis and were fully aware of the study's purpose and destination.

5.11 Conclusion

In this chapter my intention was to explicate the epistemological perspective underpinning this study, and to delineate clearly the implications of its theoretical framework for the overall methodology, data collection and most particularly data analysis methods. Central to the research methodology of the study were the collection and analysis of teacher and learner L2 classroom talk. These raw data were transcribed, coded and subjected to processes of descriptive analysis to identify patterns of interaction, which in turn led to the identification of relevant episodes of talk for further detailed analysis. These episodes were microgenetically analysed, using a further process of open coding, and involving an iterative reading and a re-reading of the raw data. This microgenetic analysis identified evidence of L2 development and aspects of teacher talk that support this development. Secondary data from observation notes, teacher interviews and learner video-stimulated recall interviews supplemented primary lesson data.

Consistent with the approach of interpretive case study within action research, the design was flexible and mixed in method. Although the overall approach was consistently interpretive, the inclusion of a control group in the design allowed for a comparative study that permitted the probing of cause and effect relationships implicit within the research questions and intervention programme itself. I turn now to describe the intervention programme in detail, presenting its underlying principles, the teacher talk strategies themselves, and the way teachers worked with the strategies to operationalise them in the classroom.

Chapter 6 The intervention

The research problem that motivated the intervention in this action research study emerged from a wider reading of the relevant SLA and classroom interaction literature, an in-depth review of L2 use within the secondary classroom context in England, as well as observation of teaching within my own department. The study was therefore based on a systematic exploration of the context and the theoretical framework from which strategies were extrapolated and the intervention programme designed. The main research purpose of my study was theory-building in relation to target language spontaneous talk in the FL classroom setting and the intervention was not about initiating change in a broader institutional context but linked to the ecology of the secondary languages classroom.   In addition, the intervention at the heart of this action research strategy incorporated a quasi-experimental element in the design as discussed in the previous chapter.

   In this chapter I detail both the underlying principles and the specifics of the intervention, outlining the strategies that constituted it as well as describing the ways teachers implemented them. The ways in which teachers interpreted the strategies for the classroom defined the nature of the intervention and had a substantial impact on the L2 language produced. I describe how I worked with the participant teachers and the extent to which they contributed to the initial set of strategies. I begin by clarifying the concept of 'spontaneous talk' as the overarching goal of the intervention, which was shared with the teachers at the initial strategy discussion meeting.

6.1 Talking or speaking? Clarifying the concept of 'spontaneous talk' with teachers

Within the field of SLA, working within psycholinguistic paradigms, language production is typically referred to as either 'input' or 'output' depending on the learner's orientation in the interaction at a given time. Those working within the SCT paradigm prefer to avoid these descriptors because they emphasise the inherent dualism within cognitive approaches to SLA. In recent studies, Swain has coined the neologism 'languaging' in preference to 'output' (Ellis, 2008) but this can be misleading as it refers most often to learner talk about language, whether in L1 or L2. Within most SCT studies individual sequences of L2 speech are often referred to simply as 'utterances' and this is the term the project teachers and I used to describe the stretches of L2 talk the classroom.

   Within an English institutional setting, spoken output is ubiquitously referred to simply as 'speaking', and it is one of four discretely taught and assessed skills, the other three being

listening, reading and writing. There are a number of reasons why I explicitly rejected this term in discussing the intervention strategies. Firstly, the separation of speaking from listening, the two skills jointly implicated in interaction is as inconsonant with SCT as the terms 'input' and 'output' because it ignores the commitment to receptive activity that is involved in real communication. Secondly, the term 'speaking' recalls the rather mechanistic function of speech of behaviourist methodologies, such as audiolingualism.

In the opportunities for L2 interaction that current national foreign language education policy requires teachers to provide, i.e. unrehearsed conversational exchanges, the idea is that teachers will not know exactly what language the students will produce in the interactions. The speaker, whether teacher or learner, will only have something to say as a result of having heard and understood what has been said previously, and this will involve listening and understanding. Every utterance will have a dual function, simultaneously reception and production, listening and speaking. In my view the term 'talking' (or 'talk' to denote the speech produced) goes some way to capturing the two-dimensional nature of this spoken interaction. Defining talk, Jones (2002) distinguishes between 'language rehearsal and language use' (2002, p.82), whereby talk refers only to language use. I therefore made the distinction between 'speaking' and 'talking' explicit in my discussions with the project teachers.

'Spontaneous' is a term used in the original versions of both the National Curriculum and KS3 Framework documents. Despite its omission from the latest versions, inspection reports continue to use the term to describe the unrehearsed, unscripted L2 language use for everyday communication that they would like to see from learners in the classroom. Hawkins (1987) defines the spontaneous speech act as one produced 'with no thought of whether the form is correct or not but simply aimed at solving a problem' (1987, p.256), a definition remarkably consistent with one offered by Janeen Leith (2009), founder of The Talk Project, a training course for language teachers aimed at developing spontaneous learner talk: 'Spontaneous talk happens when kids set off on a sentence without knowing how they are going to finish the sentence' (TES forum post, 2009).

I drew on all of these sources to define spontaneous L2 talk in the secondary languages classroom as utterances of unplanned learner-generated L2 talk with intention to mean. It might be learner-initiated or a response to a teacher question. It might be within an oral task or part of everyday communication between tasks. In a chapter dedicated to encouraging more talk in the modern languages classroom, Jones (2002) comments: 'the idea that teachers should not *always* have practised sufficient language to enable their learners to complete a task seems relatively novel' (2002, p.86). A guiding principle for 'spontaneous talk' in our

project was, then, that the teacher would not know in advance what the learner was going to say. The role of the intervention strategies was to plan for teacher talk that would encourage this unplanned, spontaneous learner talk.

6.2 Principles of the pedagogical intervention

The talk strategies that constituted the intervention element of this study were underpinned by several core principles, all of which were informed by the sociocultural theory of learning that framed it. In this section I briefly explain these underlying principles.

I start with the premise that interaction benefits L2 learning above all when opportunities for communicative language use, whereby learners are focused on the message and choose what they want to say, are maximised (Cathcart-Strong, 1986; Hawkins, 1987; Salter, 1989; Ellis, 1998; van den Branden, 2006). Acknowledging that such interaction is compromised in most classrooms, where the dominant pattern of discourse is the IRE/F exchange (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988) and the majority of decisions about when to speak and even what to say are made by the teacher (Westgate et al., 1985; Hall, 1995; Consolo, 2000; Macaro, 2000; Mantero, 2002; Alexander, 2006; Waring, 2009; Rivera, 2010), it is clear that any intervention strategies need to seek actively to disrupt the prevailing discourse pattern. The principles that informed the development of non-IRE/F patterns of oral interaction included a focus on more open-ended teacher questioning (Nystrand et al., 1997) preferring referential to display questions (Brock, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983; Cullen, 1998; Nunn, 1999; Lynch, 1991, Pica & Long, 1986; Ernst, 1994; Tan, 2007), the use of teacher follow-up questions to extend learner participation (Hall 1998, cited in Hall &Walsh, 2002; Verplaetse, 1998), and enabling learners to take greater control of topic nomination (Slimani, 1989; Ellis, 1998).

Instances of spontaneous learner L2 talk in English secondary foreign languages classrooms were found to be rare, partly as a result of the afore-mentioned dominant classroom discourse patterns, but partly too perhaps because teachers are focusing too heavily on pre-communicative activities at the expense of providing opportunities for unscripted, unplanned L2 use (Littlewood, 1981; Salter, 1989; Chambers, 1991). A priority for teacher talk strategies within the intervention programme was therefore to plan to include tasks that focused on language use rather than language rehearsal.

The central role of the teacher and the choice of teacher-fronted whole class interaction in this intervention is a point of tension within this study. The unique contribution that 'the dialogically constituted interpsychological event between individuals of unequal abilities' (Donato, 1994, p.37) can play in helping the novice learner to develop his/her communicative competence is set against the well-documented rarity of learner-initiated L2 contributions in

teacher-led classroom discourse. Consequently many researchers have focused on pair and group tasks as a positive locus for the development of L2 learner talk (Macaro, 1997; Ellis, 2003) and this has also occurred within SCT studies of L2 learning. However, as previously highlighted, the focus for learning has been the development of conceptual knowledge, and the use of L1 or L2 has not been of primary importance to these studies. In studies where L2 meaning-oriented interaction has been the focus, there is more of a suggestion that learner-learner interaction might not provide the same learning opportunities as interaction with an expert interlocutor (Pica et al., 1996). In addition, there is also evidence that learners will not always interact in their L2 if left to their own devices, particularly when they share their L1 (Harris et al., 2001). These are the principles upon which my choice of teacher-fronted classroom interaction strategies is based.

Having acknowledged, however, that teacher-fronted talk appears to constrain learner initiations and that one factor might reside at the level of discourse organisation, I recognised in addition the potential role of learner anxiety that is well documented in SLA literature (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan, 2003). MacIntyre (2007) more recently conceptualised the push-pull factors involved in the decision to engage in L2 interaction or hold back from it as a dynamic, volitional process involving a complex interaction of forces. At the heart of encouraging a preparedness to have a go, to take the risk, there is the need for teachers to provide means of mitigating learner anxiety (Young, 1999) and this principle fed into the overall design of the intervention programme. As with the examples of classroom discourse that deviate from the IRE/F sequence, however, there was scant evidence in the literature of a proven set of strategies that reduce anxiety and encourage higher levels of learner L2 output. Nevertheless there was some evidence that humour created and fostered by the teacher could support a learning atmosphere in which students feel they are able to disagree with the teacher and express their own views (Consolo, 2000; Duff, 2000).

A further disincentive for learner L2 contributions to whole class interaction was explicit error correction. As Holmes (Jones et al. 2002) comments:

> If the teacher intervenes too swiftly or comes across as too critical, this may result in curbing learners' initiative and readiness to say what they want to say. The teacher needs to create positive attitudes to error and a learning environment where learners feel comfortable to experiment with language. (Jones et al., 2002, p.73)

In addition, construing teacher-learner interactions within a scaffolding framework of implicit to explicit feedback moves is, as discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis, entirely consistent with a sociocultural theory of learning (Lantolf &Aljaafreh, 1994; Verplaetse, 2000; Ohta, 2001).

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Therefore the principle of generating contingent teacher responses to learner talk, whereby evaluation moves were largely avoided was considered important to the intervention design.

The notion that the development of talk is a process of dual skill development, implicating the skills of listening and speaking was also a core principle of the teacher talk strategies (Van Lier & Matsuo, 2000; Nakahama, Tyler & Van Lier, 2001; Crichton, 2009). For successful engagement in L2 conversation, listening and speaking had to be developed jointly so that language learners can 'improve their listening comprehension and discourse management skills in cooperation with their speaking skills in interactive and interpersonal activities' (Roebuck & Wagner, 2004, p.70). Comprehension is often underplayed in discussions about L2 language use. A previous project designed to generate higher levels of learner spontaneous talk reported improved listening skills as 'an unexpected outcome' (Harris et al., 2001, p.91) but it was an intended aim of this intervention that, inasmuch as teachers would not know what learners were going to say, learners would need to work to understand what teachers were saying. The unpredictability in the interaction would run both ways.

A further principle underlying the focus on teacher-fronted whole class discourse was the potential for L2 learning that might be triggered by peripheral participation in the talk. Although as yet under-researched, there was evidence to suggest that learners not directly implicated in the teacher-learner dialogue might nevertheless benefit from it (Gibbons, 2003; Lantolf & Yáñez-Prieto, 2003; Michell & Sharpe, 2005).

Finally, the framing of the intervention strategies as suggestive rather than prescriptive acknowledged the need for the project teachers to retain professional autonomy. In so doing I recognised that any pedagogical changes that might ultimately prove worthwhile and/or sustainable would need to belong to the teacher's own repertoire of practice. I return to the implication of this principle in section 6.4 of this chapter. Before describing the intervention strategies themselves, I provide a summary of the principles underlying the intervention strategies in Table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1: Core principles of the pedagogical intervention strategies

Spontaneous L2 learner talk must be meaning-oriented and must enable learners to say what they want to say
The IRE/F structure of teacher-learner interaction should be avoided in favour of less inhibiting discourse patterns
Pre-communicative activities should be minimised in favour of more frequent communicative activities
The teacher role is uniquely important in providing contingent oral support to novice learners as they use limited linguistic resources to express themselves. (Pair and group work is valuable but does not provide the same opportunities for L2 development).
There is a need to offset learner anxiety in whole class L2 interaction and humour has an important role to play.

Explicit correction is a disincentive to learner initiation and L2 learning is supported when teacher scaffolding is sensitive to learner needs as they unfold within each interaction
Spontaneous L2 talk develops the skills of listening and speaking and attention should be given to both.
Peripheral involvement in whole class L2 interaction may also promote L2 development.
Changes to teacher pedagogy need to preserve the authenticity of the classroom and teachers will need to make any strategies their own, developing and adding to them as appropriate.

6.3 The teacher talk and behaviour strategies

The following teacher strategies were designed in line with the principles outlined above. In the main they are the strategies that formed part of the teaching repertoire during the study and were the foundation of the L2 discourse for the duration of the intervention period. The strategies frame teacher talk and behaviour operating at two levels akin to those described as 'macro' and 'micro' by Wells (1996). At the macro level, the teacher was responsible for designing and organising the overall lesson framework, planning and initiating activities that would provide appropriate activities in light of the stated aims of the intervention. It was clear that unplanned talk for the learner did not mean unplanned talk for the teacher. Enabling learners to say what they wanted to say would require thoughtful planning and design of appropriate tasks, as well as a planned approach to the teacher's own use of language, modelling language that learners might absorb into their own repertoire. As Bernadette Holmes (Jones et al., 2002) puts it, 'we can plan the progression in our own use of target language in such a way that pupils will be able to systematically borrow structures from the teacher stimulus and manipulate them to their own purposes' (2002, p.75). This calls to mind the 'borrowing' Bruner regards as such a crucial component in the interactional scaffolding provided by parents in children's L1 acquisition (Bruner, 1986).

At the micro level, in contrast, teaching could be characterized much more in terms of response:

> Having created setting and provided the challenge, the teacher observes how students take it up, both individually and collectively, and acts to assist them in whatever way seems most appropriate to enable them to achieve the goals that have been negotiated (Wells, 1996, p.83).

Following Wells (1996), I grouped the teacher intervention strategies accordingly into 'macro' and 'micro' strategies, reflecting those strategies implicated in the lesson planning and design as well as those governing the teacher talk in spontaneous interactions. There is a sociocultural perspective to these approaches to interaction in both areas of teaching.

As a way to ensure a shared understanding of the underlying principles of the intervention, the following overarching aims of teacher L2 talk were shared with the project teachers:

1. To provide rich input that is comprehensible to the learners and at the same time provides a modelling of key structures that can over time be appropriated by the learner and will appear in learner L2 in the classroom interaction.

2. To elicit longer, more extended L2 utterances from the learners.

3. To facilitate longer, multi-exchange interactions with the learners.

4. To engender more spontaneous, personalised L2 use amongst learners, including more learner-initiated L2 utterances.

5. To encourage more frequent use of learner L2 questions in the discourse.

6. To increase the ratio of learner: teacher L2 talk in the classroom interaction.

6.3.1 Macro strategies (planning the talk, task design and classroom management)

1. At the outset to the intervention, the teacher may engage pupils in a psychological 'buy in' to the notion of the L2 as the principal means of communication in the languages classroom by both teacher and pupils. This could be done via a short talk in English, asking students to project themselves forward into the future and imagine themselves as successful communicators in the foreign language. The teacher will lead students to the realisation that the most logical, effective way to achieve this is to actively engage in as much L2 talk as possible. The climate in which it is the norm to take risks and make mistakes when speaking in the L2 will also be established and the way paved for a mutually supportive, collaborative learning community in the classroom.

2. Some language for interaction may be explicitly taught and practised. The language that teachers choose for this will be selected on the basis that it can be re-cycled and adapted for spontaneous use in unrehearsed situations. (See Appendix 7 for some examples).

3. Tasks (such as hot-seating or other similar activities) that promote learner question-forming may be included and learner questions will be actively solicited whenever possible. (See Appendix 8 for example of task type).

4. Teachers will plan to offer frequent opportunities for learner hypothesis and supposition, actively seeking to elicit personal responses (I think that… because). This may be supported by the inclusion of tasks such as 'Odd one out' activities (See Appendix 9).

5. Humour will be intentionally used to diffuse tension and reduce anxiety.

6. Teachers may use a version of a 'no hands up' policy.

7. Teachers may consider using a 'wait-time' strategy to support learners in thinking through what they want to say.

8. Teachers may allow students to discuss their ideas in pairs in the target language before contributing to whole class discussion.

9. Teachers will accept (even solicit) deviations from their lesson plan.

10. Teachers may try out different positions within the classroom to reduce their physical dominance.

6.3.2 Micro strategies (managing spontaneous classroom talk)

1. Teachers may ask predominantly referential questions, or make display questions function referentially.

2. Teachers may ask questions and take several learner responses before responding.

3. Teachers may withhold explicit correction whenever possible, responding to content more than form.

4. Teachers may encourage learners to respond to the contributions of other learners.

5. Teachers may actively encourage spontaneous contributions.

6. Teachers may scaffold contributions whenever possible and co-construct learner utterances.

7. Teachers may prefer fewer extended exchanges with several learners rather than brief question and answer exchanges with the majority.

8. Teachers may avoid repeating learner contributions (as this can function as evaluation and conclude interactions prematurely).

9. Teachers may model extensively in their talk examples of language for learners to incorporate into their own repertoire.

   In the final section of this chapter, I describe the ways in which the project teachers engaged with the strategies following our initial discussion meeting, some typical tasks the two teachers developed and used during the intervention period, as well as indicating individual differences in the approaches taken.

6.4 Strategy implementation

As indicated in the previous chapter, every attempt was made to preserve the authentic classroom learning environment and the two experimental teachers were given complete freedom in their interpretation and implementation of the intervention strategies, as befits an approach that sought to preserve authenticity in the classroom, as well as to recognise their status as professionals. Following the initial meetings with teachers, they took away a copy of the intervention strategies and began to experiment with different approaches with their

classes. There were no observations for eight weeks as agreed with the class teachers to enable them to get to know their classes better and to try out various strategies for themselves, without the intrusion of the video camera. During this period I had only the briefest of communications with both teachers.

Classroom observations from January onwards enabled me to see both the types of task that teachers were including in their lessons, as well as form initial impressions of the approach each teacher was taking. One task that both teachers used was a picture stimulus task. I describe one example of this approach used by each teacher.

In one lesson I observed, Teacher 1 used pictures of young people and encouraged her students to create an identity for each one. Figure 6.1 shows the stimulus used in the lesson. Inviting students to hypothesise, the teacher asked them familiar questions that functioned referentially because of the imaginative context. In another lesson, she displayed funny (amusing and peculiar) pictures of sporting activities to generate spontaneous responses.

Figure 6.1: Picture stimulus for Teacher 1, Lesson 4 (March 2008)

Teacher 2 employed a similar approach in the first lesson I observed, using the picture stimulus shown in Figure 6.2:

Figure 6.2: Lesson stimulus Teacher 2, Lesson 1 (January 2008)

The lesson structure was a simple one. The teacher introduced a photo, displayed on the white board, of Julie Andrews dancing on the Austrian slopes from the film 'The Sound of Music'. She explained that the purpose of the lesson was to talk in German and that it was important for all of them to talk so that there would not be hands up to answer questions but that instead she would throw her small soft basketball to the student who would answer first and then others could choose to contribute and comment until the ball was thrown to another student. This activity, as in fact the entire lesson, was conducted in German. She then asked the first of three questions, 'Was sieht man im Foto?' *[What do you see in the photo?]* and asked learners to discuss their responses in pairs, giving them two minutes for this task. Whole class oral interaction to feed back and discuss the answers followed this pair work. The same pattern ensued for the second question 'Was kann man in Österreich machen?' *[What can one do in Austria?],* the learners having several minutes in pairs to discuss their responses, and the third question, 'Was hat diese Frau gestern gemacht?'*[What did this woman do yesterday?]*, for which they had another few minutes of discussion time before again feeding back answers in teacher-led whole class interaction. The entire lesson was oral interaction, of which around 80% was teacher-fronted whole class interaction and 20% was paired speaking preparation time.

This approach showed that teachers were actively engaged in creating tasks to promote spontaneous meaning-focused L2 use and that they were operationalizing both 'macro' and 'micro' strategies. Another approach I saw from both teachers was the explicit teaching of particular interactional language that teachers intended would re-surface subsequently in more spontaneous situations, as in macro strategy 3. Teacher 1, for example, modeled two L2 questions and one phrase that learners used to complete a whole class correction of a listening task. When called upon, learners framed the answers they had written to the listening task as questions of the teacher. In this lesson, written support was initially provided to support their L2 production as is shows in figure 6.3:

Figure 6.3: Teacher 1: Macro Strategy 3 - pre-teaching interaction language

	Wohin?	Warum?
1	Gmunden	um Wassersport zu treiben
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Fahren sie nach…..?   Ich bin nicht sicher   Ist das..?
Are they going to….?   I am not sure   Is that..?

Teacher 2 also used the strategy of pre-teaching some language that she selected on the basis that it might later appear in learners' spontaneous L2 use. At the start of the lesson she explained that she and the German assistant had made a short one minute video and that they would need to respond to some true/false statements based on what they saw but that instead of using 'Ja/Nein'*[Yes/No]* they should instead use an alternative response. She then proceeded to model these to the students. The language she had chosen is shown in Table 6.2:

Table 6.2: Teacher 2: Macro Strategy 3 - pre-teaching of interaction language

vielleicht	perhaps
wahrscheinlich	probably
das stimmt (nicht	that's right/not true
keine Ahnung	no idea
ich glaube schon	I think so
Ich bin (nicht) sicher	I am (not) sure

She went through each one and explained them in German, ensuring they knew what they were. Later in this lesson, after watching the video, learners had to respond to each of the statements about the film using one of these responses. As with Teacher 1's lesson, we can see that the learner language use in these lessons was essentially pre-communicative, but the intention was that learners would use the language spontaneously on subsequent occasions.

From these examples we see that both teachers were committed to translating the intervention strategies into practice. We see that there were some areas of overlap in their practice too, in the use of picture stimulus tasks and in the pre-teaching of some interaction language. During the intervention period and prior to the transcription and analysis stages, I perceived that in one respect the approach taken differed between the two experimental class teachers and this was confirmed also during the mid-stage teacher interviews. Teacher 1 kept her lesson content more closely in line with the existing scheme of work than Teacher 2, seeking to integrate her learner talk opportunities more fully into textbook tasks and other activities that she felt she needed to complete to ensure curriculum coverage. Teacher 2, in the lessons observed, appeared more comfortable with a more flexible approach, abandoning the scheme of work altogether at times. The impact of this, and other differences in individual teacher interpretation and adaptation of the intervention strategies, emerged later during the analysis phase. The initial descriptive analysis, on which cross-case comparisons were based, was integral to the iterative approach to analysis. It proceeded from qualitatively coded data and served to pinpoint further relevant episodes of talk for further qualitative analysis. It is to that analysis and the overall findings of the study in relation to its research questions that I now turn.

Chapter 7   Descriptive analysis of differences in the amount of learner L2 output between the three classes.

7.1 Introduction

In this first analysis chapter I present a descriptive analysis of the lesson transcript data from the 18 video-recorded lessons, six from each of the three teachers involved in the study, the two experimental and one control class teacher. The numerical counts and frequencies are not an end in themselves. They provide a point of departure, an initial lens through which I present the principal features of the data from the large number of measures that emerged in the process of coding the lesson transcripts. These summaries enable initial comparisons to be made in the overall patterns of interaction between the three teachers and across the 18 lessons. Where differences are noted in the data I highlight aspects of the data that warrant further exploration. I include in this chapter the results of statistical analyses carried out on differences in the descriptive data, but given the small-scale nature of this study I continually guard against simplistic reduction or distortion of the data by contextualising with examples from the raw lesson data.

The overall aim of the intervention programme was to provide greater opportunities for learner L2 output within the classroom discourse in the two experimental classes of Year 9 German learners.   I begin by presenting for each teacher the overall pattern of spoken interaction, drawing particular attention to the quantity of learner L2 output as proportion of total lesson time. I then proceed to explain the coding framework for the learner L2 output in whole class interaction, focusing in more detail on the two categories of learner talk that are the least frequent in the dominant IRE/F pattern of classroom interaction, L2 questions and L2 longer utterances. In this descriptive analysis I note the overall patterns for each teacher and also include a more detailed exploration of differences between individual lessons. Finally, I summarise the principal features of the lesson data, outlining the findings in terms of overall discourse patterns and frequencies of identified interactional moves.

7.2 Analytical framework

In order to establish an overview of overall learner L2 output as a proportion of total lesson time, I applied an observation analysis schedule to the 18 video-taped lessons, six of each of the experimental classes and six of the control class. The purpose of this analysis was to provide a starting point only. As previously detailed in Chapter 5, the research paradigm adopted in this study is that of a grounded heuristic Action Research study in which

individual teacher differences and the idiosyncrasies of each class are factors that my study needed to take account of. Consequently the principal methods of analysis entailed open coding of the raw data, exploration of emergent patterns and conclusions that were borne out by the evidence and which resonated with all participants implicated in the learning context.

With the aim of identifying overall learner L2 (and L1) output, quantities of teacher talk in L1 and L2 and other main learning activities, the following coding categories were used to account for all activity observed in the 50 minute lessons:

Table 7.1: Coding Framework of Interactional patterns

T	Teacher talk in L2
TE	Teacher talk in L1
P	Learner talk in L2
PE	Learner talk in L1
PP	Paired oral work in L2
PPE	Paired oral work in L1
A	Audio-(visual) input (CD or Video)
O	Other task (including reading comprehension, written activity, textbook task)

This coding was generated after all 18 video-recorded lessons had been transcribed and was elaborated further in the course of the subsequent coding of all the lessons. In format it is a low-inference rating scale and, following established interaction analysis protocol, the coding was applied at three second intervals to the 18 video-recorded lessons (Ellis, 2008). I did not code the lessons at the time of recording despite being present during the lessons. This was in order not to forgo the opportunity to make additional observation notes. Additionally I considered it advantageous to do the coding in retrospect, with the benefit of an accurate and visible timing device. Table 7.2 shows the quantities of TL teacher and pupil talk by class and by lesson:

Table 7.2: Quantities of TL talk shown as number of 3-second stretches of interaction

	T	P	%P		
	Teacher talk	Pupil talk	Total amount of whole class TL talk	Percentage of whole class TL talk that is carried out by Pupils	Mean for each teacher	Standard Deviation
T1	466	54	520	10%		
T1	301	31	332	9%		
T1	450	85	535	16%		
T1	199	75	274	27%		
T1	446	90	536	17%		
T1	425	72	497	14%	16%	0.064448
T2	479	136	615	22%		
T2	93	18	111	16%		
T2	8	106	114	93%		
T2	515	52	567	9%		
T2	439	74	513	14%		
T2	464	205	669	31%	31%	0.312752
T3	480	38	518	7%		
T3	439	36	475	8%		
T3	578	26	604	4%		
T3	234	35	269	13%		
T3	216	20	236	8%		
T3	442	80	522	15%	9%	0.040627

A one way Anova analysis (Pallant, 2001) was carried out on the quantities of pupil talk across the three groups. However, the level of variance within the groups, particularly Teacher 2's lessons (standard deviation = 0.3), produced an insignificant value in this comparison across the three classes (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). I therefore completed an independent samples t-test to compare the quantities of pupil talk between Teacher 1 (experimental group 1) and Teacher 3 (control group)'s classes. There was a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.044$), as shown in Figure 7.1 below. The effect size, eta squared = 0.347, is considered a large effect size according to guidelines proposed by Cohen (1988)

for interpreting this value, whereby 0.01 = small effect, 0.6 = moderate and 0.14 = large effect.

In view of the considerably higher levels of pupil talk generated in Teacher 2's class, when compared to either Teacher 1 or Teacher 3's classes, it was highly surprising that the subsequent parallel t-test between Teacher 2 (experimental group 2) and Teacher 3's classes did not produce an even more significant result. The reason, (see Table 7.2 above) was the high standard deviation in the pupil talk data for Teacher 2, which compromised the t-test analysis too.

Figure 7.1: Independent Samples T-test comparing the quantity of pupil talk for Teacher 1 and 3 classes

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pupil	3	6	39.1667	21.15104	8.63488
	1	6	67.8333	21.92183	8.94955

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
pupil	Equal variances assumed	.177	.683	-2.305	10	.044	-28.66667	12.43606	-56.37593	-.95740
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.305	9.987	.044	-28.66667	12.43606	-56.38074	-.95259

After coding, the totals for each coded segment were converted to percentages of lesson time; the percentage figures providing a more transparent basis for comparison of the raw data between lessons because all of the lessons were slightly different lengths, some varying by up to as many as ten minutes. The data provide an overall picture of the learner and teacher output for each of the six lessons recorded for each teacher as well as the average for each teacher of all six lessons. In addition, I included the standard deviation for each category as there was a high level of variability between lessons in many of the categories. Tables 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 show the interaction analysis data for each teacher across the six lessons per teacher:

Table 7.3: Teacher 1 (Experimental) Patterns of Interaction

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Average	SD
T	57%	39%	51%	27%	50%	51%	46%	10%
TE	12%	13%	12%	0%	22%	13%	12%	6%
P	7%	4%	10%	10%	10%	9%	8%	2%
PE	1%	1%	3%	0%	4%	1%	2%	1%
O	3%	16%	8%	55%	14%	13%	17%	17%
A	13%	14%	8%	0%	0%	0%	6%	6%
PP	7%	12%	8%	8%	0%	12%	8%	4%
PPE	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%

Table 7.4: Teacher 2 (Experimental) Patterns of Interaction

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Average	SD
T	58%	13%	1%	53%	52%	53%	39%	22%
TE	0%	47%	28%	4%	2%	0%	12%	18%
P	16%	3%	13%	5%	9%	24%	12%	7%
PE	1%	6%	10%	1%	1%	0%	3%	4%
O	1%	0%	0%	15%	16%	5%	7%	7%
A	0%	0%	0%	7%	6%	18%	5%	6%
PP	24%	11%	10%	0%	0%	0%	7%	9%
PPE	0%	20%	38%	14%	15%	0%	14%	13%

Table 7.5: Teacher 3 (Control) Patterns of Interaction

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Average	SD
T	54%	49%	57%	48%	25%	54%	48%	11%
TE	6%	5%	11%	5%	13%	6%	8%	3%
P	4%	4%	3%	7%	2%	10%	5%	3%
PE	6%	4%	5%	4%	1%	1%	3%	2%
O	25%	21%	10%	34%	5%	22%	18%	10%
A	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%
PP	5%	11%	12%	0%	53%	4%	15%	18%
PPE	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%

Focusing on the learner L2 output we can see that on average the individual L2 production is higher as a percentage of lesson time in the experimental classes (Teacher 1 8 %, Teacher 2 12% and Teacher 3 5%). We would expect this to be the case as the strategies in the intervention programme aimed to increase L2 output within teacher-fronted whole class

discourse. Figure 7.2 shows the individual learner L2 output across all 18 lessons and the average L2 output as a percentage of lesson time.

Figure 7.2: Individual Learner L2 Output
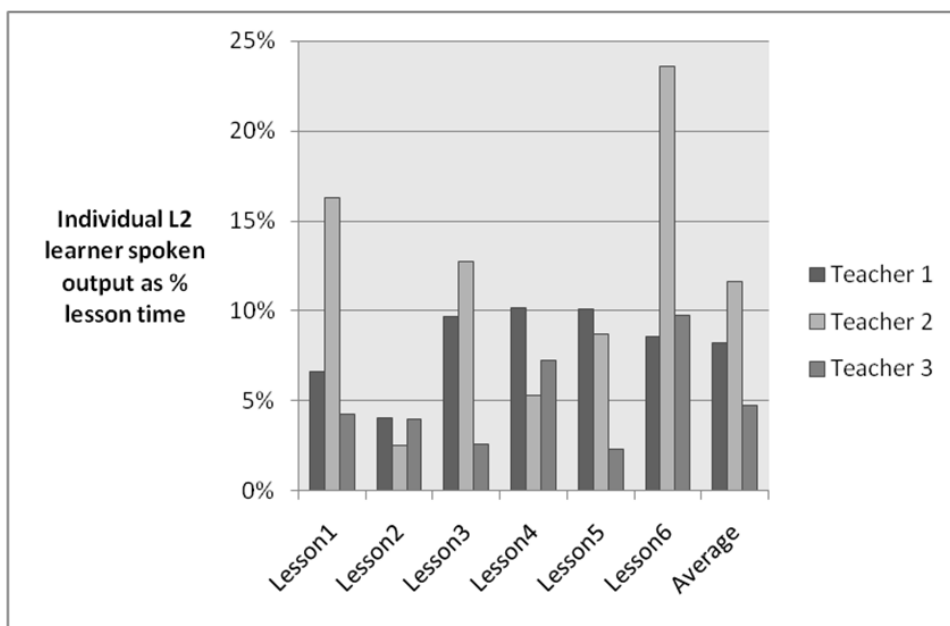
If, however, we include the overall L2 output by combining the individual output with the L2 pair work output from each lesson a slightly different picture emerges. Here the average across the six lessons is much closer for the three teachers. These data indicate that the control teacher created more opportunities for L2 pair work taken as an average across the six lessons and this increased the overall L2 output of this class. On average the control teacher allocated substantially more lesson time to L2 pair work (14%) compared to the two experimental teachers (8%). It is only possible to speculate as to the reasons for this difference. Perhaps the two experimental class teachers deliberately used less pair work during the intervention programme and especially during the video-recorded lessons to maximise the researcher's ability to collect teacher-fronted classroom discourse data. That said, there were still pair work activities in place in five of the six lessons for Teacher 1 and in three of the six lessons for Teacher 2. Figure 7.3 shows the overall L2 learner output combining individual and pair work:

Figure 7.3: Overall L2 learner output
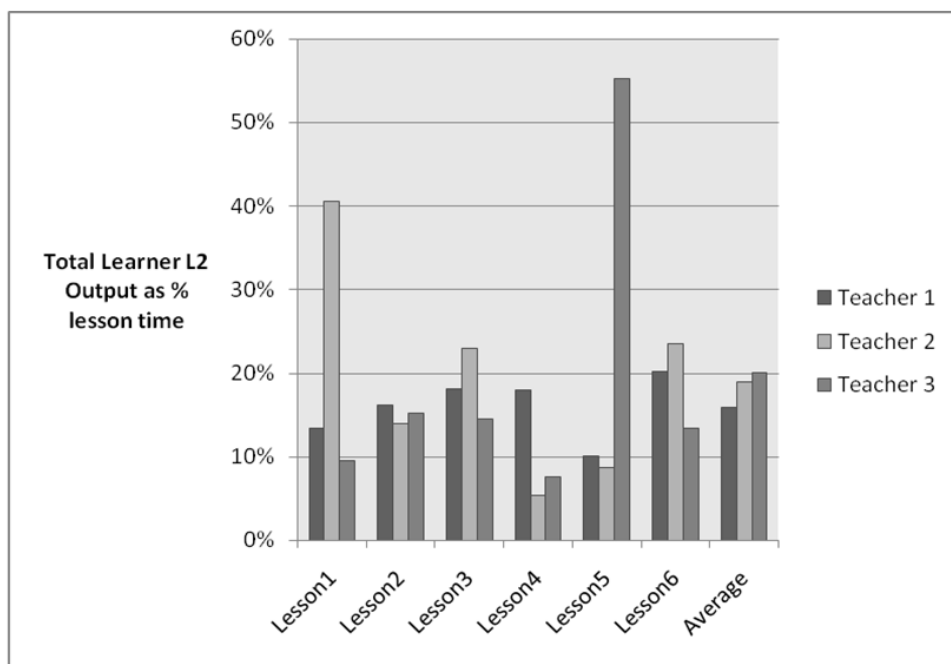
Although the focus of this part of the analysis is on changes in learner participation, it seems appropriate to elicit the key patterns of teacher talk from the interaction data to provide a point of departure for subsequent analysis and indicate questions for further exploration.

7.3 Units of analysis: teacher talk

Figure 7.4 presents for each teacher the L2 and L1 teacher talk as a percentage of overall lesson time across the six lessons. If we bear in mind that the intervention programme set out to increase learner talk, we might not to be surprised to encounter higher levels of L2 teacher talk, implicated in the elicitation of increased learner talk and needed to stimulate extended teacher-learner L2 exchanges. As you can see from the data in Figure 7.4, there is a somewhat surprising level of L1 in the experimental groups coupled with a lower L2 teacher output overall:

Figure 7.4: Overall L2 and L1 teacher talk as a percentage of lesson time
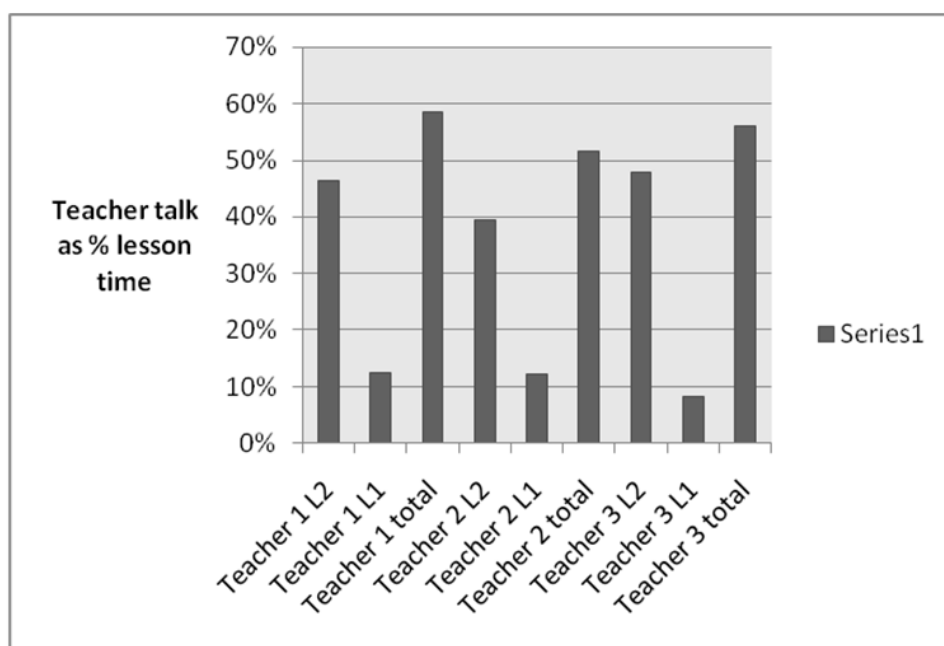
The data here raise questions that require further analysis through a further coding of the video transcription data. However, it is worth identifying some interesting patterns that emerge if we look at the distribution of teacher L1 talk and compare across the 3 teachers. An examination of Teacher 1's L1 talk reveals sustained episodes of L1 in five of the six lessons most often at the end of the lesson but also at the beginning in two of the six lessons observed, then hardly any incidences of teacher L1 and other times during the lesson. Figure 7.4 shows a screenshot of the interaction analysis coding for Teacher 1's first observed lesson (L1 episodes highlighted):

Figure 7.5: Teacher 1 Lesson 1: Pattern of L1 Teacher Talk

Teacher 2's use of L1 is the most inconsistent across the six lessons. Used not at all in two of the six lessons, it is used minimally in a further two lessons and then in a further two lessons, teacher use of L1 dominates the lesson (47% in Lesson 2 and 28% in Lesson 3). In Lesson 2 the pattern suggests a long, yet periodically interactive L1 explanation taking up

almost half of the entire lesson. Lesson 3 appears to involve an L1 explanation with five additional L1 episodes, perhaps to give feedback or add further explanation. What is clear from the patterns identified is a highly variable use of L1 by this teacher.

Figure 7.6: Teacher 2 Lessons 2 and 5: Patterns of L1 Teacher Talk
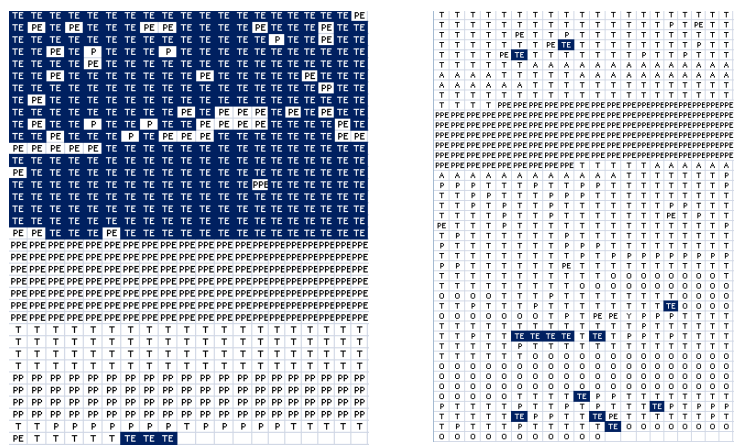
Teacher 3's L1 use is also very interesting. In five out of six lessons her use of L1 is very much more dispersed throughout the lesson discourse than for both the experimental teachers. One inference that may be drawn from the interactional pattern is that perhaps her use of L1 is not strictly planned in advance but arises in response to learner questions or misunderstandings that occur as the lesson proceeds. There is evidence of code-switching in Teacher 3's talk that is not apparent in the talk of the other two teachers. Figure 7.6 shows the interaction pattern for one of Teacher 3's lessons:

Figure 7.7: Teacher 3 Lesson 3: Pattern of L1 Teacher Talk
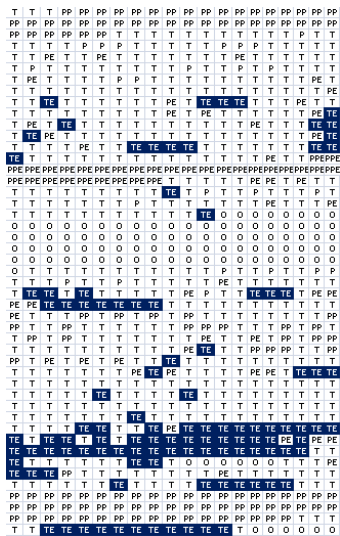
However, we note that overall Teacher 3 uses less L1 than the experimental teachers. This is suggestive perhaps of teachers engaging with new strategies, whereby the teachers feel it

necessary or desirable to explain the practice and learning objectives of the new talk strategies initially in L1, and furthermore that they perhaps also seek to evaluate the new practice at the end of the lesson. A closer analysis of the lesson transcripts enables further exploration of these observations later in this chapter.

When figures include paired L2 oral output time, the overall L2 learner output is slightly lower for the experimental classes than for the control class. This is perhaps surprising but may be in fact due to experimental teachers including more teacher-fronted oral work in the observed lessons. As a percentage of lesson time, teacher L2 talk is highest and lowest in the two experimental classes and both classes have overall average higher L1 teacher talk levels than the control class. However, the patterns of this L1 teacher talk suggest that the experimental teachers may be making uncharacteristically high use of L1 to introduce and evaluate new tasks and strategies as part of the intervention programme. This assumption is based on the observation that their L1 episodes are concentrated at the beginning and end of certain lessons. In Teacher 3's lessons, L1 use appears more dispersed and employed as a response to the needs of learners as the lesson unfolds.

In addition to the three-second interval coding of teacher / learner talk, I used NVivo to code specific teacher talk utterance types. As detailed in Chapter 5, this coding process was open and iterative. The total counts of each utterance across the whole data set are found below, in table 7.6:

Table 7.6: Total counts of L2 teacher talk utterances

Teacher talk utterances	T1	T2	T3
QO - Open questions	17	235	65
CQ - Closed questions	334	266	461
EX - Extension follow up	41	131	72
EE - Extended exchanges	30	23	10
TE - Teacher evaluation	284	106	305
TRC - Teacher re-cast	18	11	34
TR - Teacher repetition	144	76	121
TR+ - Teacher amplification	84	36	68
TRQ - Teacher restatement as question	7	80	5
IRE interactions	167	47	177
NON IRE interactions	54	75	47

A one-way Anova analysis on the number of IRE interactions across all 3 classes gave a statistically significant result (p = 0.028), the raw data themselves showing too that Teacher's 2 classroom interaction contained substantially fewer IRE interactions. The effect size, eta squared = 0.379, is considered a large effect size. As can been seen in Table 7.6 above, the number of non-IRE interactions was also higher overall for Teacher 2 (75 in total over 6 observed lessons) as compared to Teacher 1 (54) and Teacher 3 (48), although the one way Anova analysis was not statistically significant in this category.

These initial analyses suggest that the IRE/F appears to have been successfully subverted in only one of the two experimental classes. In the control class, four out of five exchanges followed the recitation script. In Teacher 1's classes, taken as a whole, the mean percentage of IRE/F interactions was 75%. In Teacher 2's classes there is evidence of a substantially different pattern of interaction, with a total of 38.5% IRE/F exchanges across all lessons. Figure 7.8 shows the one way Anova analysis comparing IRE/F interactions across the three classes:

Figure 7.8 One way Anova analysis IRE/F interactions across three classes

Descriptives

IRE								
					95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
1	6	27.8333	16.47321	6.72516	10.5458	45.1209	4.00	50.00
2	6	7.8333	8.03534	3.28041	-.5992	16.2659	.00	21.00
3	6	29.5000	15.34601	6.26498	13.3954	45.6046	10.00	46.00
Total	18	21.7222	16.45245	3.87788	13.5406	29.9038	.00	50.00

ANOVA

IRE	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1744.444	2	872.222	4.579	.028
Within Groups	2857.167	15	190.478		
Total	4601.611	17			

Further one way Anova analyses were carried out to compare the differences in the teacher talk utterance types in Table7.6 across the three classes. Statistically significant results were indicated in the following categories: teacher open questions (p = 0.01); teacher restatement as question (p = 0.013) and teacher evaluation (0.011). Eta squared values of 0.613 for teacher open questions, 0.437 for teacher restatement as question and 0.480 for teacher

evaluation all indicate large effect sizes. Figures 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11 show the Anova summaries for each category:

Figure 7.9 One way Anova analysis **teacher open questions**

QO	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4373.778	2	2186.889	11.909	.001
Within Groups	2754.500	15	183.633		
Total	7128.278	17			

Figure 7.10 One way Anova analysis **teacher restatement as question**

TRQ	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	608.778	2	304.389	5.831	.013
Within Groups	783.000	15	52.200		
Total	1391.778	17			

Figure 7.11 One way Anova analysis **teacher evaluation**

TE	ANOVA				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3984.778	2	1992.389	6.140	.011
Within Groups	4867.500	15	324.500		
Total	8852.278	17			

In all three categories the areas of significant difference were between Teacher 2 and the other two classes. In the first two categories, Teacher 2's talk had significantly higher counts of open questions and teacher restatement as questions, the importance of which are explored more fully in Chapter 8. In the third category, Teacher 2's talk contained significantly fewer instances of evaluation, a finding that accords with the earlier data on patterns of IRE/F and non-IRE/F interaction. Taken as a whole, these data add further detail to the different picture of classroom interaction emerging from Teacher 2's lesson data.

7.4 Units of analysis: learner talk

I now turn to further evidence from the videoed lesson transcripts to examine the extent to which learner participation in the classroom discourse changed as a result of the intervention programme. Whilst the development of an initial coding framework had resulted from a pilot study of two lessons, further coding was elaborated and applied to the 18 lesson

transcriptions, the coding framework developed and augmented in response to the lesson data. For example, learner responses were initially coded without reference to length, but subsequently subdivided and coded as single word, short phase and longer utterances. The unit 'Learner questions' was also subdivided into L1 and L2 questions when it became clear that learners in one of the teacher's lessons produced L1 questions in preference to L2. Table 7.7 shows the full list of coding as applied to learner output:

Table 7.7: Coding Framework for Learner L2 utterances

LQ	Learner L2 Question
LU	L2 Longer Utterance (7 words or longer)
SP	L2 Short Phrase (up to 6 words)
SW	L2 Single Word
R	Reason or Justification
LI	Learner Initiation L2 – any length
LQ L1	Learner L1 Question
LI L1	Learner L1 Initiation
ENG	Learner L1 response – any length

A count of the number of incidences of each of these types of L2 learner output was coded using NVivo software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 2, 2002) and Table 7.8 shows the resulting data, with Figure 7.12 displaying the same results in a graph:

Table 7.8: Overall learner L2 output by utterance type in whole class interaction

	L2 learner utterance type					
	LQ	LU	SP	SW	R	LI
Teacher 1	53	18	130	166	1	2
Teacher 2	14	31	226	201	10	19
Teacher 3	1	14	46	184	0	1

Figure 7.12: Overall learner L2 output by utterance type in whole class interaction
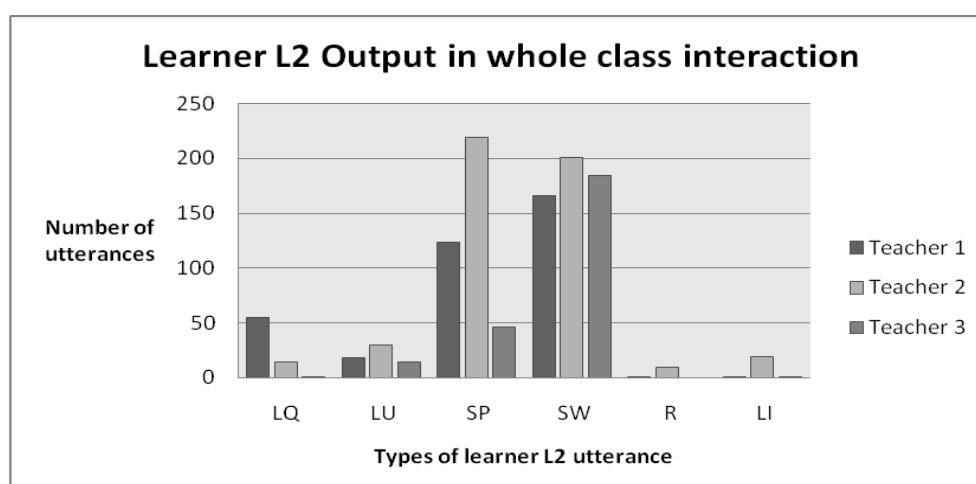
One way Anova analyses were conducted for each of the categories of learner talk. Significant difference was found only in the category of Short Phrase, defined as phrases of between 2 and 6 words in length, as shown in Figure 7.13 below. Additional t-test analyses, however, indicated that the difference was significant between Teachers 1 and 3, Teachers 1 and 2, as well as between Teachers 2 and 3.

Figure 7.13 One way Anova analysis - **Learner talk: short phrases**

Descriptives

SP

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	6	20.6667	12.90994	5.27046	7.1185	34.2148	5.00	36.00
2	6	36.5000	17.93042	7.32006	17.6832	55.3168	10.00	52.00
3	6	7.6667	3.88158	1.58465	3.5932	11.7401	1.00	12.00
Total	18	21.6111	17.18118	4.04964	13.0671	30.1551	1.00	52.00

ANOVA

SP

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2502.111	2	1251.056	7.458	.006
Within Groups	2516.167	15	167.744		
Total	5018.278	17			

Next, each category of L2 learner output was considered separately and the raw data explored for evidence that would illuminate emerging patterns. I present the results of these analyses here, summarising the findings for each category.

7.4.1 Learner L2 Questions

One of the explicit aims of the intervention programme was to encourage more frequent use of learner L2 questions in the discourse. Figure 7.14 shows the number of learner L2 questions and, for comparison the learner L1 questions for each of the three teachers in the study:

Figure 7.14 Learner L2 and L1 Questions
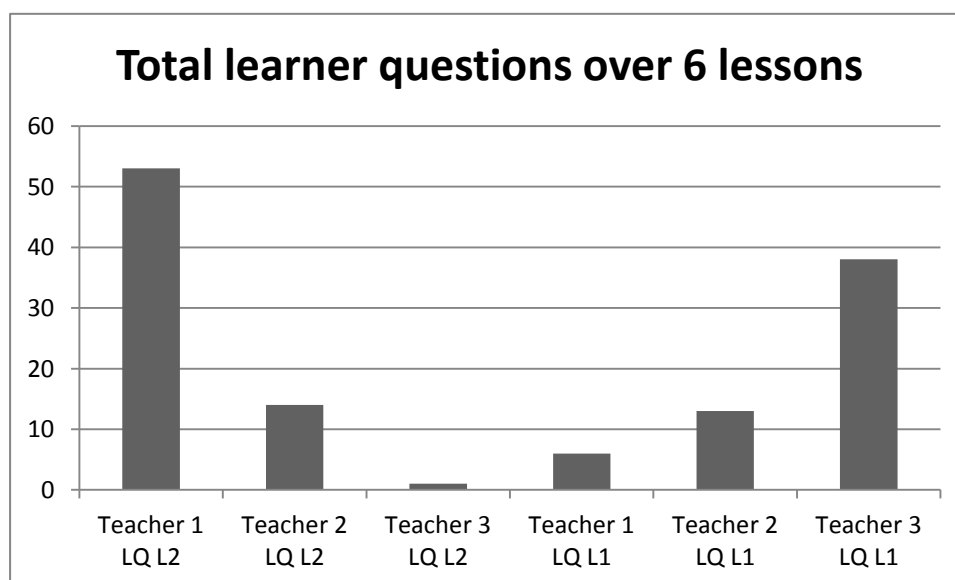
There are substantially higher numbers of learner L2 questions in both the experimental classes but a closer examination of individual lesson transcripts and the contexts in which the questions were generated yielded greater insights than the numerical data alone. Although not statistically significant, Teacher 1's lessons show the highest incidence of learner L2 questions. Learner questions occur in three of the six lessons observed. In the first lesson there are five L2 learner questions and there is an observable pattern to their formation. They are generated as part of a whole class correction/feedback activity and the teacher has encouraged learners to use L2 to suggest their answers. These questions are formulated using a simple 'Ist das..?'*[Is that..?]* structure. By far the greatest number of L2 learner questions occurs in one particular lesson, Lesson 5. A closer investigation of this lesson shows the teacher introducing, as part of her interpretation of the intervention programme, a task type designed specifically to elicit questions from learners as a means for them to discover the meanings of new language that they will need later in the lesson and beyond. The teacher had given the class a prompt sheet to help them with this. As we note from the somewhat formulaic formulation of the questions, these were not spontaneous utterances as such, and lie on the continuum between language rehearsal and language use. However, they mirror and practise intensively several question forms and the task results of more L2 questions than in either of the other two teachers' lessons combined. Figure 7.15 shows a sample of some of these learner questions:

Figure 7.15 Examples of learner L2 questions – Teacher 1, Lesson 5

Taken from: Document '210409_MWA_9x2_Transcript_Lesson5', 35 passages, 929 characters.

Ist es ein Substantiv?
[Is it a noun?]
Hat es mit der Schule ?
[Has it got with the school?]
Wer hat eine ein Teller normalerweise?
[Who has a (fem. article) a (neut. article) usually?]
es is ist es ein Verb?
[It is is it a verb?]
Wer hat ein nein Wer hat Eislaufen normalerweise?
[Who has a no who has iceskating usually?]
Mit wem macht man das normalerweise?
[With whom do you usually do that?]
Wo macht man das normalerweise?
[Where do you usually do that?]
Ist es ein Adjektiv?
[Is it an adjective?]

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Beschreibt es eine Person oder ein Ding?
[Does it describe a person or a thing?]
Wo macht man das normalerweise?
[Where do you usually do that?]
Hat es nein erm xxx (.3.) erm beschreibt es eine Person oder ein Ding?
[Has it no erm xxx (.3.) erm does it describe a person or a thing?]
Was ist Ding?
[What is 'Ding'?]
 Ist schön positiv oder negativ?
[Is 'schön' positive or negative?]

Although the explanation of this task occasioned the high proportion of L1 at the start and end of the lesson (22%), the learner L2 output generated as a result was 10% of the total lesson time, and in addition, an opportunity to make more spontaneous use of these questions arose in a subsequent lesson when there were two unknown words and learners were invited to ask questions to determine their meanings. Although a few learners still needed the support of their prompt sheets, the readiness of some learners to ask the simpler questions showed that they had begun to acquire this simple question structure. Another point worthy of mention here is that this is the lesson containing the highest number of non-IRE interactions for this teacher. Using task types that by their design invert the IRE pattern may therefore be one way to change the pattern of learner interaction.

Teacher 2's lessons show a much more varied pattern in terms of learner L2 questions. They occur in four of the six lessons and are spontaneous in that they have not been elicited by the teacher explicitly nor are they part of any structured task as in the case of Teacher 1. Of the questions produced in whole class teacher-fronted interaction there is some use of 'Wie heiβt..?' *[What is ...called?]* and 'Was ist..? *[What is...?]* to ascertain the meanings of individual words. These account for six of the 14 questions. Two further questions show learners in two different lessons attempting to stretch their linguistic resources to communicate more challenging meanings. In Lesson 5, when engaged in a whole class photo description activity, one learner asks: 'Erm, was wir sprechen, erm, hat, eh, sein richtig?' *[Erm, what we speak, erm, has, er, to be correct?]*. In lesson 1, a learner responds to the teacher's statement that they will get their test results back the following week by asking: 'Warum es ist nächste Woche?' *[Why it is next week?]*. The remaining six questions were produced in Lesson 3's group talk activity and are worth further discussion as they were produced spontaneously in response to the peer-prepared and delivered short oral presentation to which learners were tasked to respond with follow up questions or comments. This was a task-type introduced by this teacher (and explained at length in L1) in Lesson 3 as one aspect of her response to delivering the intervention strategies. Figure 7.16 shows the six questions:

Figure 7.16 Learner L2 questions produced in group talk activity – Teacher 2, Lesson 3

Warum findest du Deutsch interessant?
[Why do you find German interesting?]
Magst du skifahren?
[Do you like skiing?]
Skifahren oder Snowboard fahren?
[Skiing or snowboarding?]
Warum? Warum? Warum? Warum?
[Why? Why? Why? Why?]
Wie findest du Frau McClelland?
[What do you think of Miss McClelland?]
Wie findest du Deutsch?
[What do you think of German?]

Five of the six learner questions produced in this activity (by the group nearest to the video camera) had used structures previously learnt during the German course and re-used here spontaneously in a new context. The question "Skifahren oder Snowboardfahren?" is particularly interesting, however, as there the learner is trying to ask if his co-learner prefers skiing to snowboarding but lacks the necessary structure. It had been covered only fleetingly in the learner's German course and he clearly cannot recall the structure on the spur of the moment. He is 'pushed' to communicate his desired message with the words and structures at his disposal, producing in German the equivalent of 'Skiing or snowboarding?' with rising intonation. The question is understood readily by his interlocutor who responds. Here is the lesson extract to put the interaction into context:

Figure 7.17 Lesson extract: Teacher 2, Lesson 3

P5: Magst du skifahren?
[P5: Do you like skiing?]
P4: Ja, es ist sehr gut.
[P4: Yes, it is really good.]
P5: Skifahren oder Snowboard fahren?
[P5: Skiing or snowboarding?]
P4: er Skifahren.
[P4: er skiing]
P5: Ich hasse Skifahren, ich mag Snowboardfahren.
[P5: I hate skiing, I like snowboarding.]

In stark contrast to the experimental groups, the control group lessons contain only 1 example of an L2 question. It is limited to the word "Ja?" but is included here as it functions as a question in the discourse and is uttered spontaneously. In this interaction the learner expresses surprise and seeks clarification in response to the teacher's L2 explanation that she got something wrong in the previous exercise. All other questions in all six lessons of the control group were L1 questions. Two further points are worth making here though. Firstly, there were a similar number of questions in the control group lessons, albeit L1 questions,

although not as many overall as in Teacher 1's lessons, but we recall that the L2 questions were intensively elicited though a specific task. Overall there were substantially more questions in Teacher 1's lessons than in Teacher 2's lessons. Secondly, an analysis of the L1 questions present in the lessons of all three teachers revealed that many of the questions asked could have been managed in L2 using structures and language that learners had learnt in previous lessons. These include 'Wie sagt man..?' *[How do you say..?]*, 'Was ist..?' *[What is..?]*, 'Wie heiβt..auf Deutsch/Englisch?' *[What is ..in German/English?]*, 'Warum ist..?' *[Why is..?]* In fact, there is evidence in the experimental group lessons that learners could and did use exactly these structures for asking questions. Of the learner L1 questions, I argue that five out of six questions in Teacher 1's lessons, 9 of 13 in Teacher 2's lessons and 21 of 38 in Teacher 3's lessons could have been asked in L2 by learners using their existing linguistic resources.

One of the six principal aims of the intervention in this study was to encourage more frequent use of learner L2 questions in the classroom discourse. The data show that there was only one L2 learner question in the control class but substantial numbers in both the experimental classes. The evidence from the lesson observation data is that learners in the experimental groups have increased the frequency with which they ask L2 questions.

As well as a quantifiable difference in learner participation in the classroom discourse as compared with the control group, the raw data from the two experimental groups reveal different patterns of L2 learner question production, which derive from the opportunities that the two teachers provide learners with. In the case of Teacher 1, the L2 questions are solicited intensively, both through the introduction of a new questioning task whereby learners ask questions to arrive at the meaning of unknown words, as well as through explicit encouragement to use L2 to feedback answers or suggestions during other class activities, for example reading or listening comprehension tasks. In the case of Teacher 2, the choice of task as part of the intervention strategy is also significant, namely the group talk task in Lesson 3, as this gave rise to spontaneous L2 questions in peer-peer dialogue that show that language previously learnt by students is available to them for use in unprepared situations. A final observation is that there is no observable linear development in terms of L2 question formation across the lessons for either of the teachers. The pattern of changes in learner participation is consistent with and seems to reflect the result of teachers' trial of, and experimentation with, new approaches. It was necessary therefore not just to consider each teacher separately in this analysis, but each lesson too. I proceed now to consider a further category in the analysis of learner L2 output in this study.

7.4.2 Longer Learner L2 Utterances

Teachers in the two experimental groups were aiming to engage learners in more classroom L2 talk and in so doing elicit longer, more extended utterances from the learners. For the purpose of this study, a longer utterance (LU) is defined as any L2 utterance exceeding six words in length. The two experimental classes, when their six lessons are taken together as a whole, produced a higher incidence of LUs than the control class, Teacher 1's lessons produced a total of 18 LUs, Teacher 2's 31 and Teacher 3's 14. Figure 7.18 displays the LUs by teacher for each of the six lessons. We can see that the distribution of the LUs across the lessons is uneven, particularly for Teacher 2, but also for the other two teachers.

Figure 7.18 Learner L2 Longer Utterances
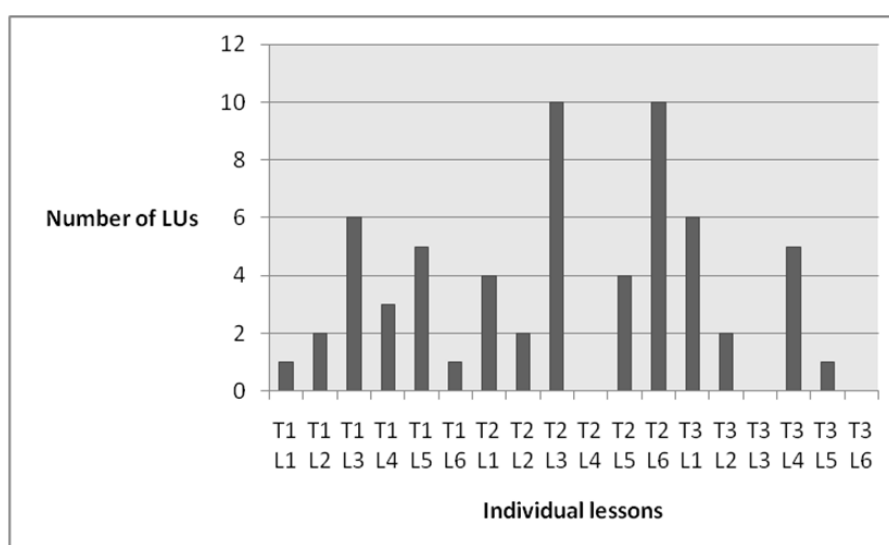
A detailed study of the language produced in these LUs offers further insight into the participation patterns that led to their production. Teacher 1 has LUs in five of the six lessons; however they are all produced with support from text or prompts of various types and in addition intrinsically linked to structured activities. In Lesson 2 learners use L2 to check their answers to a structured reading comprehension activity and frame these utterances as questions, whereby the utterance is scaffolded by the answers to the task itself. So, for example, one learner asks 'Fahren Sie nach um wandern zu gehen?' *[Do you go to in order to go walking?]* and a second, 'Ist das um im See zu baden?' *[Is that in order to bathe in the sea?]* The resulting speech constitutes a longer utterance here, although the learners needed only to re-form the sentences of their answers into questions, inverting the verb in the first and adding 'Ist das..' to the second. In Lesson 3 the output is similar, although learners are identifying statements as false and then improving them. This again involves the learner reading from his answers and adding 'ist falsch' so we have 'Am Freitag sind sie zum Museum gegangen ist falsch.' *[On Friday they went to the museum is wrong.]* Lesson 5

involves learners producing longer utterances only as they read their answers. Whilst they belong to the body of L2 language that makes up this lesson, they do not interest us particularly as the utterances are not representative of communicative L2 use. Lesson 6's LU is a question deriving from the question-forming task described above: "Hat es mit Schlittschuhlaufen etwas zu tun?" *[Does it have something to do with ice-skating?]* Again, this is a task supported by written prompts but learners do need to adapt them to form questions and as already indicated, there was evidence in this final lesson that learners were beginning to formulate questions more readily without referring to the written support. Lesson 4 involved a speaking activity in which learners generated information orally and collaboratively in response to teacher L2 questions. This activity was teacher-fronted but with a group of eight to ten students, whilst the remainder of the class worked on computer-based tasks. The stimulus was a photo of a person and the teacher noted down essential details generated by the group on pieces of paper, laying them down next to the photo on the floor. Individual learners were then called upon to provide an oral summary of the profile that had been generated. Three longer utterances resulted from this and they represent the most independent examples of LUs from this class. The language is simple and re-uses language learnt the previous year at the start of their German course. Figure 7.19 shows the longest of these utterances:

Figure 7.19: L2 Longer Utterance – Teacher 1, Lesson 4

P: Ich denke er heisst es heisst Jimi Hendrix und er sie ist fünfzehn Jahre alt. Sie hat am fünften
[P: I think he's called it's called Jimi Hendrix and he she is 15 years old. She has on the fifth]
T: am fünfzehnten
[T: on the fifteenth]
P: Geburtstag. Sie wohnt in Berlin auf Deutschland. Sie hat eine Schwester heisst Alice Sie magt Kunst er sie hasse er Musik.
[P: Birthday. She lives in Berlin on Germany. She has a sister called Alice (incorrect sentence structure). She likes (incorrect verb ending) art he she hates (incorrect verb ending) er music.]

There are a number of hesitations and grammatical mistakes in this utterance. This is significant as I previously drew attention to the prevalence of grammatically perfect learner L2 output that follows a model given by the teacher and is practice rather than speech. Of the longer utterances in the recorded data for Teacher 1, it is only those that are generated in this task that show signs of more unstructured, less formulaic speech.

Teacher 2 also has LUs in five of the six lessons. In contrast to Teacher 1's lessons however, the utterances form part of a structured activity in only one of the five lessons. In

Lesson 5, learners begin with an opinion, one of several different phrases that have been introduced in a previous lesson to extend the range of learner responses to a series of statements relating to a video clip. The language introduced is shown in the table below:

Table 7.9 Opinion statements Teacher 2 Lesson 5

vielleicht	perhaps
wahrscheinlich	probably
das stimmt (nicht)	that's true (not true)
keine Ahnung	no idea
ich glaube schon	I think so
ich bin (nicht) sicher	I'm (not) sure

 In Lesson 5 the teacher urges learners to try to add more to these basic opinion statements and include reasons. Again learners are responding to statements concerning a short, 45 second video clip. The LUs generated by students during this teacher-fronted whole class activity are shown below:

Table 7.10 L2 Longer Uttterances – Teacher 2 Lesson 5

P: Erm, das stimmt nicht, weil es die Mathelehrerin ist.
[P: erm, that's not true, because it is the maths teacher.]
P: Erm, das stimmt nicht, die Lehrerin, erm, mag die Note nicht.
[P: erm, that's not true, the teacher, erm, doesn't like the grade.]
P: Erm, ich glaub nicht, erm, Frau McClelland hat Noten nicht so gut
P: erm, I don't think so, erm, Miss McClelland has grades not so good.]

All of these LUs give an opinion and a reason or justification. One learner uses 'weil' (because) and follows with correct word order, involving the movement of the verb to the end of the clause. The other two learners avoid using the word 'weil' although they have been taught to use this structure, perhaps to avoid the difficulty of re-positioning the verb or making a grammatical mistake by using incorrect word order. They overcome the difficulty by sandwiching the opinion and reason together. However, all utterances display an extension of the opinion by the addition of a reason. The third LU also shows an adaptation of the original opinion statement 'ich glaube schon' *[I think so]* to the negative 'ich glaube nicht' *[I don't think so]*, which was not explicitly taught.

    Lessons 2 and 6 are the two other teacher-fronted whole class interaction episodes where longer utterances result. In both these lessons learners are responding to a visual stimulus and supplementary L2 questions from the teacher. The language they produce is characterised by hesitations and grammatical mistakes, but also a high level of personalisation (verbs of opinion) and variety of structure (references to present, past and future time frames) as well as reasons. The utterances are distinctly naturalistic, each is very different from the other and there is no recognisable pattern, form or structure that is being 'practised'. Learners show in

these LUs that they are able to make themselves understood and that they are able to re-use spontaneously (albeit imperfectly) the structures that they have learnt more formally in previous lessons. Figure 7.20 presents the 10 LUs from Lesson 6:

Figure 7.20 L2 Longer Utterances – Teacher 2, Lesson 6

Document '040609_LM_9x1_Transcript_Lesson6', 10 passages, 803 characters.
P: Ich war in Deutschland, weil, erm, erm (.2.), weil ich, erm, eh, (.) mein Vater arbeit erm erm
[P: I was in Germany, because, erm , erm (.2.), because I, erm, er, (.) my father work erm erm]
P: Eh, ehm, ich denke er ist lustig, weil ehm, eh, ehm, er, er, ehm, er   smile.
[P: Er, erm, I think he is funny, because erm, er, erm, he, he, erm, he 'smile'.]
P: Sie ist lächelt, weil es nicht Skateboardfahren gemacht, I mean gemagen, gemagt, no no oh
[P: She is smiles, because it not did skateboarding, I mean like-ed, like, no, no, oh]
P: Ehm, eh, letztes Jahr, eh, bin ich nach Deutschland gefahren und es war gut.
[P: Erm, er, last year, er, I went to Germany and it was good].
P: Er wohnt in England an der Küste?
[P: He lives in England on the coast?]
P: Ich weiß nicht, aber ich denke, ehm, sein Hobby ist, eh, Fußball, weil es sehr fit ist.
[P: I don't know, but I think, erm, his hobby is, er, football, because it is very fit.]
P: Erm, gestern, erm, er, erm, nach ein casino Cesars gegangen und, erm, er, erm, er Black Jack gespielen, erm, er
[P: Erm, yesterday, erm, er, erm, went to a casino Cesars and, erm, er, erm he played Black Jack (incorrect participle & sentence structure)
P: Er wird ein Computer kaufen, aber er
[P: He will buy a computer, but he]
P.: Erm, (.2.) ich bin schwimmen (.) und, erm, tanzen mit meiner Freundin.
[P: Erm, (.2.) I went swimming (.) (missing past participle) and erm dancing with my friend]
P: Erstens: Er bin nach Las Vegas, Zweitens (Lehrerin fordert andere Schüler zur Ruhe auf): Er blieb nach Las Vegas und eh, s, eh
[P: Firstly, he is to Las Vegas, secondly (teachers motions other students to be quiet), he stayed to Las Vegas and er, s, er]

Lesson 3 is a unique lesson among those recorded for Teacher 2. It is the lesson that contains the group talk activity that was a mixture of prepared oral presentation (learners being given four to six minutes to prepare an oral answer to a specific question) and spontaneous responses to follow up on that presentation. None of the spontaneous responses were longer than six words. The nature of some of this language has been described in the L2 question section of this analysis. Although the LUs produced in this lesson were not spontaneous in that there had been a preparation time, learners were still required to produce language independently of a model and of their teacher. They were encouraged by their teacher to include a range of structures. The LUs that were recorded in this lesson (from two different groups of six learners positioned nearest the camera) included reasons using 'weil' and 'denn', past tense, future tense and um..zu clauses (in order to), all of which had been encountered in formal instruction during lessons that year. Figure 7.21 lists the LUs recorded during Lesson 3's group talk activity:

Figure 7.21 L2 Longer Utterances – Teacher 2, Lesson 3

Document '120309_LM_9x1_Transcript_Lesson3', 10 passages, 1059 characters.

P: Deutsch Hausaufgaben ist sehr nervig denn es ist langweilig.
[P: German homework is very annoying because it is boring.]
P: Letzte Jahr werde ich Deutschland mit meine Eltern, um schwimmen zu gehen.
[P: Last year I will Germany with my parents, to go swimming.]
P: Erm Ich finde Deutschland sehr interessant. Im Sommer werde ich Deutschland gehen.
[P: Erm I find Germany very interesting. In the summer I will go Germany.]
P: Ich mag Deutschland, weil es ist sehr interessant. Ich fahre nach Deutschland, um skizufahren. Letztes Jahr habe ich Freunde besuchen. Nächstes Jahr fahre ich nach Deutschland um Deutsch zu lernen.
[P: I like Germany because it is very interesting. I go to Germany to go skiing. Last year I visit friends. Next year I'm going to Germany to learn German.]
 P: Ich finde Deutschland langweiligxxxxxx ich finde Deutsch interessant aber mein Lieblingsfach ist Französisch.
[P: I find Germany booooooooooring I find German interesting but my favourite subject is French.]
P: Wir finden Deutschland langweilig wir xxx Deutschland letztes Jahr. Ich gehe es war schrecklich
[P: We find Germany boring because we xxx Germany last year. I go it was awful.]
P: Meine Familie hasse Deutschland.   Wir gehen um Berlin zu besuchen und ich finde die Leute unangenehm.
[P: My family hate Germany. We go to visit Berlin and I find the people unpleasant.]
P: Heute in die Schule ich habe sechs Stunden. Ich habe Informatik, Mathe Englisch und Deutsch.
[P: Today at school I have six lessons. I have ICT, Maths, English and German.]
P: Heute ist nicht so gut, weil es langweilig ist. Ich gehe zur Schule, um Spass (pronounced schpess) zu haben
[P: Today is not so good because it is boring. I go to school to have fun.]
 P: Heute habe ich Geschichte zwei Mal gelernen. Ich denke, dass Geschichte sehr interessant ist, weil die Lehrerin sehr lustig ist.
[P: Today I have learn history twice. I think that history is very interesting because the teacher is very funny.]

    Given the lack of any L2 learner questions in the control class data, it is perhaps a surprise to see the number of L2 longer utterances produced in Teacher 3's lessons. There were a number of LUs produced in similar interactional situations to those in Teacher 1's lessons, in which learners' output is in the form of verbal L2 answers to structured comprehension activities. In two of the four lessons where LUs were present this was the case and this accounts for 50% (7 of the 14) LUs for Teacher 3.   In two further lessons the LUs are generated by learners giving opinions of films in response to teacher elicitations. They follow the pattern 'Ich mag _____ aber ich mag _____ nicht' *[I like _____ but I don't like _____]*. At 7 words (minus the film titles), these opinions just meet the LU criterion. Although the language use in terms of complexity does not match that of the LUs in Teacher 2's lessons, it is nevertheless significant that through this simple soliciting of opinions learners are given the opportunity to produce longer than average L2 utterances and

these data throw into sharper relief the absence of more spontaneous longer utterances from Teacher 1's observed lessons.

In summary, the data collected on L2 longer utterances reveal a much higher incidence of this type of learner L2 output in one of the experimental group's lessons. In addition, a closer examination of the actual language produced in all three teachers' lessons shows a clear qualitative difference in the learner output and in the contexts in which it was produced between Teacher 2's lessons and those of the other two teachers. The spontaneous production of LUs is unique to Teacher 2's lessons as is their nature. The LUs in these lessons are characterised by the variety in their formation, the number of different structures used and meanings expressed and the way the discourse mirrors that found in a naturalistic setting. LUs in the first experimental group, whilst greater in number than those found in the control group, are mostly produced in structured responses to reading comprehension activities, although one scaffolded speaking activity gave rise to three extended speech acts that were less structured.

7.5 Conclusion

As my review of the literature has shown, it is not only the more recent body of research within a sociocultural framework that has highlighted the importance of interactive communication. The negotiation and modification of meaning have been shown to be particularly significant in second language learning as they make input more comprehensible to the learner (Long, 1980). Similarly, studies of L1 development have highlighted the importance of mother and child negotiating to construct meanings jointly (Halliday, 1975). In addition, Swain (1985, 1995) also suggests that L2 learners benefit from opportunities to modify their output in order to produce more coherent and comprehensible discourse for their listeners. Subsequently, working within a sociocultural framework and invoking the key concept of the ZPD, Swain has suggested that the type of learning opportunity whereby the learner is engaged in dialogue with an 'expert' other or peer encourages or stretches the learner to produce better utterances that s/he was previously likely or able to produce alone.

For the classroom the implication is that there need to be opportunities created for classroom interaction, that there needs to be sufficient 'air time' for learners to engage in the processes of negotiating meaning and attending to their output at key moments in the discourse where they are not immediately able to produce coherent, comprehensible language, in other words, when their linguistic resources are stretched.

Furthermore, as highlighted earlier in this study, much of the classroom interaction research suggests that the dominant patterns of classroom discourse may not allow learners the

interactive space to develop their language in an optimum way. The IRE/F pattern of teacher initiation – pupil response – teacher evaluation/feedback (Mehan, 1979; Cazden, 1988) or triadic dialogue (Lemke, 1985) has been shown to limit the opportunities for learner self-initiation and learner talk but equally has been shown to be the naturally dominant pattern of classroom interaction.

The intervention programme on which this study is based set out from the premise that, in order to create opportunities for alternative interactional patterns to develop, the teacher must actively seek to encourage learner-initiated talk and to subvert the IRE/F pattern of classroom discourse. From the analysis presented here it is clear that experience of the intervention strategies has changed the pattern of learner interaction in several key aspects. Learners in both of the experimental groups produced overall greater individual L2 output as a proportion of overall lesson time. In addition, learners in both experimental groups produced greater numbers of L2 questions, longer utterances and short phrases. In particular, one of the experimental groups showed substantially higher levels of L2 output compared to both other groups. An analysis of teacher talk for all three classes revealed that this teacher's lessons contained substantially higher numbers of open questions, extension follow up moves, and non-IRE interactions, with demonstrably fewer closed questions, teacher evaluations, teacher restatements and IRE interactions.

In summary, the disruption of prevailing interactional patterns in whole class L2 discourse is most clearly in evidence in Teacher 2's lessons and it is in these lessons that the greatest individual L2 output occurs, including the highest number of longer utterances, reasons and learner initiations. Teacher 1's implementation of the intervention strategies is evident, but most of the learner L2 talk lies somewhere between communication and rehearsal, and is tied to structured lesson tasks. Nevertheless overall learner L2 output is 3% higher than in the control class. Teacher 2 seems particularly to have succeeded in increasing the number of short phrases relative to single word utterances, when compared with the control group. Particular aspects of the intervention such as the tasks to generate questions and the routines using the L2 for completing whole class feedback/correction activities have served to generate greater numbers of L2 questions and short phrase responses.

As previously noted, one of the salient features in these data is the lack of linear development in any of the identified categories of talk, either learner or teacher talk, all of which vary widely from lesson to lesson. This is particularly true of the experimental classes but applies also to the control class. There is no possibility of seeking to generalise a pattern of progression in these data. This is perhaps unsurprising as teachers of the experimental

groups in particular were deliberately trying out a variety of different approaches to increase L2 output.

This chapter highlights the broad patterns of interaction and changes in terms of teacher and learner talk, comparing the three classes lesson by lesson. The analysis presented here generates further questions. In lessons with higher occurrences of learner L2 talk, what is the precise nature of the teacher role? What are the interactional moves that trigger enhanced learner performance? This will be the preliminary focus of the following analysis chapter. Subsequently, I will examine more specifically the linguistic output of the learners within these interactions, with the aim of demonstrating the ways in which the spoken learner L2 output reveals qualitative evidence of L2 development.

Chapter 8   Qualitative analysis of teacher-learner L2 interaction

8.1 Introduction

The descriptive analysis in the preceding chapter indicates that there were higher levels of L2 learner output in the experimental classes, where the two teachers sought to establish patterns of spoken interaction other than the IRE/F pattern of exchange. This chapter builds on that initial analysis to show that learners' improved interactional performance in the experimental classes, particularly the class of Teacher 2, is triggered by the teacher talk. Teacher 2's interactive moves trigger the improvement by changing the dominant discourse pattern. The non-IRE/F episodes created by the teacher talk moves afford the learner an initiation into a broader range of discursive experience more akin to contexts outside the classroom. Specific features of the teacher talk act to change the dominant teacher/ student roles and call into being different discourse roles for the learner that promote higher incidences of question-forming, topic nomination, and equality of turn-taking.

In addition to creating conversational episodes, the teacher talk also solicits meaning-oriented L2 communication that pushes the learner to produce language spontaneously that s/he has previously encountered in a more formal learning context and sparks aspects of strategic competence. And finally additional features of the teacher talk make the discourse available to all learners in the class, facilitating distributed L2 development, that is to say L2 learning through peripheral or secondary participation in the interactions.

To summarise, I argue that it is the teachers' interactional moves that stimulate the students' improved output in three different ways: firstly, in terms of a broadening of students' communicative repertoire; secondly, in terms of gains in linguistic competence through the acquisition of vocabulary and structures and thirdly in terms of collective learning, or put another way, shared or distributed L2 development within the class.

I begin this analysis chapter first by analysing Teacher 2's talk in action to show how specific interactional moves lead the learner to participate in longer, conversational exchanges, how others alter the discursive balance, generating more learner initiations, and finally a third category of interactional moves that contribute to the instructional coherence of the overall discourse, drawing the wider involvement of the whole class and promoting shared L2 learning. I argue that it is the combination of these interpersonal moves that is decisive in improving student interactional performance. I then present my analysis of the three identified aspects of learner L2 development in turn, evidencing my arguments with extracts from the video-observed lesson data, supporting them with microgenetic analysis of the

lesson data and student self-report data obtained through post-study semi-structured interviews involving a strategy of video-stimulated recall.

8.2 Teacher talk

The selection of episodes for analysis conforms to the overarching purpose of the study; namely the generation of non-IRE/F classroom discourse. Teacher 2's Lesson 6 is identified in the descriptive analysis of the preceding chapter as richest in non-IRE interactions. Proceeding from one such episode in that lesson and elaborating a coding framework of all teacher and learner talk moves generated the taxonomy of teacher/learner spontaneous L2 talk moves found below in Table 8.1:

Table 8.1: Coding Framework of teacher and learner talk in non-IRE interactions

Learners	Teacher
1. Learner initiates to introduce new ideas into the interaction (LI)	1. Teacher uses (frequent) referential questions (open & closed) (RQ)
2. Learners ventures 'incomplete' or 'partially-formed' utterances – ungrammatical yet communicative (LV)	2. Teacher echoes learner contribution as question or confirmation (EC)
3. Learner responds readily (RR)	3. Teacher repeats or rephrases question (RE)
4. Learner introduces contrary ideas to that of peer or teacher (CI)	4. Teacher shows interest in tone of voice (INT)
5. Learner negotiates meaning (NM)	5. Teacher manages class (CM)
6. Learner negotiates form (NF)	6. Teacher uses (frequent) phatic statements and questions (PH)
7. Multiple learner involvement (ML)	7. Teacher waits (WA)
8. Learner hesitation (HE)	8. Teacher responds to content rather than form (CON)
9. Learner introduces humour (LH)	9. Teacher prompts (PR)
10. Learner asks question (LQ)	10. Teacher summarises main points of interaction (SU)
11. Learner prolongs interaction (PI)	11. Teacher personalises comment or question to learner (PC)
	12. Teacher attributes learner contribution by name (AT)
	13. Teacher introduces humour (HU)
	14. Teacher makes other conversational response (CR)
	15. Teacher teaches directly or feeds (DT/F)

In my closer analysis of the range of teacher talk moves I show that there are three distinct interactional goals discernible in them and that each contributes differently to the improved learner performance in these episodes. My model of this teacher's talk construes these goals as three distinct teacher 'roles' in the discourse, and I hypothesise that it is this teacher's

ability to adopt, and to switch between, these distinct roles that triggers the improved learner performance in these episodes.

8.2.1 Co-construction – teacher as 'expert'

The features of teacher talk that work to co-construct meaningful exchanges with the learner are the dialogic support that enables the learner both to make meaning and to take part successfully in L2 conversations. They provide assistance that is graduated from implicit to explicit and conform broadly to the patterns of dialogic support identified in previous studies of interaction carried out within an SCT framework (Aljafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Ohta, 2001). Whilst not all of them are present in every interaction, these features identified in the spontaneous episodes display the interactional resources deployed by the teacher to elicit meaningful L2 communication from individual learners:

- Referential question (RQ)
- Restatement of learner response (EC)
- Wait time (WA)
- Repeat or reformulation of question (RE)
- Personalising question (PE)
- Response to content not form (CON)
- Prompt (PR)
- Direct teaching/feed (DT/F)

The following extract from Teacher 2, Lesson 6 exemplifies the teacher's use of assistance moves and how these are contingent to learner needs:

Extract 8.1: 'Woher kommt er?' (Where does he come from?)

[Photo of unknown young man displayed on whiteboard. Teacher elicits ideas from whole class about his country of origin].

1   T: Die nächste Frage: Woher kommt er? Aus welchem Land kommt dieser Mann, was denkt ihr? (.) Tsch, tsch, tsch, tsch, bitte, warte! So, ehm, Marie, was sagst du?
     [T: The next question: where does he come from? Which country does this man come from, what do you think? (.) Shh, Shh, Shh, Shh, please, wait! So, erm, Marie, what do you say?]
2   P: Ehm, er kommt aus Deutschland?
     [P: Erm, he comes from Germany?]
3   T: Aus Deutschland? Warum sagst du, dass er aus Deutschland kommt?
     [T: From Germany? Why do you say that he comes from Germany?]
4   P: Ehm,
     [P: Erm]
5   T: Tsch, tsch (ermahnt einige Schüler)
     [T:Shh, shh (quietens a few students)]

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6   P: Ehm,
        [P: Erm]
7   T: Was denkst du?
        [T: What do you think?]
8   P: Ehm, (.3.), ehm,
        [P: Erm, (.3.) erm]
9   T: Ehm, warum aus Deutschland?
        [T: Erm, why from Germany?]
10   P: Ehm (.2.),
        [P:Erm (.2.)
11   T: Hast du keinen Grund? Nee? Keinen Grund? Nicola, was sagst du?
        [T: Don't you have a reason? No? No reason? Nicola, what do you say?]

The teacher opens the interaction by initiating the topic in a question to the whole class. She asks where the man in the photo is from. Rather than leave the floor open for learners to self-select, she then nominates one student, Marie, to answer the question (line 1). The response is expressed tentatively, almost as a question (line 2) but the teacher's echo is followed immediately by her follow up question and the move serves to confirm that the learner's response has been understood and accepted as a basis for further communication (line 3). The learner hesitates and seems to be struggling to respond (lines 4 and 6) and the teacher fills the gap in communication with a question that relieves the pressure on the learner to answer and buys her a little time by taking back the floor (line 7). It is also one of the ways the teacher 'personalises' her questions. Here the insertion of the question 'Was denkst du?' *[What do you think?]* emphasises that the teacher wants to her the learner's point of view and that there is no one correct answer sought.

   The teacher then waits again and allows the learner a further hesitation turn (line 8) before repeating a simplified version of the question (line 9). After a further hesitation from the learner (line 10) the teacher, responding to content (or lack of it) rather than form, suggests in her next turn that perhaps the learner does not have a reason to share. She receives a non-verbal signal that this is the case from the learner and therefore nominates another student to participate (line 11) in preference to employing a prompt or a direct feed. This seems appropriate in this interaction as the learner has not been able to provide even the most tentative start to a reason that they could have co-constructed. In the exchange that is now taken up with another student, Nicola, it proves possible for teacher and learner to construct jointly a reason for the choice of place.

Extract 8.2: 'Woher kommt er' cont'd

1   T: Hast du keinen Grund? Nee? Keinen Grund? Nicola, was sagst du?
        [T: Don't you have a reason? No? No reason? Nicola, what do you say?]
2   P: Ehm (.), eh, er kommt aus, ehm, eh, Düsseldorf?
        [P:Erm (.) err, he comes from, erm, err, Düsseldorf?]

3   T: Düsseldorf?
        [T: Düsseldorf?]
4   P: Ja.
        [P: Yes]
5   T: Warum Düsseldorf?
        [T: Why Düsseldorf?]
6   P: Eh, in Deutschland XXX.
        [P: Err, in Germany XXX]
7   T: Warum sagst du das? (.) Ist das dein Lieblings, deine Lieblingsstadt in
        Deutschland?
        [T: Why do you say that? (.) Is that your favourite, your favourite town in Germany?]
8   P: Jaa.
        [P: Ye-es]
9   T: Ja? Vielleicht?
        [T: Yes?   Maybe?]
10   P: Ehm, eh, letztes Jahr, eh, bin ich nach Deutschland gefahren und es war gut.
        [P: Erm, err, last year, err, I went to Germany and it was good.]
11   T: Toll! Und du warst in Düsseldorf?
        [T: Great! And you were in Düsseldorf?]
12   P: Ehm, eh, ehm,
        [P: Erm, err, erm]
13   T: Ich bin nie in Düsseldorf gewesen. Ich bin nie in Düsseldorf gewesen, ja? Du warst
        in Düsseldorf, aber ich nicht. Ja?
        *[T: I have never been in Düsseldorf. I have never been in Düsseldorf, yes? You were
        in Düsseldorf, but not me. Yes?]*
14   P: Ja.
        [P: Yes]

Nicola, conforming to the previous student's choice of country, has a specific city in Germany in mind and initiates that the man comes from Düsseldorf (line 2). The teacher's echoed question (line 3) standing alone as the next turn indicates genuine surprise and interest and requires a corroboration from the learner (line 4). The follow up question from the teacher (line 5) seeks the reason for this choice of city but the learner's response is problematic and does not communicate (line 6). The teacher, acting to repair, asks a more specific question that provides a prompt as to a possible reason that the learner need simply accept with an assent, that is to say, whether Düsseldorf is the learner's favourite city in Germany (line 7). Clearly tempted to take the lifeline offered, the learner's expression of assent is nonetheless hesitant and unconvincing (line 8) and leads the teacher to offer her back the floor (line 9). The learner is suddenly able to seize the initiative offered and embarks on a turn that partially communicates the reason, stating that she went to Germany last year and that it was really good (line 10). The learner still needs help to provide the missing link to Düsseldorf and the teacher tries to solicit this with a question (line 11). The learner's response is inconclusive however and the teacher finally resorts to a more explicit feed (line 13), the learner's agreement to which closes the exchange (line 14).

The role of the teacher as 'expert' is clearly discernible throughout this episode, and this episode is typical of all of the non-IRE episodes in Teacher 2's lessons. It is the dialogic assistance provided through these interactive moves that enable the learner to co-construct meaningful interaction and develop the competence to participate effectively in conversations. However, the interactional resources used directly in the construction of communication represent only 8 of the 15 identified categories of utterance. I identified several features of teacher talk whose primary purpose is to establish or maintain a conversational tone to the interaction and to align the teacher more equally with the learners. In all I identified 7 categories of teacher talk that have either solely or partly this function and it is to a discussion of this second teacher role that I now turn.

8.2.2 The 'conversational' goal – teacher as co-participant

Novice L2 learners with limited linguistic competence require high levels of assistance to participate in spontaneous dialogue. In a classroom setting, this leaves control of the interaction firmly in the hands of the teacher. A focus on meaning-oriented communication, a high proportion of referential questions, the intensive soliciting of learner responses, and graduated dialogic support in the formation of meaningful utterances are, as evidenced above, effective in permitting learners to take part in L2 conversations of multiple turns and helping them to produce spontaneously in new contexts language that they have encountered previously in more traditional classroom activities. These, together with the absence of teacher form-focused evaluation moves, are the essential features that produce this non-IRE interaction. And yet it is still essentially teacher-controlled interaction. It seems that it must be as this is a natural consequence of the imbalance in linguistic competence between teacher and learner.

How is it then that these spontaneous episodes have the quality of conversations that might easily take place outside of the classroom in a more naturalistic setting? What features do they share with spontaneous everyday conversation? How is this achieved? What are the effects? How do these features in particular contribute to the learning experience afforded by these spontaneous classroom interactions? The detailed analysis that follows answers these questions.

8.2.2.1 Echoes

'Echoes' or repetitions of the previous turn by the next speaker are common to spontaneous speech. The messages that may be conveyed through these repetitions as statement or

question are outlined in this description, retrieved from an online description of the features of spontaneous conversation:

> Echoes are often used to show agreement and approval. To repeat the other speaker's words may be a sign that you agree with him. On the other hand echoes with rising intonation may suggest a doubt or question which hints at disagreement or misunderstanding. Either way it is characteristic of spontaneous conversation that there should be this interaction between speakers (retrieved www.putlearningfirst.com).

Such echoes (EC) are a consistent feature of Teacher 2's interactive repertoire. The descriptive analysis in the preceding chapter found, within the broader 'Teacher Restatement' category a sub-category of interactive moves, coded TRQ (Teacher Restatement as Question) that was scarcely present in the talk of the other two teachers and yet a dominant feature of Teacher 2's talk. In previous lesson extracts, they have been shown to have a communicative function, acting as a request for clarification. There are many examples, however, whose function is principally to convey interest in and engagement with the speaker.

   In the lesson extract below, Steven, a learner, nominates a new topic with the suggestion 'Essen?' *[Eating?]* in line 4. The teacher's response (line 5) is not a clarification check, nor adds new information to the interaction, but its message is the equivalent of 'Now you've got my attention - I'm listening!' If we omit this reaction from the turn, the communication is not impaired in any way and the interaction could proceed perfectly well with the follow up question 'Warum sagst du, dass sein Lieblingshobby Essen ist?*' [Why do you say that his favourite hobby is eating?].* The effect of this echo here is to democratise the teacher/learner roles and emphasise to the learner that he has got something new to say that surprises and interests his interlocutor.

Extract 8.3: 'Essen?'

[The teacher continues the focus on the photo of the young man, asking about his hobbies].

1   T: Steven, hast du mit ihm getanzt?
       [T: Steven, did you dance with him?]
2   P: Nein.
       [P: No.]
3   T: Auch nicht.
       [T: You neither.]
4   P: Essen?`
       [P: Eating?]
5   T: Essen! Warum sagst du, dass sein Lieblingshobby Essen ist?
       [T: Eating! Why do you say that his favourite hobby is eating?]
6   P: Ah, er ist dick!
       [P: Ah, he is fat!]
7   T: Er ist dick?
       [T: He is fat?]
8   P: Ein bisschen.

[P: A bit.]

9   T: Findest du? Ein bisschen? Vielleicht hier? Bisschen dick. Das ist sein Finger und seine Hand. Er ist ziemlich schlank (.), er ist ziemlich schlank. Colin! Bitte lach nicht! Vielleicht ist sein Lieblingshobby Essen. Okay...
[T: Do you think? A bit? Maybe here? Bit fat. That's his finger and his hand. He is quite slim (.), he is quite slim. Colin! Please don't laugh! Perhaps his favourite hobby is eating. OK...]

Perhaps it is precisely because the learner is emboldened by his elevation to collaborative participant that his next turn is so confident and introduces humour into the exchange (line 6). Whatever the case, he certainly surprises his teacher this time and her response is an echo with raised intonation, communicating surprise and a little disbelief and drawing further information in the form of a qualification from the learner (line 8). In fact, if you read lines 4 – 8 of this exchange, you can imagine it taking place outside the classroom and the teacher/learner roles are dissolved to the point of being indistinguishable. The trigger for this re-alignment of interactive roles within this and other episodes certainly appears to be the teacher use of echoes.

8.2.2.2   Other phatic language use

In addition to her use of echoes, Teacher 2's language purposely emulates the spontaneous speech mode in other distinct ways. One particular feature is a range of techniques that informalise the tone of the interaction. The use of phatic questions (PH), that are reformulations of questions that are surplus to communicative requirements, gives the discourse a chatty, familiar, interpersonal effect. In particular, the addition of formulations such as 'Was sagst du?' *[What do you say?]*, 'Was denkt ihr?' *[What do you all think])*, 'Andere Ideen?' *[Any other ideas?]* 'Hast du vielleicht eine Idee?' *[Do you maybe have an idea?]* provide a sort of 'dialogic padding' that increases the conversational nature of the discourse. The following extract is one of many examples of such language use:

Extract 8.4: 'Was sagst du?'

[The class has offered ideas about his country of origin and his hobbies. Now they are asked what sort of person he might be].

1   T: Felix, was sagst du?
[T: Felix, what do you say?]
2   P: Er sieht frech.
[P: He looks cheeky]
3   T: Er sieht frech aus?
[T: He looks cheeky?]
4   P: Ja.
[P: Yes]

5	T: Wie du? (.2.) Bist du frech?
	[T: Like you? (.2.) Are you cheeky?]
6	P: Ein bisschen.
	[P: A bit.]
7	T: Ein bisschen, ja, schon. Ehm, er sieht frech aus. Ist das gut oder schlecht?
	[T: A bit, yes, right. Erm, he looks cheeky. Is that good or bad?]
8	P: Gut! Natürlich!
	[P: Good! Of course!]
9	T: Ja, das ist etwas Positives, natürlich. Natürlich ist das positiv. Er sieht frech aus, sagt Felix. Was sagst du, Zara?
10	*[T: Yes, that is something positive, of course. Of course that's positive. He looks cheeky, says Felix. What do you say, Zara?]*

The opening line shows one of teacher's typical question types. Casual in tone, the use of learner name emphasises the personal nature of the response sought by the teacher, and also frequently provides a discourse link back to previous interactions. Following Felix's response and ubiquitous echo from the teacher, the next teacher move in line 5 is an example of another means by which this teacher personalises the interaction (PE). Moving from a description of the man in the photo to the learner she asks if he too is cheeky, simultaneously introducing an element of humour into the exchange (HU). This humour is picked up by the learner in his response (line 6), continued by the teacher (line 7) and draws yet more humour from Felix in line 8. The reciprocity and shared humour evident in this exchange adds to its spontaneity and stimulates the learner to emulate natural speech patterns in his ready responses and use of exclamation. The teacher's initial responses in lines 7 and 9 add no new information, but their sarcastic tone contributes to the humour so their use may be considered phatic too as is, of course, the humour itself.

Student interview data confirm the importance of humour. The teacher's humour is perceived to spark off further humour in learner contributions: 'She's quite a funny person so she would make up humour and that encourages us to add a bit of humour into our responses'. Humour is considered to increase the intrinsic interest of classroom interaction and conforms to a student's notion of everyday conversation: 'The humour adds to the interest. It's just like a normal English conversation really but you're learning German at the same time'. Humour is also judged to countermine the anxiety associated with making errors in spontaneous language use, and is therefore likely to support spontaneity:

> Learning is always a lot easier when humour is incorporated into it. It's just good because when you're put on the spot it's generally a very pressurised situation and you freeze up sometimes and laughter is kind of a bit of familiarity in the face of danger really.

One final feature that I draw attention to in this category of teacher talk is the way in which this teacher often attributes the contribution of a learner to him or her by name as shown in

line 9 of this extract. This particular feature is interesting because it not a common feature of spontaneous conversation. It seems, however, to fulfil two functions in this interaction. Firstly, it contributes to the intersubjectivity of the discourse, emphasising the contributions of individuals to it in a very explicit way. To understand its second function, we need to remind ourselves of the wider body of participants in the discourse, the other class learners. Such statements seem incongruent to the interaction between two interlocutors, but at these moments in the dialogue the teacher very deliberately widens her interactive scope to embrace the whole class as participants, that is to say, she adopts her third role in the interaction, that of 'class instructor'. I explore the characteristics of this role, as played out in the teacher's use of linguistic resources in the section of analysis that follows.

8.2.3 Instructional Coherence – teacher as 'class instructor'

Returning to the framework of identified teacher talk types, I identified a number of features that neither advance the communication nor add to the conversational tone. Whilst disparate in nature, the aspect they share is an awareness of the wider pedagogical destination of the discourse and its situation within the whole class setting. Of these, two particularly interesting utterance types function to include the whole class of learners in the discourse and make available to them the language that is unfolding in the spontaneous episode. The first of these, as noted in the previous section, is to attribute learners' contributions to them in the third person, often in the teacher's closing turn (AT). The assigning of a given utterance to a named individual does have the dual effect of enhancing the collaborative nature of the interaction, validating the contribution to the wider 'audience' as well as providing a moment to take stock of the point at which the interaction has arrived, before continuing with another individual's contribution.

Another method that this teacher uses typically to close an interaction is to provide a brief summary (SU) of the main points of the preceding episode. This move provides both an accurate model of the essential language that the interaction has generated as well as a signal that the episode is concluding, providing a topically coherent bridge to the next interaction. This feature clearly adds nothing to the conversational tone, in fact it is antithetical to spontaneous conversation. Both features bond the series of interactions with individual student interlocutors into one coherent discourse, assisted also by the unifying theme of the overarching question that begins the lesson, in this case, the description of a man in a photo. Their effectiveness is underlined by the fact that it is seldom necessary for the teacher to

reiterate the original question. She simply asks another student what s/he thinks. The following extract from Lesson 6 illustrates the teacher's use of the summary technique:

Extract 8.5: 'Hast du eine Idee?'

[One particular student initiates a return to the subject of the man's country of origin, sometime after the interaction has moved on to other themes].

1   T: Hast du eine Idee, Zara?
        [T: Have you got an idea Zara?]

2   P: Ja, ehm, er kommt aus Russland.
        [P: Yes, erm, he comes from Russia.]

3   T: Aus Russland? Wie du? Und warum wie du aus Russland?
        [T: From Russia? Like you? And why like you from Russia?]

4   P: Ehm,
        [P: Erm]

5   T: Ist er dein Onkel?
        [T: Is he your uncle?]

6   P: Nein! Er ist meine, ehm (.), eh (.), Bruder.
        [P: No! He is my, erm (.), err (.), brother.

7   T: Dein Bruder? Was? (lacht) **Das ist Zaras Bruder! Wow, Zara!** (.2.)Und wo ist dein Bruder?
        [T: Your brother? What? (laughs) This is Zara's brother! Wow, Zara! (.2.) And where is your brother?]

8   P: Ehm, (.) eh, er, ehm, Frankreich?
        [P: Erm (.), err, he, erm, France?]

9   T: In Frankreich? **Dein Bruder kommt aus Russland und er ist in Frankreich.** Und wie heißt er?
        [T: In France? Your brother comes from Russia and he is in France. And what is he called?]

10   P: Ehm, er heißt (.) Stefan.
        [P: Erm, he's called (.) Stefan]

11   T: (lacht) **Dein Bruder heißt Stefan, kommt aus Russland und wohnt in Frankreich. Wow! Okay...**
        [T: (laughs) Your brother's called Stefan, comes from Russia and lives in France. Wow! OK...]

In lines 7, 9 and 11 (bold and underlined) the teacher summarises the progress of the dialogue, addressing Zara in her utterances but clearly aware of the wider audience. Other features that conform to this 'instructional coherence' teacher role are the classroom management moves, the direct teaching or feeds and certain examples of rephrasing or repetition in which we are aware of the presence of the other learners and the wider educational setting in which these spontaneous episodes are located. In this role, we see the teacher's conscious moves to orient to the learning needs of the whole class.

From the student interview data, it emerged that learners were aware that the teacher was modelling language for them. One student comments:

the way that she teaches, she has conversations with different people and sometimes she highlights little bits of text or little phrases that they would have used that are good and that other people should use, so definitely learning new vocabulary from the conversations.

One perceived effect of the teacher making particular items of language more salient during the conversations is that students learn new vocabulary.

But a second perception is that the teacher's recasts and reformulations offer an improved version of the learner's utterance, which can be a useful source of comparison for the listener, who has the time available for analysis and may be able to re-organise his/her linguistic resources as a consequence of these opportunities for 'noticing by proxy', building on their peer's linguistically stretched output coupled with the teacher's reformulation of the same message:

> Yes, because, it sounds quite horrible from this side, but you hear the right German from the teacher and then the maybe not so fluent German from the student and then obviously she does the same that she did with me [referring back to a teacher re-cast], and that's obviously a teaching moment. You hear the wrong way to do it and then the right way to do it.

In summary, I argue that it is the weaving together of these three discourse roles that enable these non-IRE/F episodes to be both 'instruction' and 'conversation'. These roles are never static and the teacher's use of language talks into being the different roles on a moment-by-moment basis.

The analysis of teacher talk presented here demonstrates that the teacher's interactional moves establish a pattern of multi-exchange episodes in whole class teacher-fronted discourse. Using a range of identified moves to prolong exchanges and to ease learners into participation in conversational exchanges, whilst providing graduated linguistic assistance that takes account of learner needs and builds meaningful communication, the teacher simultaneously establishes reciprocity and equality through a variety of interactional moves that emulate spontaneous conversation. These moves can be seen to encourage learners to take the initiative and adopt the role of fellow interlocutor rather than novice. In the analysis that follows, I argue that the gains in learner performance are three-fold: a broadening of their communicative repertoire; the acquisition of new and partially-learnt vocabulary and structures and collective or 'distributed' L2 learning within the class.

8.3 Learner talk: Communicative repertoire

If learners engage only in IRE interactions the language they will typically produce will be grammatically-correct full sentences (Hall 2010). Whilst not denying the importance of

grammatical accuracy in L2 learning, the limitations are clear: 'If the IRF were the only practice, it would certainly constrain learners' development of a range of communicative repertoires for taking action in their L2 worlds outside the classroom' (Hall, 2010, p.212). In this section of analysis I show how learner L2 output from the experimental classes in this study differs qualitatively from the output norms of the ubiquitous IRE/F exchange and argue that the interactive opportunities afforded to learners by the teachers' interactive moves afford learners alternative roles in the discourse that broaden their communicative competence and allow them to adopt, albeit fleetingly, different discourse identities.

For 'real' communication to take place in interaction there must be some exchange of information. Known-answer questioning routines focus predominantly on form and inhibit the introduction of new ideas or information by the learner. The student interview data establish a link between oral activities where there are no correct answers and where learners are invited to speculate, and a willingness to use the L2 spontaneously. When asked about picture-stimulus tasks where Teacher 2 typically used closed questions referentially, students commented that 'even if you only know the smallest amount of vocabulary you can say anything.. just think up things because we're imaginative so we can basically say anything we want to as long as it's in German and makes sense' and argued that with this approach 'they (teachers) can get anyone to talk, I mean even the most unconfident people would say something'. Another student linked the openness of the task to humour again:

> Because they kind of leave it up to you … they leave it up to you to think of what to say and kind of again with the informality it's good because you can really say anything and even if it's funny then that's good because it's good to laugh in a classroom I think.

As we will see from the lesson observation analysis that follows, the almost exclusive use of referential questions by Teacher 2 sparks off corresponding learner responses that do, by definition, share new information. More significantly, however, learners go beyond this to self-select and initiate new ideas unsolicited by teacher questioning, or even in opposition to it, as the following extract illustrates:

Extract 8.6: Eine Geschichte (A story)

[Another photo stimulus lesson. This time the teacher asks what the person in the photo might have done the previous evening].

1   T: Was hat er gestern Abend gemacht? John?
       [T: What did he do last night? John?]
2   P: Ehm (.), eh, letzte Woche, ehm
       [P: Erm (.), err, last week, erm]
3   T: Letzte Woche? Gestern Abend habe ich gefragt!
       [T: Last week? I asked about last night!]

4 P: Ja, aber letzte Woche
    [P: Yes, but last week]
5 T: Okay, das ist eine Geschichte, ja?
    [T: OK, this is a story, yes?]
6 P: Jaa. Ehm, er bin nach Las Vegas gegangen.
    [P: Ye-es. Erm, he went to Las Vegas] (incorrect auxiliary verb form)
7 T: Wow!
    [T: Wow!]

The teacher opens the interaction with a question directed to the whole class. John indicates (non-verbally) his wish to take the floor and is nominated by the teacher (line 1). His first utterance begins hesitantly with the words 'Letzte Woche' *[last week]* and the teacher, perhaps assuming that he has misheard or misunderstood, seeks to re-orient him to her question, albeit in an exclamatory way that maintains the conversational tone of the exchange (line 3). The learner, however, conveys in his next turn that he has neither misheard nor misunderstood. His repetition of 'Letzte Woche' prefaced by 'aber' *[but]* insists that what he has to say relates most definitely to last week. The teacher, acknowledging the learner's right to topic management expressed in the previous turn, asks 'Das ist eine Geschichte, ja?' *[This is a story, yes?],* and we see that she needs to ask as she truly has no idea what the learner is about to say. Line 6 sees the learner embark on his narrative, with the teacher duly assigned the role of respondent (line 7) as the story unfolds.

As communication is co-constructed during the interaction that ensues, both interlocutors engage in equal measure and it is not simply a question of fluency over accuracy or content over form. Teacher and learner negotiate meaning in the following extract, but here too we see that extant linguistic asymmetry is counter-balanced by the learner's control of the topic, resulting in his completion (line 3) of the teacher's repair attempt (line 2), a repair which is finally concluded by the learner in line 7. We see the learner's linguistic resources stretched to breaking point in line 1, where he finally resorts to unsuccessful lexical invention as he is unable to retrieve the word 'verloren' *[lost].* Despite this, he interrupts the teacher's attempt to provide assistance in line 2 and re-claims the initiative, successfully communicating the fact that the man lost his money at Black Jack.

Extract 8.7: 'Die Geschichte' cont'd

[This extended interaction with teacher and one student takes several minutes but other learners are fully involved].

1 P: Oh, jaja, ehm (.), er, er, er spielen Black Jack und er loosen einhundert (a few students are laughing)
    [P: Oh, yes yes, erm (.), he, he, he playing Black Jack and he 'loosen' (anglicised invention for verloren' one hundred (a few students are laughing)]
2 T: Aber John, hat er

	[T: But John, did he]
3	P: Nicht gewonnen, Black Jack.
	[P: not win, Black Jack.]
4	T: Er hat gewonnen?
	[T: He did win?]
5	P: No, nicht gewonnen.
	[P: No, didn't win]
6	T: Er hat nicht gewonnen?
	[T: He didn't win?]
7	P: No.
	[P: No]

Roles and relationships are never static in these conversations as a further example from this episode shows. Again the learner's linguistic resources are stretched but this time a brief focus on form is permitted and the learner emphatically accepts the teacher's direct feed. There has been so much interactional equality in this exchange, however, that even here the overall tone of the interaction remains light and conversational.

Extract 8.8: 'Die Geschichte' Conclusion

[Peripheral participation from other students is sustained to the conclusion of the 'story'].

1	T: Wo ist er jetzt? Ist er immer noch in Las Vegas?
	[T: Where is he now? Is he still in Las Vegas?]
2	P: Ehm, Jaa.
	[P: Erm, yes.]
3	T: Ja?
	[T: Yes?]
4	P: Er ist, ehm, er ist stuck there (man hört einige Schüler lachen)
	[P: He is, erm, he is 'stuck there' (a few students are heard laughing)]
5	T: Ja. Er muss da bleiben, er muss da bleiben.
	[T: Yes. He has to stay there, he has to stay there.]
6	P: Jaa!
	[P: Ye-es!]

The features of learner talk identified above support the claim that these interactions build 'real' communication. Further features provide additional evidence to identify these episodes as 'conversations'. Conversation is too ubiquitous a term to facilitate easy definition but it is nevertheless useful to adopt a working definition to frame the next part of the analysis. Wilson (1989) in his definition highlights the issue of discourse control, maintaining that conversation is a speech event that is:

> distinguished by an equal distribution of speaker rights. This does not mean that speakers contribute an equal number of speaking turns, but rather that any individual has an equal right (within conversation) to initiate talk, interrupt, respond, or refuse to do any of these. (1989, p.20)

For Seedhouse, the two conditions that would enable interaction in a language classroom to

be classified as conversation are firstly that learners should 'regard the teacher as a fellow conversationalist of identical status rather than as a teacher' and that the teacher should not 'direct the discourse in any way at all' (1996, p.18). As we have seen, control of the 'Las Vegas' interaction begins with the teacher and in line 5 is ceded to the learner. Throughout, control of the exchange is often in the hands of the learner and there is collective, shared responsibility for its direction and outcome. In the teacher talk there is evidence of a variety of alignment strategies, linguistic means the teacher uses to blur the teacher/learner distinction. I find too that the learner talk in these interactions shows a confidence in taking the floor that belies their status as student, and marks learners out as taking a fully participant role.

Student perception data confirm that the learners considered these interactions to be conversations. More importantly they believed that taking part in these conversations improved their ability to use language in unrehearsed situations. When asked what had helped to improve their ability to speak German in all of the teaching they had had over a 4-year period, one student responded:

> The ability to take part in real conversations definitely, because obviously it wasn't scripted at all, and it wasn't something that could've been. There weren't any right answers and obviously when you're in a real situation you won't have any back up.

Another learner describes being able to cope well on a German Music Exchange visit using much of what he had learnt in lessons: 'We had proper conversations with each other, even if it was the most simple of conversations. This then helped me when I talking to German people […] basically I'd learnt a lot of that from German lessons.' Another student describes conversations with her friend's mother, a native German speaker, reflecting that 'it really helped because again it was spontaneous and the more you talk the better you'll be really'. The use of the word 'again' draws an interesting parallel between the classroom interactions and real conversations with a native speaker outside the classroom.

These classroom conversations undoubtedly contain spontaneous learner L2 talk. It is important, however, to make a distinction between spontaneity and fluency. Spontaneous conversation as distinct from planned discourse tends to exhibit non-fluency features as the participants engage in 'on-line' processing. These include: hesitations, repetitions, pauses, as well as incomplete or irregular syntax. All of these are present in the learners' contributions (and to a lesser extent in the teacher talk). It is also to be expected that spontaneous speech may be lexically limited in comparison to prepared speech where it is possible to consider a broader range of vocabulary and expression and there may be a tendency to resort to set phrases. These characteristics typify all of the non-IRE data from Teacher 2's lessons. I

therefore argue that these interactions promote spontaneity, but not that they directly enhance fluency.

In summary, the teacher talk allows the teacher to diffuse the dominant teacher/student roles and to enable the student (as well as the teacher) to port other discourse identities within these non-IRE episodes. The language produced by the learners in these interactions reveals that they are able to respond to the interactive affordances of the teacher talk and assume different discursive roles. As we have considered in the traditional architecture of classroom discourse, the role assigned to the student in the adjacent pairing teacher/student is almost exclusively that of 'respondent'. In these episodes we see that learners ask questions, make suggestions, initiate, nominate and control topics. Just as the teacher aligns herself with the learners through her interactive moves, the learners too shed the role of 'student' and assume the mantle of 'co-participant' in the exchanges.

8.4 Learner talk: Microgenetic growth and L2 development

In addition to its role in affording learners initiation into a wider variety of interactive practices and developing their strategic competence, these spontaneous episodes represent a locus for L2 learning whereby learners acquire greater control over language as yet only partially acquired in previous instruction. The contribution that this type of spontaneous interaction makes to the acquisition of new language is the second focus of this analysis chapter. To what extent do these spontaneous episodes contribute to the learning or reinforcement of vocabulary items or grammatical structures? I address this question through the microgenetic analysis of several non-IRE episodes below. In this analysis the particular focus is on the linguistic output of the learners, showing how the L2 output reveals qualitative evidence of improvement.

8.4.1 Linguistic development within one spontaneous episode

In this episode at the start of one lesson, after quieting the class in the customary way, counting down in German from three to one, Teacher 2 initiates a conversation with one student who had been absent the previous lesson:

Extract 8.9: One spontaneous episode

[The class is ready to start the lesson when the teacher initiates this interaction with one student, seated near the back of the classroom:]

1   T: Guten Tag, Zara, wie geht's? Wie geht´s?
       [Hello, Zara, how are you? How are you?]
2   P: Ja.

[Yes]
3　　T: Ja? Warst du krank? Am Dienstag, krank?
　　　[Yes? Were you ill? On Tuesday, ill?]
4　　P: Nein, ehm...
　　　[No, erm..]
5　　T: Tsch.
　　　[Shh..]
6　　P: Ich bin in Deutschland.
　　　[I am in Germany.]
7　　T: Du warst in Deutschland?! Du bist nach Deutschland gefahren?! Wo in Deutschland warst du?
　　　[You were in German?! You went to Germany?! Where in Germany were you?]
8　　P: Ehm, Berlin.
　　　[Erm, Berlin]
9　　T: In Berlin? Was hast du in Berlin gemacht?
　　　[In Berlin? What were you doing in Berlin?]
10　　P: Ich war in Deutschland, weil, ehm, ehm (.2.), weil ich, ehm, eh, (.) mein Vater arbeit ehm ehm
　　　[I was in Germany, because erm erm (.2.), because I erm er (.) my dad work erm erm]
11　　T: In der Universität?
　　　[In the university?]
12　　P: Ja.
　　　[Yes]
13　　T: Super! Wie interessant! Und, wie war Berlin?
　　　[Fab! How interesting! And, how was Berlin?]

Asked about her whereabouts, the student hesitates, clearly struggling to respond, finally producing 'Ich bin in Deutschland' in an attempt to say that she was in Germany, but producing the incorrect tense of the verb 'sein', to be. In her response the teacher offers a rather implicit form of re-cast, using the correct tense of the verb, but in the second person singular form, expressed as two questions, ostensibly following up only on the content of the student's response. In fact, the teacher's response contains 3 questions, an additional, phatic 'Du warst in Deutschland?!' *[You went to Germany?!]* uttered half as exclamation, half as question. We have previously noted that these redundant utterances set a conversational tone, but also function to give the student a fraction more time to react, delaying the moment when the student has to produce his/her next turn. Having conveyed that she was in Berlin, the teacher follows up by enquiring as to the reason for her visit, and the learner this time replies using the correct form 'war', beginning her response confidently, 'Ich war in Deutschland, weil' *[I was in Germany, because]* before once again becoming a little unstuck with her present tense verb endings, though nonetheless managing to communicate successfully that her visit had been on account of her father's work there.

　　I acknowledge that this a little speculative, but it may be that the teacher's implicit re-cast of the first unsuccessful attempt triggered Zara's successful production of 'ich war' *[I was].*

It was some considerable time later that I was able to interview this student about this episode, but after watching a video recording of the episode, I asked her if she was aware of self-correcting. Her response indicated that the teacher's input may have been instrumental:

> I think if I'd have been left to it, if she hadn't said that, I probably would have gone on saying 'Ich bin in Deutschland' *[I am in Germany]* and whatever I said next but probably it was the fact that she said it again, that would have definitely influenced me, yes.

She went on to offer a rationale in support of implicit re-casting rather than explicit correction, with respect to learner willingness to engage in spontaneous L2 interaction:

> Probably subtlety is good especially as a teacher because if you get, well from personal experience, if you say something wrong and then you get corrected, obviously the teacher's intentions are good, always, but it's that kind of 'you did it wrong' and it being highlighted almost.. and that makes you less confident and probably less likely to try and do something again.

A surprising insight that emerged from interviewing the student about this exchange came when I asked her what she felt she learned from unplanned interactions like these, and she mentioned a new piece of language that she had learnt from this episode: 'I hadn't known for example, 'Brandenburger Tor' *[Brandenburg Gate]* previously. I hadn't known what it was so obviously that was a new vocab that I picked up'. It turned out that she meant she had visited the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin whilst away, but only seen the name written on a road sign on the way and hadn't heard it said, until it emerged later in the same conversation:

Extract 8.10: Brandenburger Tor

[The teacher tries to find out more about what Zara did in Berlin].

1   T: Toll. Hast du zum Beispiel das Brandenburger Tor gesehen?
        [Great. Did you see the Brandenburg Gate for example?]
2   P: Ja.
        [Yes]
3   T: Ja? Gab es viele Touristen? (.) Und wie war das Wetter?
        [Yes? Were there lots of tourists? (.) and what was the weather like?]

This is an indication that spontaneous interactions can trigger the acquisition of new vocabulary and this is explored more fully in the next section of my analysis.

8.4.2 Linguistic development over time and transfer

The expression 'ich glaube schon' *[I believe so]* had been introduced by the teacher earlier in this particular lesson with several other expressions that learners could use to respond to statements about a short video clip. The pattern of the lesson that unfolded was the teacher asking many of the students in turn for their response to a given statement in German about

the video clip they had just watched. In this particular extract, the teacher asks David for his response. He wants to say 'I don't think so' and attempts to re-construct spontaneously from 'ich glaube schon' *[I believe so]* adding a 'nicht' *[not]* to make the construction negative, resulting in 'ich glaube schon nicht' *[I believe so not]*, a flawed construction that does not really communicate. The teacher responds, showing first in her hesitation that there is a problem with the utterance and then by offering 'ich glaube nicht' *[I believe not]* as a re-cast, emphasizing its preferability as an utterance by adding, 'das ist besser' *[that is better]*.

Extract 8.11: 'Ich glaube nicht' *[I don't believe so]* Part 1

[After watching a video clip involving the teacher and the foreign language assistant, students are asked if they think the teacher is a good student].

1   T: Warum seid ihr nicht sicher? Ich bin doch eine tolle Studentin! Aber, weil ich keine Hausaufgaben gemacht habe, bin ich natürlich nicht so gut. David, was sagst du?
       [T:Why are you all not sure? Why I'm a great student! But, because I didn't do my homework, I'm obviously not quite so good. David, what do you say?]
2   P: Ich glaube schon nicht.
       [P: I think so not]
3   T: Ich glaube (.), ich glaube nicht. Ja? Das ist besser. Felix?
       [T: I think (.), I think not. Yes? That's better. Felix?]

The teacher makes no more explicit mention of this phrase during this lesson and it is not re-used by the student or any of his peers during the remainder of the whole class interaction. However, during a subsequent lesson approximately 6 weeks later, the same student, David, when asked for his opinion within a different context, spontaneously re-uses the expression correctly as follows:

Extract 8.12: 'Ich glaube nicht' *[I don't believe so]* Part 2

[The teacher elicits opinions in response to a different video clip].

1   T: Stimmt auch nicht, David, was sagst du?
       [T: That's not true either. David, what do you say?]
2   P: Ich glaube nicht.
       [P: I don't think so]
3   T. Ich glaube nicht. Was sagst du Anna?
       [T: I don't think so. What do you say, Anna?]

Furthermore, later in the same lesson, another student is asked for her opinion and responds using the same construction:

Extract 8.13: 'Ich glaube nicht' *[I don't believe so]* Part 3

1   T: Ich glaube schon. Nicola, was sagst du?
       [T: I think so. Nicola, what do you say?]
2   P: Ich glaube nicht
       [P: I don't think so]
3   T: Ich glaube nicht. Also, die Lehrerin war sehr positiv.
       [T: I don't think so. So, the teacher was very positive.]

8.4.2.1 One learner's 'verrückte' *[mad]* journey

We can see examples in the discourse where the freedom that learners have in directing the interaction and the frequent opportunities that exist for talk that does not conform to a targeted structure or communicative function allow them to develop the individual use of preferred lexical items. One student for example has clearly elicited the German word for 'mad' from his teacher in a previous conversation – it is certainly not to be found within the text book used by the class – and he uses it often whenever the task is sufficiently open-ended to allow for its use. In this first extract, the teacher responds by making the word available to others in the class by re-using it and asking for their opinion, miming the meaning of the word humorously as she does so.

Extract 8.14: 'verrückt' *[mad]* Part 1

[The teacher displays on the whiteboard an image of Julie Andrews from the film 'The Sound of Music' on the slopes of a mountain in Austria].

1   T: Also so-o. So lass uns beginnen so bitte nicht nicht nicht so machen ok (laughter) so was sieht man im Foto?
[T: So, so. Right let us start, so please don't don't don't do that ok (laughter). Ok, what do you see in the photo?]
2   P: ein verrückt Frau
[P: a mad woman]
3   (PP: murmuring)
4   T: Was denken die Anderen? Ist das eine verrückte Frau?
[T: What do the others think? Is it a mad woman?]
5   PP: ja , ja (a little screaming from teacher as she models 'mad')
[PP: Yes, yes]

Later in the same lesson, the same student prompts another who is being asked by the teacher to explain why the woman is stupid, as claimed by a different student.

Extract 8.15: 'verrückt' *[mad]* Part 2

1   T: Shhh! Moment. Rob! Warum ist sie dumm?
[T: Shhh! Wait a minute. Rob! Why is she stupid?]
2   P: Sie ist...ehm..
[P: She is…erm…]
3   P2: verrückt verrückt
[P2: mad mad]
4   P: verrückt
[P: mad]
5   T: Sie ist verrückt. Was macht sie? Was macht sie?
[T: She is mad. What is she doing? What is she doing?]

Later still in the lesson, the same student finds another opportunity to re-use his favourite lexical item, this time in a different context, but more importantly, this time the learner modifies the adjective 'mad' to transform it into the comparative form 'madder' or 'more

mad'. As this is accomplished spontaneously within the interaction, we can see this as evidence of competence with the linguistic structure of German regular comparative forms. This class had received instruction in the formation of German comparatives the previous term and had practised their production, orally and written, in some structured drills. This independent formation of a comparative comprised of an adjective acquired during spontaneous classroom interaction indicates that the learner has acquired the underlying linguistic knowledge required in the formation of comparatives to the degree that he is able to produce the structure spontaneously.

The opportunities that this type of classroom interaction affords the learner in terms of L2 learning are substantial. We see clearly here that spontaneous output can help learners to not only achieve greater fluency by increasing control over forms that they have already partially acquired, but also that it allows learners to test out hypotheses in real time and receive moment-by-moment feedback on their utterances. L2 development is visible not only through increasing participation and emergent L2 communication but also in examples such as this through the spontaneous use and re-use and successful modification of language previously acquired in spontaneous classroom interaction.

Extract 8.16: 'verrückt(er)' *[mad(der)]* Part 3

[Part of a class conversation about what there is to do in Austria].

1   T: Ladies. Also, danke schön Katy. Helen, kann man nicht in Cambridge Deutsch lernen? Kann man in Cambridge Deutsch lernen? Warum fährt man nach Österreich?
      [T: Ladies. So, thank you Katy. Helen, can't you learn German in Cambridge? Can people learn German in Cambridge? Why do people go to Austria?]
2   P: es ist besser (whispered)
      [P: it's better (whispered)]
3   T: Warum ist Österreich besser als England? (.3.) Habt ihr eine Idee? Oder ist das zu schwierig?
      [T: Why is Austria better than England? (.3.) Do you have an idea? Or is it too hard?]
4   P: es ist verrückter, es ist verrückter
      [P: it's madder, it's madder]
5   T: Es ist verrückter? Wie bitte Helen?
      T: It's madder? Pardon Helen?

Five months later, the same student finds another use for his favourite adjective, this time incorporating it into a new structure that has come into the discourse as the group tries to describe a photo of a man that the teacher has presented to them.

Extract 8.17: 'verrückt' *[mad]* Part 4

[The teacher has asked students to say what sort of character they think the man in the photo has].

1	T: Ja, Steven?
	[T: Yes, Steven?]
2	P: Er sieht verrückt aus.
	[P: He looks mad]
3	T: Warum sieht er verrückt aus?
	[T: Why does he look mad?]
4	P: Ehm,
	[P: Erm]
5	T: Die..
	[T: The..}
6	P: Ja, ehm, er sieht
	[P: Yes, erm, he looks]
7	T: Er sieht verrückt aus, ja, die Augen sind ein bisschen wuh,
	[T: He looks mad, yes, the eyes are a bit woah]
8	P. Ja.
	[P: Yes]
9	T: Oder? Ja? Er sieht verrückt aus.
	[T: Or? Yes? He looks mad.]

Although we would not claim that Steven has acquired the new structure 'Er sieht …aus' *[He looks…]* as it was first introduced into the conversation during this lesson, what we can see from this episode is that Steven has fully acquired the adjective 'verrückt' and that he has not just acquired the use of it within a formulaic chunk or set phrase but has the underlying knowledge of how to use it as an adjective within a new structure. The new structure has only been modeled once with one adjective earlier in this lesson. In fact, the manner in which this structure is introduced and then used within this lesson merits closer attention and it is to this that I turn in the following section.

8.5 Collective learning or 'Distributed' Microgenesis

A detailed analysis of the use of the construction 'er sieht + adjective aus' *[he looks + adjective]* during one lesson reveals both aspects of the process of language learning in interaction as well as the crucial work of the teacher in building with students this learning conversation. In contrast to previous examples, this demonstrates a pattern of 'distributed' microgenesis, whereby different learners consecutively use the new language, each time requiring less direct support from the teacher.

The first time the construction is introduced by the teacher it is to repair a problem in the dialogue with one student who is struggling to justify his opinion that the man in the photo is boring. The response of the teacher is first to offer less direct assistance. She waits to allow him to formulate his first and second responses. When he is unable to justify his opinion, she suggests 'Vom Foto?' *[From the photo?]* using a simple phrase with a cognate, to which the learner could simply respond 'Ja' *[Yes]*. At this point, though, the learner offers the English

'He looks like it'. The teacher, deciding that direct teaching of a new structure is the best solution, offers him 'Er sieht langweilig aus' *[He looks boring]* and writes the phrase onto the board as she says it clearly twice, the second time attributing the utterance to Jamie, 'sagt Jamie' *[says Jamie]*. This is a technique this teacher often uses and its effect is to offer additional clarity as to the meaning of the utterance, given that Jamie has voiced the same in English, as well as to reinstate the conversational tone of the interaction, after a momentary diversion for the direct teaching of the new phrase. In addition, the utterance brings the direction of the interaction back to the theme of describing the man in the photo. The writing of the phrase makes the new language available to all the students in the class, and marks it out as worth noticing. But, as we will see, the teacher does more than this to encourage uptake of the new language. In all, the teacher herself uses the phrase a further 10 times within the interactions that follow, as she and the students construct a description of the man in the photo.

Extract 8.18: Er sieht langweilig aus *[He looks boring]*

[The teacher nominates a student to give his impression of the man's character].

1   T: Jamie? Was für eine Person ist der Mann?
          [T: Jamie? What type of person is the man?]
2   P: Ehm (.2.), er ist langweilig.
          [P: Erm (.2.) he is boring.]
3   T: Er ist langweilig? Warum denkst du, dass er langweilig ist? (.2.)Du weißt nicht?
          [T: He is boring? Why do you think that he is boring? (.2.) Don't you know?]
4   P: XXX.
          [P: XXX]
5   T: Vom Foto?
          [T: From the photo?]
6   P: He looks like it.
          [P: He looks like it.]
7   T: Du musst aber auf Deutsch reden, ja. Er (schreibt an die Tafel) sieht langweilig aus. Ja? Er sieht langweilig aus, sagt Jamie. Was sagst du Caroline?
          [T: But you must talk in German, yes. He (writing on the board) looks boring. Yes? He looks boring, says Jamie. What do you say Caroline?]

A little later in the lesson, the teacher asks a different student for his opinion. The learner, who is of course able to refer to the written phrase on the board if he wishes, produces a partial version of the construction, adding a new adjective but missing the separable prefix 'aus' at the end.

Extract 8.19: 'Er sieht frech aus' (He looks cheeky)

[The teacher brings another student into the conversation].

1   T: Felix, was sagst du?
          [T: Felix, what do you say?]

2   P: Er sieht frech.
        [P: He sees cheeky]
3   T: Er sieht frech aus?
        [T: He looks cheeky?]
4   P: Ja.
        [P:Yes]
5   T: Wie du? (.2.) Bist du frech?
        [T: Like you? (.2.) Are you cheeky?]
6   P: Ein bisschen.
        [P: a bit]
7   T: Ein bisschen, ja, schon. Ehm, er sieht frech aus. Ist das gut oder schlecht?
        [T: a bit, yes, right. Erm, he looks cheeky. Is that good or bad?]
8   P: Gut! Natürlich!
        [P: Good! Of course!]
9   T: Ja, das ist etwas Positives, natürlich. Natürlich ist das positiv. Er sieht frech aus,
        sagt Felix. Was sagst du, Zara?
        *[T: Yes, that is something positive, of course. Of course that's positive. He looks
        cheeky, says Felix. What do you say, Zara?]*

In response to Felix's incorrect and ambiguous formulation, the teacher responds with the corrected form, framed as a question so that the effect is a clarification check that requires a response from the learner and thereby ensures a continuation of the interaction. Again here we see how the carefully chosen response by the teacher fulfills several different functions, representing at once an implicit correction of the previous utterance, a new modeling of the correct construction with a different adjective, and a means to continue the interaction. Her feedback is much less direct in this interaction and responsive to the level of understanding the learner reveals in his partially correct formulation.

The teacher's next turn is equally significant. She prolongs the interaction with this learner by asking if he too is 'frech'. By transferring the conversation to a personal level, the teacher checks that the learner understands the word he has chosen. His response will reveal his understanding. Aware too that these learners have only 15 months of instruction with two lessons per week behind them, she senses that a fruitful way to prolong an interaction is to personalize it. In addition, mindful of the 'audience' and wanting to maintain the attention of the other 33 students in the class, she injects humour into the interaction with this question, knowing that this student is indeed cheeky and that the moment will be appreciated by the whole class. The extension to this interaction offers the teacher another opportunity to repeat the correct version of 'Er sieht frech aus' *[He looks cheeky]* and leads into a further request for the learner's opinion, which maintains the humour of the moment as the learner's reply indicates. The final turn of the teacher builds in a further repetition of the phrase, typically assigning it to the student interlocutor, bringing the focus back again to the task of describing the man in the photo, after the spontaneous aside. Again we see how the decisions that the

teacher makes on a moment-by-moment basis work on several levels, maintaining the conversational, instructional and linguistic goals of the lesson.

At this point in the lesson, the teacher has used the target construction five times, neatly interwoven into the dialogic interaction. In the interaction that follows, we see that the next learner is able to produce the construction independently, adapting it himself by adding a different adjective.

Extract 8.20: Er sieht verrückt aus *[He looks mad]*

1   T: Ja, Steven?
        [T: Yes, Steven?]
2   P: Er sieht verrückt aus.
        [P: He looks mad]
3   T: Warum sieht er verrückt aus?
        [T: Why does he look mad?]
4   P: Ehm,
        [P: Erm]
5   T: Die..
        [T: The..}
6   P: Ja, ehm, er sieht
        [P: Yes, erm, he looks]
7   T: Er sieht verrückt aus, ja, die Augen sind ein bisschen wuh,
        [T: He looks mad, yes, the eyes are a bit woah]
8   P. Ja.
        [P: Yes]
9   T: Oder? Ja? Er sieht verrückt aus.
        [T: Or? Yes? He looks mad.]

Here we see the learner use the new construction confidently and the teacher's next turn does not include even a repetition of his utterance to confirm its correctness or reinforce it for the rest of the class. She moves ahead directly to ask for a justification from the learner. Here the learner struggles and, picking up on his hesitation, the teacher prompts with the beginning of an idea 'Die..' (The..). The learner seems to be on the verge of repeating his original utterance and the teacher decides, perhaps so as not to embark on too long a digression or deflect the attention too far from the highlighted phrase, to repeat it for him and suggest a reason herself. After his agreement, she briefly offers him the opportunity to add any further comments before closing the episode by repeating his utterance one final time. She has now used the expression eight times.

Before long we have another indication that the expression has been noticed and is being used appropriately by another student who offers:

Extract 8.21: 'Er sieht freundlich aus' *[He looks friendly]*

1   T: Caroline?
        [T: Caroline?]
2   P. Ehm, er sieht freundlich aus.

[P: Erm, he looks friendly.]
3 T: Er sieht freundlich aus, ja?
  [T: He looks friendly, yes?]

The teacher seems content not to 'work' the expression further in this interaction and moves on to a different aspect of the description. From the final two extracts below, we can see however that she avails herself of every opportunity to model to the learners how this new expression can be used. When the discussion moves on from the man's character to ideas about where he comes from, the teacher re-uses the expression in her question 'Sieht er Englisch aus?' *[Does he look English?].* Finally, a little later in the lesson, and in response to a student-initiated contribution, the teacher weaves the expression into the dialogue one final time, disagreeing with the suggestion of the student that his hairstyle leaves something to be desired and commenting 'Das sieht gut aus' *[It looks good].*

Extract 8.22: 'Er sieht englisch aus' *[He looks English]*

[The teacher exploits the opportunity to re-use the target expression in the conversation].

1 T: Er wohnt an der Küste? Das ist die See. Das ist richtig, ja. Das ist die See. Er kommt aus England, denkst du. Warum denkst du, dass er aus England kommt?
  [T: He lives on the coast? That is the sea. That's right, yes. That is the sea. He comes from England, you think. Why do you think that he comes from England?]
2 P: (.) Es (.)
  [P: (.) It (.]
3 T: Oder (.2.) Sieht er englisch aus? (.) Hat er ein englisches Gesicht?
  [T: Or (.2.) Does he look English? (.) Has he got an English face?]
4 P: Er hat XXX. (.) Ich weiß nicht.
  [P: He has XXX. (.) I don't know.]
5 T: Du weißt nicht, naja.
  [T: You don't know, ok.]

Extract 8.23: Das sieht gut aus *[It looks good]*

[In response to a student question, the teacher manages to feed the target expression into the conversation again].

1 T: Amy?
  [T: Amy?]
2 P: Wie heißt xxx auf Deutsch? (einige Schüler lachen)
  [P: How do you say xxx in German? (some students laugh)]
3 T: Das ist, das ist, er hat eine, er hat ein schönes Frisur! Ja? Das sieht gut aus! Okay. Wie alt ist er? (.) Wie alt ist er? Amy? (.) Tsch, tsch.
  [T: That is, that is, he has a, he has a lovely hairstyle! Yes? It looks good! OK. How old is he? (.)]

  The teacher uses the structure 'Er sieht…aus' in total 11 times during the interactions in this lesson. In each of the interactions where a student is involved in using the phrase, we see that the teacher is successively able to offer less explicit support. The 'distributed'

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microgenetic development evidenced in this lesson through the use of this structure lies in the students' use of it, which begins as passive reception of direct teaching of the structure, moves to partial use of it and culminates in two different students producing spontaneously adapted versions of the structure independently within dialogic interaction with the teacher. Further evidence of development is shown by the teacher's level of support in the successive interactions. She begins by directly teaching the structure, moves on in a subsequent interaction to re-casting a flawed use of the structure, then repeats the correct version offered by student 3, Steven, three times within the interaction, and finally with student 4, merely repeats it once before moving on to a new interaction.

This series of linked interactions invites further interpretation. The previous examples of microgenetic development advanced in this analysis seek to show one learner's developing use of linguistic resources over a series of lessons or during several interactions within one lesson. I want to argue that is it equally valid to claim that such linguistic development can be 'distributed', that is to say, spread across several learners, all of whom are participants in the whole lesson's interaction, active listeners when they are not directly involved in the individual teacher-student episodes. It seems clear to me that there is evidence of learning within the participation metaphor, which 'finds evidence for learning in an individual's growing and widening activity in a community carried out through shared practices of discourse with expert participants *(*Donato, 2000, p.41).

Taking the class as representative of one individual then it could certainly be said that there is evidence of learning that unfolds within the interactions of this lesson. The fact that the linguistic development resides in the output of different learners need not reduce the validity of the learning claims based upon it; rather the claims for the language learning opportunities afforded by such conversational episodes are strengthened by the distributed nature of the output. Viewing the class as the locus of learning gives a new lens through which we interpret the teacher's assistance too. One could argue that the three repetitions of the learner's successful utterance 'Er sieht verrückt aus' *[He looks mad]* are excessive and not contingent to the learner's needs in this interaction; after all, he has produced the same utterance unaided by the teacher just a moment before. However, if we place this interaction within the series of interlinked interactions that make up the whole body of output involving this construction, then we see that the teacher, who after all has the linguistic development of all of the learners as her overall goal, crafts her response on a continuum of assistance ranging from explicit teaching at the outset to one fleeting repetition of a student utterance at the end of the lesson. The teacher in this class-fronted interaction is seen attending to the perceived developmental level of the whole class and graduates her assistance accordingly.

I am conscious of the need to be cautious about the evidence I present for distributed learning and do not assume that all learners benefit in the same way from whole class interactions. One example of this emerged from the student interview data, showing that in L2 interactions students may make associations that either only approximate meanings, or may be incorrect. Referring to the first lesson when the term 'verrückt' first emerged, one student remarked:

> I guess it means happy or something like that because she was describing Heidi as 'verrückt' so when she teaches she does pick up on words like that and she says them over and over again until we learn them and we understand what they mean. There's not like a right answer to what it is, but we're intelligent enough to understand that it means something like 'happy' or something like that, so we can use that again in conversation.

Another extract from the student interview data makes clear that even when learners respond readily and appropriately in spontaneous situations and appear to have therefore understood, they may have caught the communicative gist rather than understood each individual word:

> Interviewer: The bit after you'd done the singing and the teacher said, 'Oh das war sehr gut Dan du singst besser als ich'*[Oh that was very good Dan, you sing better than I do]* and you responded straightaway with 'Danke schön' *[Thank you very much],* it seems that you had understood exactly what she was saying, that she was basically saying you sing better than she does.
>
> Student: Yes, I understood that. Maybe I didn't get the singing bit but I thought she was saying 'you think better' or something better than me, well done.

This note of caution is important but, in an instructed setting, teachers are unlikely to rely on spontaneous interactions as the only source of vocabulary input. The evidence that such interactions can provide additional opportunities for acquiring new lexis is highly positive. There are additional gains that students identified for learning through peripheral participation in teacher-fronted whole class spontaneous interactions that underline their importance within instructed language teaching and learning and I describe these in the final section of this chapter.

8.6 Additional benefits of whole class conversational interaction

In my analysis of students' perceptions several features of the spontaneous classroom interactions were highlighted that promote particular aspects of L2 learning at times when the learners are 'receivers' rather than 'producers' of language, participating 'by proxy' and listening to the teacher interact with one of their peers. First, there was the intrinsic interest in listening to L2 interactions involving their friends. One commented that 'with your friends

it's interesting to hear what they sound like in German' and another mentioned that 'you're more likely to invest yourself in learning when it's someone you know'.

Related to this was the capacity for sustaining interest and attention that these open-ended conversations seemed to have:

> What you say is probably not usually going to be right because you're having a conversation and therefore the teacher is going to ask someone else for a different opinion and then you can listen to that and compare it with your own and you're interested because you want to know why she hasn't picked yours. Then she'll ask someone else and you'll all be listening to each other and I think that's quite a good way of talking.

The cumulative character to these exchanges and the absence of wrong/right answers was contrasted with more traditional question and answer structures, where one student admits to switching off once he had given his response:

> You can't just really say: question and answer, question and answer, question and answer. You're not really going to get anywhere because once you're finished talking to the teacher, you reminisce in the glow of having your thing said and you don't really listen to what the next person's saying.

A third aspect of peripheral engagement observed was the opportunity it afforded to learners to reflect more consciously on the L2 than was possible when they themselves were directly implicated in the interaction. I referred earlier in this chapter to the student who was able to compare the difference between teacher and learner utterances. Another student, when asked what he did whilst he was not directly involve in the conversation, gave the following response:

> I was thinking all the time. Whilst other people were talking I was thinking up sentences to add to it and I put my hand up afterwards to add stuff to it. Whenever someone was talking, if it was the teacher or a pupil, I was always thinking about something I could add. So if they said, 'she is happy on Sundays' or something, I could say, 'this is because she does this', I was looking wherever I could to extend and add something extra. I was looking at the board and looking at my book and making notes in my head all the time basically.

This is a strong indication that, whilst direct involvement in the spontaneous L2 conversation was an opportunity to develop strategic competence, forcing learners to respond in 'real time' when their linguistic resources were stretched, indirect involvement was an opportunity to engage in rather different, but nonetheless valuable activities. This particular student seems to be benefiting from peripheral involvement in order to extend his discourse competence, trying to build on what others say and then to contribute new ideas. It is extremely interesting to observe here that conscious reflection and deliberate planning are directly feeding into spontaneous L2 use, as a result of these conversational episodes.

8.7 Conclusion

As well as contributing to the acquisition of new language, that is to say individual lexical items, formulaic 'chunks' or set phrases, and even new structures, the qualitative microgenetic analysis above provides evidence that participation in spontaneous talk in the classroom plays a role in increasing linguistic competence, as learners develop greater control of language forms only partially learnt in other instructional contexts. Furthermore, the analysis of the patterns of interaction delineate gains in terms of L2 interactional competence, as learners are afforded opportunities to take on different roles within the discourse and are initiated into a broader range of interactional practices than they enjoy within a classroom dominated by IRE/F interaction. Learners nominate topics, initiate ideas, generate questions and share control of the direction of the class interaction and, in so doing, engage in discourse that resembles language use outside the classroom context. And, as I have argued in this chapter, it is a strategic combination of teacher interactional moves that triggers the improved learner performance.

The intervention programme on which this study is based sets out from the premise that, in order to create opportunities for alternative interactional patterns to develop, the teacher must actively seek to encourage learner-initiated talk and to subvert the IRE/F pattern of classroom discourse. The analysis presented in the preceding chapter demonstrates that experience of the intervention strategies changed the pattern of learner interaction. Learners in both of the experimental groups overall produced a greater amount of individual L2 output as a proportion of overall lesson time. In addition, learners in both experimental groups produced greater numbers of L2 questions, longer utterances and short phrases.

The disruption of prevailing interactional patterns in whole class L2 discourse is most clearly in evidence in Teacher 2's lessons and it is in these lessons that the greatest individual L2 output occurs, including the highest number of longer utterances, reasons and learner initiations. This second analysis chapter focuses more precisely on the features of Teacher 2's talk and argues that the combination of interactive moves that she employs are the trigger for the linguistic and interactional gains in learner performance in the non-IRE/F episodes.

The analysis to this point suggests that spontaneous interaction is both a possible and desirable addition to the secondary languages classroom. The intervention strategies in the study provided a springboard for the two experimental teachers and overall individual L2 output increased as a result, but their different interpretation of and engagement with the strategies gave rise to differential patterns of interaction and qualitative differences in learner L2 output. At their core, pedagogical practices are based on individual teacher beliefs about what constitutes teaching; what should be learned and how it should be learned. In order to

explore the question of how the teachers involved perceive the relative effectiveness of the intervention strategies and the related question of how teachers can best organise teaching to promote enhanced linguistic and interactional competence through spontaneous talk, I turn now to my analysis of teacher views, obtained through a series of interviews with the teachers involved in this study.

Chapter 9 How do teachers perceive the impact of the intervention strategies on learner L2 talk? Exploring developments in teacher perceptions over time.

9.1 Introduction

This project set out to create opportunities for learners to take part in spontaneous whole class target language interaction through the intentional intervention of two teachers over a 9-month period. A third class was involved as a control group and the teacher of that class was briefed about the project but not aware of the intervention strategies. The main aim of the intervention was to see the extent to which teachers could disrupt the ubiquitous Initiate-Response-Evaluation discourse pattern with alternative sequences, and, if successful, to explore two aspects; firstly, the emergent patterns of interaction and secondly, the language that learners produced.

   At the mid-point in the overall intervention period, after two of the lessons for each teacher had been recorded, semi-structured interviews took place with each of the experimental group teachers. Teachers were asked to comment on the intervention strategies and reflect on their practice so far in relation to each. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. A full year later, several months after the end of the intervention period, the experimental group teachers and the control teacher took part in semi-structured post-study interviews, the purpose of which was to provide (for the experimental group teachers) a point of comparison in their perceptions of the spontaneous talk intervention programme but also some indications as to the longer term impact of the talk strategies on their practice. These interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour.

   In this chapter I focus on two aspects. Firstly, I present evidence from the two experimental teachers mid-study interviews that illuminate features of the interaction in both classes presented in the preceding analysis chapters. This serves to shed further light on the different patterns of interaction that resulted from the two teachers' implementation of the same intervention programme. Secondly, I focus on the development in teacher perceptions and practice over time in relation to spontaneous talk in the secondary languages classroom and draw some initial conclusions for the potential development in language teaching pedagogy.

9.2 Factors affecting teacher implementation of the talk intervention strategies

As the descriptive and qualitative analysis of the preceding chapters indicates, although

overall L2 learner output was greater in both of the experimental classes when compared to the control class, it is in Teacher 2's lessons that the more substantial gains in terms of learner spoken performance are found. The microgenetic analysis of lesson data suggests possible reasons why this is the case, but data from the mid-study teacher interviews offer further insights. Variance in implementation and interpretation of the talk strategies is underpinned principally by the teachers' attitudinal differences and natural inclinations. I support here my argument that it is Teacher 2's interactive moves that trigger the improved learner L2 output and I use the interview data to account more fully for the differential outcomes in learner output between the two experimental classes. From the teacher interview data I present the factors that I argue militated against Teacher 1's full implementation of the talk intervention strategies and show how Teacher 2 had, in her perception at the mid-point in the study, implemented more of the strategies more fully than Teacher 1 claims to have done.

9.2.1 Attitudes to lesson structure and curriculum constraints

Teacher 1 interprets the project goal as increasing learner L2 talk, but in her interpretation of the strategies she introduces some very structured talk activities that elicit certain formulations, either for the purpose of giving answers to a reading comprehension task or discovering the meaning of new vocabulary items. Whilst these increase the overall learner L2 talk in whole class interaction, they do not trigger longer, multi-exchange conversational interactions with learners, where there is the possibility for them to initiate, nominate the topic or ask unsolicited questions. Teacher 1's self-report data suggest that she is most comfortable when trying to elicit L2 talk in structured activities that form part of her usual repertoire:

> There's lots of time when you'll correct like when we were correcting an activity so they'd say 'ich denke Nummer eins ist...' *[I think number one is…]* I think that is for me that part of the spontaneous project I really like that whole class part of that because I feel it really pulls them all in.

During the interviews, the experimental class teachers were asked if they had managed to generate interactions in which learners responded to each other. At this time in the project Teacher 1 had not generated any episodes where learners responded to each other's questions. She cites a different sort of interaction where learners were asking questions of the teacher to determine the meaning of some new vocabulary items, and the learners needed to listen to each other to build on what was already known: 'The way they were asking the question to learn what the vocabulary was, they had to listen to each other there. I know they weren't particularly responding orally they were responding by not asking the same question'.

Teacher 1 shows again here that she is trying to embed the spontaneous talk strategies within tasks and activities that may not generate the range of interactional opportunities envisaged in the intervention programme. In contrast, Teacher 2 had, however, begun to implement this strategy as her response confirms: 'I also asked individuals to respond to other students' answers and I let that run for maybe three or four responses without putting any input, without giving any input at all'. The varying degree to which both teachers were comfortable with abandoning lesson and task structure is therefore a factor that influenced strategy implementation.

A second constraint mentioned by both teachers was the requirement to cover the curriculum and to prepare students appropriately for assessments. Here there are marked attitudinal differences between the two teachers. Teacher 2 acknowledges curriculum coverage as a point of tension but makes it clear that she is not deterred by this: 'I think we've found ourselves a little bit behind, a little behind where we would be in the year, but for me it's been more interesting'. In fact, in the later interview she admits to being all too keen to embrace diversions from her lesson plan, and to her willingness to embrace spontaneous digressions because she finds teaching in this way more interesting and enjoyable, but also because she believes that learners retain more if they are interested:

> I'm very happy with asking questions where I don't know the answer, absolutely, and I'm also very happy with having a response which is either entertaining or interesting and we could go off on a complete tangent for as long as I feel that it's useful or interesting, I think very often if you manage to get some interest in the lesson they'll learn something no matter what, where you could have had the best planned, you know rigorous exercise-based lesson in the world and actually they'll go through the motions but maybe they'll not remember.

Teacher 1, during the intervention period, is a little more cautious and expresses her concern about not being able to cover the curriculum adequately: 'I can't help but feel a little bit of a pressure that actually I still want to get the content done'. Furthermore, although Teacher 1 declares that she is very ready to deviate from the lesson plan, she acknowledges firstly that, with this project class, it just hasn't happened, and secondly that she does quite like to get where she's planned to in her teaching:

> I'd like to say yes in terms of my teaching I am quite... I like to know what I am achieving and I like to get to this stage because it affects the homework or whatever, but I would give up the time to talk about something if it naturally came up.

9.2.2 Attitudes to error correction and grammatical accuracy

Both experimental class teachers allude in the interviews to the tension between grammatical

accuracy, the urge to correct and strategies directing them to avoid explicit correction moves. At the mid-point in the study, Teacher 1 says she has not yet attempted to take several different answers from learners without responding. She does say that she has begun to respond more to content than form and describes her attempts to replace explicit corrective moves with implicit recasts that preserve the conversational quality of the discourse, although she makes it clear that she would reserve this for activities where the focus was spontaneous talk and in other grammar-focused activities, she prefers explicit correction:

> Quite often somehow I end up using the same sort of structure like say they said 'Ja, ich habe ins Kino gegangen' *[Yes, I went to the cinema]* then I'd say 'oh, ja super, ja ich bin auch ins Kino gegangen' *[Oh, yes, great, yes I went to the cinema too]*. I'd like to think that's what I've been able to do more than telling them at that point 'nein, man sagt das nicht, man sagt, ich bin ins Kino gegangen' *[no, you don't say that, you say, I went to the cinema],* but if I'm doing an explicit past tense activity almost different to the spontaneous then yeah, I would correct that.

Teacher 2 has, in a similar way, settled on a mechanism of 'back-channelling' and she too gives an example from a recent lesson:

> I do try now to have longer exchanges where I don't correct but I am rephrasing it and putting it back so it's hopefully not an obvious correction...For example, somebody said...just something I think quite straightforward with a modal but the infinitive wasn't at the end like 'Ich mag fahren ski' *[I like skiing going]* or something. And I said something back like 'Was, du magst skifahren?! Ich mag auch skifahren!' *[What, you like going skiing?! I like going skiing too!]* Something you know and then immediately go on to something else so that they can hopefully you know hear it and then go on to something else.

So there are similarities in approach here that reflect both teachers' preoccupation with learner accuracy and a latent discomfort with the entry of 'incorrect' L2 into the discourse. Teacher 1 reveals, however, that she delineates very clearly the spontaneous talk activities from other learning tasks within the same lesson, so that at most, her implementation of the strategies is, at this stage in the project, partial. Teacher 2 on the other hand suggests in her responses that the approach she has adopted to correction is something she is applying to all of the classroom talk for the duration of the project. This is corroborated by the videoed lesson data too.

A further, related, strategy in the programme that aims to reduce the number of times the teacher re-takes control of the discourse as well as soften the demarcation of the teacher/student roles was to require teachers not to repeat learner contributions. Teacher 1 has clearly given some thought to this and in order not to repeat learner contributions; she describes using a range of teacher feedback comments instead. The context she gives for this is a whole class correction activity again but the interactive moves selected by the teacher

here leave unchanged the imbalance of teacher/student talk and reinforce the IRE/F pattern of discourse:

> Even just marking and they say 'radfahren' *[cycling]* and I'd go 'Ja, radfahren' *[Yes, cycling]* and said 'Ja, super, perfekte Ausprache'…*[Yes, great, perfect pronunciation]*. That was something explicitly done to try and think no, not to just repeat what they've said but it's having a wee bank, it's almost like having your target language phrases to stop you just repeating learner contributions; 'yeah, good pronunciation', 'yeah, lovely answer', 'yeah, that's correct', whatever, just to have 10 of those would be good.

If we contrast this with Teacher 2's approach, we see that the latter's interactive strategies seem more closely aligned with the goals of increasing learner talk, interrupting the IRE/F pattern and blurring, albeit fleetingly, the teacher/student distinction:

> Rather than repeating what they've said, I'll turn to someone else and ask 'Was denkst du? Er sagt,' *[What do you think? He says..]* or I'll ask another pupil to repeat it, so 'What did he say?' I'll pretend that I haven't heard and then they'll repeat it, or again just asking a bit like the similar one, number one, where if it's a straightforward question that needs an answer, even if it is what's the answer A,B, C, just to ask 3 of them to see if we get the same one. Or if it's 'Was hat er gemacht?' Er ist in die Stadt gegangen. *[What did he do? He went into town]* then at least if 3 of them say, then fine, I haven't said it, they've said it. And more pupils speak. I know it's not spontaneous, but it puts them out there a little more.

9.2.3 Humour and rapport with the class

The intervention programme targets the explicit use of humour as a strategy to diffuse tension and anxiety and encourage increased learner participation in whole class spoken interaction. Both teachers display an awareness of the value of humour in their teaching and both teachers perceive the use of humour as a valuable tool in building and sustaining a rapport with learners. At the mid-study interview stage, Teacher 1 perceives that the lack of humour with this particular class to be a barrier to their spontaneous talk: 'I think the whole humour side of it I do usually bring in but I'm not getting it with them as much and that way of making it less anxious'. I explore later in this chapter how this is substantially different for Teacher 1 with teaching groups in the year following the project, but with this class the lack of humour is a something that she perceives to militate against a good relationship with the class:

> It's still a funny class for me and at Christmas I really was I felt struggling with them and I do feel now happier with them, I feel that they're a bit more on board. They're still not the same as in most of my classes where I feel we laugh at some things together. I don't get that feeling with them.

In contrast, Teacher 2 cites the value of humour, not only in creating a good rapport between her and the learners, but also between the learners themselves; its role in fostering a community identity in the class:

When I gave them the more natural turn of phrase comments they did try and use those and the old 'Frag…' *[Ask…]* was a very popular one and although very short and perhaps not always conducive to keeping the conversation going but very often they would pick someone who was a friend who might get a laugh or they'd pick someone who they thought was a bit better and might be able to give an answer, so in a way they were bonding together with community spirit to keep a conversation or an activity going.

For this teacher, humour is fundamental. She describes including it to make the lesson more fun for her. She outlines how she believes it helps students to relax, to reduce the distance between her and the class, how she uses their response to the humour to measure their understanding of the L2 discourse, and how she purposely weaves humour into conversation and anecdote:

It's normally attached I think to somebody isn't it when I think about it, it's often somebody said something and we build a story around what somebody said, it's more anecdotal, somebody said something funny and we build a story around that..

Although Teacher 2 views humour as something that is a natural part of her teaching persona, she is nevertheless conscious of exploiting it deliberately in her talk, and clear about the positive effects she believes it to have.

9.2.4 The 'conversational' goal and longer exchanges

The principal motivation for changing the dominant interactional patterns is the notion that learners acquire the interactive patterns that they are exposed to, so that in IRE/F dominated interaction they are deprived of the interactional opportunities afforded by dialogue that is much more akin to conversation in naturalistic settings. Teacher 2 displays perhaps a fuller understanding than Teacher 1 of the project's goals in her self-report data; in her mid-study interview she uses the word 'conversation' sixteen times. Teacher 1 does not mention the term at all in her mid-study interview. Teacher 2 includes the term as she summarises her view of the overarching goal of the project:

I do feel that our initial problem really, the problem posed was you know we teach them this in school but then they get to meet someone who speaks German and they say well all I could say was the problems of the environment or my family, and you know you do want them to be able to have a conversation.

As the analysis in the preceding two chapters indicates, this aim translates itself into teacher moves that appear to generate longer exchanges of spontaneous interaction in the whole class discourse. That this is part of Teacher 2's intended implementation of the talk strategies is underlined in her self-report data:

I think I do try to always get them to say more than they want to...I think sometimes I'm guilty of expecting more just for off the cuff and perhaps I haven't modelled things on the board as much as I could have but then I do find it interesting to see who can make those leaps themselves.

She describes the challenge of keeping the conversation going, even when learner responses are limited, and how this stretches her imaginative and interactional resources:

It's something that I'm trying to do more and you do have to be quite clever in that because you do have to think how would I...I'm not going to correct that, or they say something that's not particularly interesting and you're thinking ooh ooh so you maybe respond saying 'oh really, you do?! Well I like something else, what do you think of that?' so trying to take them back round. Sometimes that's a challenge.

Teacher 1, responding to the question as to whether she is managing to solicit longer interactional exchanges with learners, refers to an example of learners building longer utterances:

Yeah I think like the lesson you'd seen the previous year with year 9 just the examples of the 'Ich bin Engländer' *[I am English]* full stop and then the next person 'Ich bin Engländer, Ich komme aus England aber ich wohne in' *[I am English, I come from England but I live in]* and then the last person says all of them. The Supersätze *[Super sentences]* as I used to call them.

For longer exchanges here Teacher 1 has interpreted longer utterances rather than exchanges. She describes a task that elicits extended responses by students, who build successively on what the student before has said, which is effective L2 sentence-building, but stops short of communicative language use.

The teacher feedback and teacher talk strategies can be summarised into the following key focus areas: the absence of teacher correction; the soliciting of spontaneous learner contributions; the development of longer exchanges, and the use of humour. Taken as a whole, all strategies aim to generate patterns of conversational discourse and stimulate overall higher levels of L2 learner output.

The preceding analysis in this chapter shows that, in each of these areas, Teacher 1's implementation of the strategies did not allow a more conversational pattern of discourse to emerge, despite the higher level of overall L2 learner output that her interactive moves generated, and, through a comparison of the two experimental teachers' self-report data, I present reasons for this. The factors that inhibit a full implementation of the intervention strategies are more numerous in Teacher 1's perception and constrained her more markedly than Teacher 2. Teacher 2 concurs with Teacher 1 in three of the perceived constraints to generating spontaneous learner talk in the classroom: the tension between accuracy and spontaneity; the need to cover the curriculum and prepare adequately for assessments; and the

importance of maintaining a positive class rapport, but their response to these constraints differs, with the according difference in discourse patterns that this triggers. In addition, Teacher 1 highlights further barriers that are not mentioned by Teacher 2 or, if mentioned, are not perceived to be a problem: the ability level of the class; the need to use L1 to introduce each new talk strategy; the size of the class and a lack of comfort with teacher-fronted whole class talk; the dominance of a few learners in the spontaneous interaction, and the time implications of planning 'alternative' lesson activities. It must be recognised that these are two different classes, experienced differently by two different teachers.

These insights offer a fuller understanding of the differential outcomes of the intervention strategy in the two experimental classes. Of further interest, however, are the self-report data from all three teachers in the post-study interviews. These show, in particular for Teacher 1, a remarkable pattern of development and from them emerge some further evidence of the effectiveness of the talk strategies on learner L2 output. In the second part of this analysis chapter, I turn to an examination of the longer term implications of the talk strategies for one teacher's practice and the corresponding changes in learner interactional performance.

9.3 The impact of the talk intervention programme – changes to one teacher's perceptions and practice over time

I chart the changes in Teacher 1's perceptions by comparing her attitudes in the mid-study and post-study interviews, which were conducted one year apart, to the perceived barriers to the implementation of the spontaneous talk strategies. In addition to revealing this teacher's development in relation to the notion of whole class spontaneous L2 interaction, this analysis indicates changes in learner L2 output in additional classes of learners subsequent to the intervention period.

9.3.1 Spontaneity and questions

When asked in the first interview about learners generating spontaneous questions, Teacher 1 cited the example of a structured lesson activity specifically designed to elicit questions from learners to ascertain the meaning of new vocabulary items. In her post-study interview the same teacher reflects on this class and this activity, citing it as not entirely spontaneous and very much just an early developmental step, contrasting it with the learner output in two of her classes in the following year:

> They were asking me questions to get enough information to work out what the word meant so I didn't know exactly therefore what they were going to ask then, erm and

that was my early days of trying to get them to ask questions. Elements of it were successful; it was nothing like what I do now though.

Reflecting on the change in her perceptions, Teacher 1 alludes to her scepticism during the intervention study period and her lower expectations in terms of what students were able to accomplish spontaneously:

I mean I know you said this last year, you were kind of getting them to ask questions and I really honestly I was just kind of like no, I don't think they can do it, and so I have come a nice u-turn on that.

Her change in attitude is matched by a marked difference in learner performance. She gives several examples from her classes where learners both ask and answer questions spontaneously:

For example some of them did ask very accurate questions because they were the ones that they should be able to ask to be honest but then there were questions that I would never have thought of them asking even just one boy went 'Was sie essen?' *[What they eating?]* And I didn't correct him at all then because Nick who was presenting understood him.

Teacher 1 shows here not only that she is happy not to correct inaccurate utterances that communicate, but more importantly that the reasons she gives for that is the fact that she takes her cue for this from the perspective of someone who does not at this point have the central role in the interaction. Learners are listening and responding to each other's utterances in the interaction that the teacher describes, and this exemplifies a much fuller implementation of one of the talk strategies than was in evidence during the intervention period.   In fact, Teacher 1 gives further evidence in the interview that she is able to occupy a far less dominant role in the discourse, and also, that she is far more able to accommodate less structured, conversational interaction, where the initiative is allowed to reside with the learners:

I do my little 30 seconds and I say 'Fragen' *[Questions]* and it is I have to sit and wait sometimes up to 30 seconds for the first hand to go up and then it just keeps going and then I have to sometimes say, 'Danke ok das war zehn, das reicht' *[Thanks ok that was ten, that's enough]* but it does take that bit of time, whereas in the past I think I might have just have gone 'tchh'.

Again here she contrasts her interactional behaviour with how she would have previously reacted, perhaps to close down the potential for interaction because of an insufficient wait time.

9.3.2 Accuracy vs. spontaneity and teacher correction

There are further shifts in Teacher 1's conceptualisation of the purpose of spontaneous L2 interaction. It has come to be far more about the whole interaction, the ability to understand and respond readily than about the accuracy of the output produced:

> I've definitely just gone 'oh I really don't mind if you don't use a whole sentence' because I feel that now that they understand so much more, they don't now struggle with the questions the same way that the kids used to, so […] they're starting to ask more questions back, and […] that in itself is a big amount of progress, but yet you would quite easily forget that I think, and I do need to keep reminding myself sometimes, 'look come on they've understood the question, they've answered it quite quickly'.

These comments depict interactional patterns that were missing from Teacher 1's videoed lessons and her responses in the mid-study interview. That she is now happy not to correct learner utterances that communicate and to accept a greater variation of learner response is related to her newly-held belief that spontaneous talk episodes are not in tension with progression in terms of grammatical accuracy: 'I don't think that just the talk, I don't think it just helps the speaking I do think it helps with the writing as well'. In fact, in this respect, Teacher 1's stance is now more positive than Teacher 2's, whose views did not change substantially between the two interviews, and who still perceives quite strongly a tension between the development of procedural and formalised knowledge:

> I found it easy (the intervention project) knowing that that was the focus and knowing that I would be observed, I think that on a day to day basis I would find it more difficult because I would obviously be worried about their writing ability and what erm you know the next assessment we might be heading towards or whether there was going to be a big discrepancy between communication and accuracy of communication.

This comment suggests too that Teacher 2 was able to commit herself fully to an implementation of the teacher talk strategies for the duration of the intervention period, but implies that she has not sustained these patterns of interaction since that time, owing to her concerns about accuracy. A further comparison of the two teachers' attitude to the IRE/F sequence, the pattern that all of the intervention strategies aim to disrupt, one year on from the project, shows the development in Teacher 1's perception. She explains that, whilst she is sure that she reverts back to the pattern at times, she is fully committed to alternative patterns of interaction: 'I'm not saying kind of not just asking a question, they tell me an answer back and me saying well done, .. Yeah, I'm sure I still do it subconsciously sometimes 'cause old habits die hard but […]'.

Teacher 2, on the other hand, admits that whilst she is able to change her third turn she is aware that she doesn't always, as a result of the curriculum and other constraints:

> I think that as a result erm of engagement in the project I am able to change my third turn, I probably would say hands up that I don't always, I think it just depends sometimes on time pressures and what's in the lesson plan and what you've got to get to.

9.3.3 Humour and class rapport

The humour that Teacher 1 cites as worryingly absent from her experimental class is, in contrast, a feature of her relationship with her current classes and strongly associated with spontaneous interactional episodes:

> Sometimes the spontaneous talk can also get those jokes going like the 'bananas in pyjamas' and 'no, I hate German' and it gets you enough of a kind of click with them that they then want to [talk], they enjoy it.

This appears to be more than a question of the teacher deliberately employing humour to dissipate anxiety. The teacher attributes humour to the spontaneous interaction, and suggests that this underpins the positive relationship with the class that in turn stimulates higher learner engagement and higher levels of learner output. In other words, the spontaneous nature of the interaction generates humour that makes learners more inclined to contribute to the talk.

The gains that Teacher 1 attributes to spontaneous talk and its effect on class rapport include aspects of teaching that, a year previously, were felt to impede the full implementation of the talk strategies too. Planning time, for example, was felt to be a constraint but the perception now is rather different:

> I do think you gain sometimes in planning because you've got their trust a bit more and just the activities just do flow a bit more, even the kind of more mundane ones which are still necessary [...]so I think the planning maybe gets cancelled out actually.

Finally, Teacher 1's perception of the imbalance in class dynamic during longer spontaneous exchanges during the intervention period, her belief that certain, more vocal learners would always dominate these longer exchanges and that the value for all learners was thereby compromised, has undergone a remarkable change. Whilst she still observes that spontaneous initiations are dominated by a minority of learners, she views this now in a much more positive light:

> I don't think it's a bad thing if I look at, analyse the ones that always end up asking the first questions, there's about four, and it is always them but I always accept them because they will get the others then asking.

She is much happier too about the benefit of the whole class interaction and its inclusion of all learners, even those who participate more by listening than initiating:

> they are also getting it by listening to the others asking the   questions, so it's not like they all have to ask the questions to get something out of the, 'cause as well if they laugh at the humour then they're following, aren't they?

If we contrast this with the same teacher's previous perception of whole class talk, the difference is clear:

> I find the whole class talk a lot harder because I worry that the ones that shine will always shine in that and I know that some will still get something out of it by listening but I think that it's such an easy way for them to switch off.

9.4 Conclusion

A year following the intervention period, Teacher 1 reports examples of learner L2 output and interactional patterns that mirror those in evidence in the video-recorded lessons of Teacher 2's class during the project. Furthermore, in her responses she demonstrates that she is no longer as constrained by the perceived barriers to spontaneous talk. She is unfazed by planning issues, curriculum constraints and the tension between accuracy and spontaneity. She is happy to allow a few learners to dominate the initial stages of spontaneous interaction, secure in the belief that all learners benefit. In addition, she draws attention, with many specific examples, to the humour that spontaneous interaction engenders, and to the rapport that is built through such interaction. She is explicit about the differences between the learner output in her present classes as compared to her experimental class, and alludes to the factors she believes to account for the difference: that she was at an earlier stage of development in terms of her thinking about spontaneous interaction; and that there was something in the nature of the class that was a barrier to more spontaneous patterns of discourse:

> But last year and again that could have been that class, […]there were momentary bits of 'oh fantastic' but I didn't feel it coming last year. I didn't feel that they were coming out with some good stuff, whereas if I look at the two main classes that I'm working on with it this year, yeah, each lesson there's always something that I think 'God I had not thought of that at all', or 'that was just lovely, that was like real life then'. I didn't get that impression last year, but I do think that was a – it was earlier days and b – it was the class.

I argue in this analysis that Teacher 1, during the intervention period, did not go far enough in her implementation of the talk strategies to yield the asymmetrical advantage in the discourse. She was not sure enough about the pedagogical opportunities afforded by the practice to let go fully or consistently enough and allow alternative interactional patterns to assert themselves.

Issues of a lesser rapport with that particular class reinforced her unwillingness to depart from the more structured talk activities too. Certain deep-seated pedagogical objections remained intractable during the intervention period, leading to limited expectations in terms of learner L2 output, the persistence of teacher voice in the discourse and the predominance of curriculum-based structured oral practice tasks, through which the teacher nevertheless made substantial efforts to increase the quantity of L2 learner output, with some success. What I show in the second part of this analysis chapter, however, is that Teacher 1 was able, a year later and with subsequent classes, to make the interactional changes that do trigger higher levels of spontaneous interaction and the improved learner performance that we see in Teacher 2's experimental class.

In Teacher 2's class during the intervention period, it is not a question of porting new, authentic discourse identities – it is about taking on the mantle of co-participant, using the linguistic means at her disposal to arrest the teacher/student roles for short, but frequent exchanges. These episodes widen the interactional platform on which her learners are permitted to operate, opening up for them the opportunity not only to try out new interactive resources but also to adopt different discourse roles. The locus for learning is three-fold: linguistic, interactive and social.

This teacher's talk behaviour calls learners into different interactive positions, so that they can 'try out' different discursive roles that are arguably more relevant to the roles that they will adopt in their L2 use outside the classroom. Their responses in this study show a positive orientation to the opportunities afforded to them as well as the appropriate emergent interactive capabilities. These spontaneous talk episodes thus predispose learners to the range of interactive practices that match, to a certain degree, the requirements of real conversation outside the classroom.

Although not fully developed and in spite of the control still often residing with the teacher in this talk, these spontaneous episodes nevertheless do more than hint at the pedagogical potential for conversational talk within the classroom. I examine the pedagogical and methodological implications of this study in the concluding chapter. First I turn to a discussion of the theoretical implications for teacher talk in the secondary languages classroom.

Chapter 10 Discussion

10.1 Introduction

In order to discuss the implications of my study, I start this chapter with a brief review of its findings and identify key questions that require further consideration. Over the duration of the project, there was a sustained and largely successful attempt in the two experimental classrooms to adopt measures that would trigger more learner talk. More specifically, the aim was to encourage more spontaneous L2 use, including more learner questions and other initiations, as well as longer learner utterances, which would disrupt the classroom interaction pattern of teacher initiation – learner response – teacher evaluation or feedback (IRE/F), still prevalent in the vast majority of classrooms generally (Wells & Mejía Arauz, 2006) and L2 classrooms too (Miao & Heining-Boynton, 2011). Within both experimental classes, when compared to the control class, there was a moderate increase in student questions, initiations and longer utterances. Very many interactions were still teacher-initiated, but an emphasis on open questions as well as strategic use of closed questions in referential contexts led to more dialogic exchanges.

In the interactions that were the most conversational, one teacher ceded control of the content to learners, scaffolded their utterance-building attempts and made extensive phatic use of language to establish and maintain the conversational flow and interactional symmetry. The teacher's moves avoided evaluation and typically functioned as continuers, encouraging learners to make further contributions. In these interactions, the IRE/F pattern dissolved and learners benefitted from these extended spontaneous exchanges in various ways. They were able to learn new words and gain greater control over their linguistic resources. In addition, learners broadened their strategic and interactional competence, using the L2 to initiate, ask questions, express degrees of alignment, narrate, use humour and respond readily to previous turns.

Although this teacher's main focus appeared to be supporting the interaction with one learner, an analysis of the discourse revealed her awareness of the whole class and her attempts to orient to their learning needs by making salient key elements of the interaction in her whole class directed summaries that frequently closed each dyadic exchange. These closing moves, although increasing the degree of teacher control, may have contributed to the learning affordances for class learners not directly involved in the teacher-learner dyadic exchanges. The learning affordances from vicarious participation in these spontaneous exchanges were explored through a microgenetic analysis of lesson data and student interviews. There is evidence to suggest possibilities for L2 learning through secondary

participation are substantial and varied, including the opportunity for learners to compare teacher and learner utterances and notice when and how one may be better than the other, to use the 'off line' time to plan further contributions whilst listening and attending to the ongoing conversation, as well as to acquire new lexis.

To summarise briefly, it proved possible for teachers to elicit more learner L2 talk through a relatively short, yet sustained implementation of talk strategies. When this classroom talk was instantiated in unplanned conversational exchanges, participation triggered vocabulary learning, structural consolidation and increased strategic and interactional competence. As the dyadic teacher-learner interactions played out within a whole class setting, other learners were able to profit by their involvement as secondary participants. However, these findings raise a number of questions of theoretical, pedagogical and methodological significance that need further exploration. In this discussion, I focus predominantly on the theoretical issues, reserving a discussion of the pedagogical and methodological issues for the following chapter.

10.2 Sociocultural theory and L2 learning

The theoretical framework underlying this study of classroom L2 talk is sociocultural theory. The purpose of any theory is to explain observable phenomena (VanPatten & Williams, 2007; Lantolf, 2010). The rationale for choosing one theoretical framework in preference to another must be the belief in its power to better explain how and why something is happening. The value of any research inquiry, at least in terms of its theoretical contribution, lies in the extent to which its findings add, qualify or even change what is already known about the phenomenon it set out to investigate. This is the extent to which the study might be considered theory-building.

This study proposed, through a planned intervention of teacher talk strategies, to generate spontaneous L2 use and explore the link between the resulting interactions and L2 learner talk. As I identified in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, very few L2 studies within a sociocultural framework have examined meaning-focused L2 interaction. For this reason, the specific role of spontaneous L2 use within a SCT-based theory of L2 learning must proceed as hypothesis. I based my claim for an important role for spontaneous L2 use in instructed language learning on two inter-related SCT principles and one further consideration: firstly, the central role of dialogic interaction in all learning; secondly, the concept of internalisation, the process whereby new knowledge is appropriated as a result of dialogic inter-psychological activity and finally, Vygotsky's distinction between scientific and spontaneous concepts. In this discussion chapter, I consider the extent to which my study's findings support the role of spontaneous L2 use within instructed language learning and the contribution this study makes

to a theory of spontaneous L2 use, relating the discussion to the theoretical rationale I presented for it. In the course of the discussion, I consider the following four aspects: the construct of scaffolding within SCT-based L2 learning; the discourse pattern of spontaneous L2 classroom interaction; the opportunities for distributed cognition within teacher-learner dyadic L2 interaction that plays out within the whole class context; and a theoretical rationale for the linguistic affordances of spontaneous learner L2 use.

10.3 Scaffolding

Proceeding on the basis that all learning is dialogic in origin, I pursued the idea that meaning-focused L2 interaction with an 'expert' makes available for appropriation, over time, language forms and functions, for both the individual learner and other learners within the classroom. The contingent, dialogic support that is provided by the teacher, responding to learner need as the talk unfolds, guiding the learner to say more than s/he can produce independently, and leading over time to future occasions of more self-regulated, independent participation, is encapsulated within the metaphor of scaffolding. There are, however, as I identified previously, significant problems with scaffolding as a construct. It is important to re-examine these issues briefly before I evaluate the extent to which my study has contributed to the development of scaffolding as a construct within SCT and for L2 learning.

10.3.1 Scaffolding: a metaphor 'under construction' or a construct 'gone underground'?

With its immediate and evocative associations with strength and support, scaffolding has enjoyed much appeal as a rich metaphor for dialogic assistance for learning. The first major formulation of the construct (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976), which included both affective and cognitive dimensions of support, gave it instant appeal within educational settings. But it has been criticised as a metaphor for dialogic support, firstly because it continues to be too imprecisely defined (Stone, 1993) and secondly, and perhaps consequentially, because it entails an inherent tension between the goals of successful task completion and increased learner independence. Earlier in this thesis I proposed that, to be effective in supporting learning leading to higher levels of learner autonomy, scaffolding requires the concept of the ZPD, which balances out support with challenge. The power of the ZPD to do this results from its insistence on contingency, which though present in Bruner's (1985) description of scaffolding, has at times been downplayed in empirical studies involving the construct.

The metaphor of scaffolding has been frequently invoked in SCT studies of L2 learning over the past 25 years, some of which have foregrounded the drive for improved independent learner performance (Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1994; Nassaji & Swain, 2000) and others that have focused more generally on supportive assistance where the organisation of talk for learning has not been so exactly operationalised as to be able to identify the precise aspects of scaffolding that have triggered improved learner independent performance (Thomsen, 2003). Perhaps as a result, criticism of the construct and attempts to redefine it to strengthen the emphasis on learner agency have become more widespread in recent years (Mascolo, 2005; Granott, 2005), as have attempts to specify more precisely how scaffolding is enacted in different settings (Gibbons, 2003; Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Michell & Sharpe, 2005). Conversely, the term has been explicitly shunned by some leading researchers in the field of SCT-based L2 learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). In an introductory chapter on sociocultural theory and SLA, the authors distance themselves entirely from the construct. Setting out to clarify a common misconception that scaffolding and the ZPD are synonymous, they describe scaffolding as 'any type of adult-child (expert-novice) assisted performance' (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p.213), and claim that it excludes the imperative of development by reducing or changing the quality of assistance provided. This disassociation is perhaps unsurprising if we consider that measuring changes to mediational feedback has become the main means by which L2 development is evidenced in SCT studies and any lack of precision is likely to be unhelpful in this respect. In preference to scaffolding, researchers working in this area have tended to focus on specifying a hierarchy of feedback moves, which have most recently been framed within an approach called Dynamic Assessment (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Poehner, 2009, 2011; Lantolf & Poehner, 2011). I focus here briefly on the main aspects of Dynamic Assessment (henceforth DA) because the issue of the terminology of key constructs within SCT relates directly to my study's contribution with respect to teacher talk as scaffolding.

As its name suggests, the practice of DA emerged as a means of diagnostic assessment. Most frequently used in one-to-one situations outside the classroom, the identification of particular issues through dialogic assessment in the learner's ZPD leads to remedial intervention. In suggesting ways in which DA might be conceptualised for situations of L2 learning, Lantolf and Poehner (2004) identify two different approaches: 'interventionist' and 'interactionist' DA. In the former, assistance is provided in a standardised way and is 'focused on quantifying the amount of help required for a learner to quickly and efficiently reach a pre-specified end point' (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004, p.54). In 'interactionist' DA the support provided is not pre-planned or focused on a pre-determined objective and is sensitive to learner need as it emerges within each interaction. In this version of DA the mediator may

'do everything possible to help the learner stretch beyond his/her current independent performance, short of giving the answer, although even this might promote development if it occurs at a propitious point in the interaction' (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011, p.15). Even at this initial, rather superficial level, I can draw parallels between this definition of DA and the construct of scaffolding as I construe it. Nor is this the first change in terminology that has occurred, as researchers have attempted to draw out distinct characteristics from the broad notion of dialogic support in L2 learning. I referred earlier in this thesis to the descriptors 'collaborative dialogue' (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2002) and 'mediational feedback' (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Nassaji & Swain, 2000) that have been selectively preferred to the term 'scaffolding'.

The question is, does this matter? Has anything been lost in the disappearance of the term 'scaffolding' to describe the dialogic mediation that supports a learner in going beyond his/her current level of independent performance? I used the metaphor of scaffolding in my study of spontaneous L2 talk to denote the teacher's dialogic support provided in unplanned whole class interactions. Should I perhaps consider re-labelling what I identified as 'interactionist' DA? To address these questions, I need first to consider what my study contributes to the definition of scaffolding as it is instantiated in spontaneous meaning-focused L2 classroom interaction.

10.3.2 Scaffolding as mediational feedback

In contrast to many SCT studies of L2 oral interaction, the teacher-learner interaction in my study did not target particular linguistic forms; therefore the teacher did not approach the interactions with a particular instructional focus. Successful task completion in this study refers to developing fuller learner participation in episodes of spontaneous L2 use. This focus led to a limitation in the study's findings but also resulted in its main contributions. Although I identified teacher feedback moves that were oriented towards linguistic performance as they emerged in response to learners' meaning-making attempts, the absence of a pre-specified focus meant that the moments of linguistic development, which did occur, were more diffuse and less easily linked to specific teacher feedback moves. A defining characteristic of unplanned, spontaneous discourse is, self-evidently, its unpredictability in terms of content and form.

Nevertheless my study of teacher-learner talk in spontaneous interactions did confirm the general findings of previous studies of L2 talk. For example, teacher feedback moves that proceeded on a scale from implicit to explicit were the most effective at prolonging talk with learners and contributed to the creation of more symmetrical, conversational discourse.

Furthermore, although it is to be expected that contingent teacher feedback moves within spontaneous discourse would not match exactly those generated within interactions where there was a pre-determined linguistic focus and a pre-prepared set of prompts, the use of similar moves in a different type of interaction adds to the stability of the construct of scaffolding as dialogic support provided within the learner's ZPD. The whole class setting for these interactions led also to additional observations about teacher feedback. For example, on occasions it seemed that the teacher provided feedback moves that were too direct and which prematurely concluded the learner's participation. On these occasions it seemed that the teacher was responding to an inherent tension between her role as manager of the instructional setting and her temporary role as conversational interlocutor. This could be perceived as an intrinsic disadvantage of attempting to work within an individual learner's ZPD in a whole class setting. However, there was also some evidence in these spontaneous episodes that the teacher was orientating more towards a whole class ZPD. This emerged when the teacher pursued a particular linguistic focus. In her feedback to different learners and the discernible development in the use of one particular structure during the lesson, it is possible to interpret the teacher's orientation as whole class directed. Group ZPD interactions have not received much attention as yet in the literature (although see Gibbons, 2003; Michell & Sharpe, 2005; Poehner, 2009) but my study indicates that further research would be worthwhile. I return to this later in this chapter in the discussion of distributed learning opportunities within spontaneous L2 interaction. I claimed at the beginning of this section that the choice of spontaneous L2 use was both a limitation and the basis for my study's main contributions. I turn now to consider how the spontaneity of the L2 use led to an expansion of the construct of scaffolding.

10.3.3 Scaffolding: the 'affective' dimension

Drawing on a variety of sources within the literature on scaffolding, the definition that I arrived at, as a point of departure for my study of classroom talk, involved both affective and cognitive dimensions of dialogic support:

> Scaffolding is help which the teacher provides through dialogic interaction with the learner so that s/he is able to complete successfully a task s/he could not manage alone. This help is both affective and cognitive in orientation, provided within the learner's ZPD and is temporary, contingent and in continuous adjustment.

One anticipated consequence of the focus on spontaneous L2 use was the ability to examine scaffolding in a broader sense than as oral feedback only. Another (largely unanticipated) consequence was a foregrounding of the affective dimension of scaffolding in teacher talk to a

greater extent than has previously occurred. It is true to say that the 'affective' dimension of dialogic support is under-represented in the research on scaffolding (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005) and in studies of dialogic feedback (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; De Guerrero & Villamil 1994, 2000; Antón & DiCamilla, 1997; DiCamilla & Antón, 1998; Nassaji & Swain, 2000) and even in studies of peer-peer collaborative dialogue (Donato, 1994; Brooks & Donato, 1994; La Pierre, 1994; Platt & Brooks, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 1999, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2002; Lynch & Maclean, 2001; Alcón Soler, 2002; Gánem Gutiérrez, 2008), although Storch's (2002) study of dyadic pairings does imply the importance of affective factors in providing effective dialogic support. Foster and Ohta's (2005) two method analysis of interactional feedback highlighted a lacuna in the research owing to the predominant focus on feedback that takes place in moments of communicative breakdown and suggested that dialogic support provided in advance of interactive failure might also be significant. The affective function of scaffolding is of particular importance in the English L2 secondary school context, in which motivation for L2 learning is notoriously low (Stables & Wikely, 1999), the proportion of students following an examination course in a foreign language is still declining (to 44% in 2010) (OFSTED, 2011), and in which inspection findings attribute the absence of L2 talk in part to an unwillingness to participate. My study identified particular teacher talk moves that were affective more than cognitive in orientation and function.

The specific teacher moves are displayed in Figure 10.1, which is a representation of the teacher talk moves from the non-IRE interactions in Teacher 2's lessons.

Figure 10.1: Model of one teacher's talk in classroom spontaneous L2 talk episodes
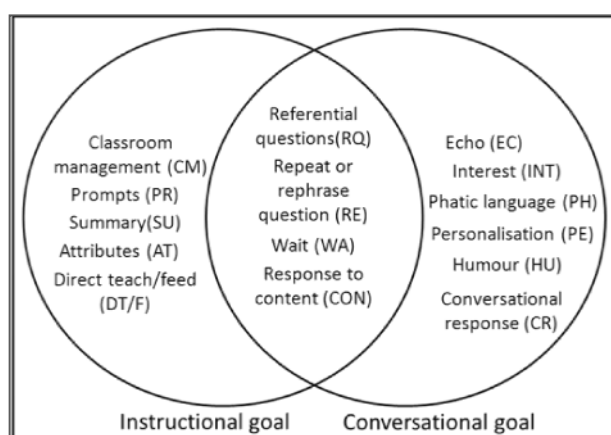
The talk moves on the right hand side of the diagram have been distinguished on the basis that their main, though not only, function is affective. There are a variety of different moves, each of which contributes to the overall aim of achieving discourse in a conversational mode. The

use of echoic utterances (EC) and others coded for interest in the teacher's intonation (INT) have the specific function of communicating the teacher's keenness to hear what the learner has to say. The difference that this makes to the learner is neatly described by Edwards and Westgate (1994):

> To be asked a question by someone who wants to know is to be given the initiative in deciding the amount of information to be offered and the manner of telling. But to be asked by someone who already knows, and wants to know if you know, is to have your answer accepted, rejected or otherwise evaluated according to the questioner's beliefs about what is relevant and true. (Edwards & Westgate, 1994, p.48)

There is a clear link here between particular teacher talk moves and the use of referential questions, as well as the teacher rescinding the role of primary knower. I address this more fully in the following section on discourse patterns within spontaneous L2 talk. The phatic use of language, redundant questions, repetitions and comments is not only conversational in effect, it also functions as 'dialogic padding', holding the floor for the learner to give him/her a little more time to plan a response without the pressure that silence produces within conversation, when an answer is awaited. The teacher repeats or adds additional comments or questions as can be done in conversation 'when you realise the person you're talking to isn't ready to reply. Repetition always gives you more time in conversation, whether that's the intent or not' (Johnstone, 1994, p.7). The outcome is successful conversational episodes that enable the learner to participate at a higher level interactively than s/he would manage with a peer of the same ability. Perceived competence is judged to be an important component of intrinsic motivation (Ushioda, 2003) and these particular teacher talk moves contribute to the perception that these classroom interactions are conversations, as is confirmed by the student perception data in my study.

A final aspect of scaffolding that I consider here under the umbrella of affective teacher talk moves is the incorporation of humour into the teacher's repertoire of dialogic support. The identification of humour in the teacher's talk strategies contributes to recent interest in promoting a more considered, systematic integration of humour into the L2 classroom (Bell, 2011). My study's findings show that humour, as introduced by the teacher as a component of scaffolding, is instrumental in the affective domain, strengthening the conversational attributes of the interaction, putting the teacher on a more equal interactional footing with the learners and relieving tension, as supported by both student interview data and microgenetic analysis of lesson data. More importantly, it seems also that teacher use of humour sparks learner use of humour when using the L2 in spontaneous interactions. Research on the functions of humour has indicated the social and cognitive benefits arising from the positive emotions associated with humour, its role in reducing stress and for establishing affiliations

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and maintaining and strengthening social bonds (Bell, 2011). Unaware of any research to date that has explored the use of humour to relieve tension among L2 learners, Bell (2011) suggests it is quite likely that it could alleviate stress and reduce the anxiety, which many L2 learners experience when speaking (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young 1999; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan, 2003). In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that ludic or humorous language use promotes its acquisition (Sullivan, 2000; Cook, 2000; Broner & Tarone, 2001). My study's findings therefore offer some support and further insights into how humour in spontaneous L2 use may contribute to L2 learning.

Taken as a whole then, the teacher talk moves identified in my study contribute to an expanded notion of scaffolding and a more detailed description of how it is realised within unplanned L2 classroom discourse. Theoretical understandings remain central, but the elaboration of the teacher moves enables much more precision and definition in the construct, showing what it looks like enacted in dialogic classroom interaction.

The spontaneity, that is, the unpredictability, of these interactions brought the affective dimension of scaffolding to the fore and led to a better understanding of scaffolding as it applies to meaning-focused L2 classroom interaction. The spontaneity was also important to overall aspects of classroom discourse organisation, and related to elements such as learner control and communicative symmetry. My study's findings are therefore also a contribution to the ongoing debate about the structure of classroom discourse and the learning affordances that different types of interaction present. I now consider the precise nature of this study's contribution to this debate.

10.4 IRE/F and conversation in spontaneous L2 interaction

Teacher control is to the IRE/F what participative symmetry is to conversation (van Lier, 1996, 2001). In a whole class situation, the IRE/F is extremely effective for managing behaviour, regulating participation and leading learning in specific directions according to pre-determined learning objectives and its ubiquity is unsurprising. In language learning, the consequence of prevailing IRE/F exchanges are learner L2 responses that are grammatically correct, whole sentences (Hall, 2010). Conversational skills such as turn-taking, topic nomination, responding and planning ahead, remain under-developed when such interactional patterns monopolise classroom interaction. Constraints on the development of more open, conversational patterns of discourse are well documented and the contradistinction between the IRE/F and conversation has been extensively researched and reviewed in chapter 3 of this study. My study adds to the existing body of work on classroom discourse in the following ways. Firstly, it confirms findings from other studies that it is very difficult to deconstruct the

prevailing IRE/F pattern even when setting out explicitly so to do (Jarvis & Robinson, 1997; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Wells & Mejía Arauz, 2006; Wells, 2007; O'Connor & Michaels, 2007; Miao & Heining-Boynton, 2011). Secondly, my study was able to identify particular factors that impeded the generation of alternative patterns of discourse, in particular through teacher interviews and analysis of lesson data. Thirdly, although gains were modest in terms of overall number of individual learner initiations, questions and longer stretches of learner L2 talk, there were, within one of the experimental classes, many examples of non-IRE interactions and specific gains in terms of learner interactional competence. Fourthly, it was possible through detailed microanalysis of lesson data to identify key elements that contributed to these spontaneous exchanges. I now discuss each of these last three findings in a little more depth.

My study's findings confirm that, despite an intervention focused on avoiding the use of the IRE/F structure, it still prevailed. In the control class, four out of five exchanges followed the recitation script. In one of the experimental teacher's classes, of the total number of statements the mean percentage of IRE/F was 75%. It was only in one of the experimental classes that substantially different patterns emerged, with a much lower 38.5% IRE/F interactions. Barriers to establishing alternative patterns of classroom interaction were explored in teacher interviews. Key findings were that the two experimental teachers shared perceptions about the three main obstacles to generating more conversational talk in the classroom, which were: the tension between accuracy and spontaneity; the need to cover the curriculum and prepare adequately for assessments; and the importance of maintaining a positive class rapport. These findings resonate with similar findings identified in the literature where main barriers are pedagogical objectives, i.e. the requirement to cover particular curriculum content and the responsibility to create and sustain an ordered learning environment (van Lier, 1996). In my study teachers' beliefs and convictions about language teaching generated differential responses to these constraints which in turn triggered the difference in discourse patterns that resulted.

In the experimental class where two thirds of interactions were identified as non-IRE exchanges, which were interactions that exceeded four turns and did not include an evaluative move, it must be acknowledged that the teacher still initiated most interactions and asked most of the questions, had the concluding words in most interactions (usually a short summary of the preceding interaction) and played a major role in speaker nominations (although this was often to allocate the floor to one of several learners bidding to take it). Explaining the key features of these interactions and how they were nevertheless perceived by both teacher and students as 'real conversations' is an important contribution that this study's

findings make to the research on classroom interaction and L2 learning. One significant finding was how important it was for the teacher to relinquish the role of primary knower. Although this confirms findings in previous studies (Slimani, 1989, 2001; Wells, 2007; Todhunter, 2007) this is the first study of L2 classroom interaction that has investigated an intervention of 'interactional engineering' (van Lier, 1996). In each of the non-IRE interactions, even when the teacher initiated the exchange with a question, it is very clear that the question was framed as a request for new information. Moreover, it was always an open question in the sense that multiple answers were possible. A particular innovation of the teachers' interpretation of the intervention strategies was the way they operationalized closed format questions as referential questions by using picture stimuli, about which students were invited to wonder and imagine. Where non-IRE exchanges developed from these questions, the linguistic asymmetry was counterbalanced by the interactional symmetry of the learners' control of the content and direction of the discourse (Yule, 1990; Wells & Mejía Arauz, 2006). The absence of teacher evaluation or correction and the orientation to meaning that this permits were crucial elements in the generation of longer teacher-learner exchanges. The replacement of evaluation with conversational responses (as detailed in the section on scaffolding earlier in this chapter) facilitated an intense soliciting of students' views that in turn pushed learners to maintain their involvement over several turns. Students' self-report data attest to the perceptions that these spontaneous exchanges provided rich learning opportunities.

To summarise, a second contribution of this study's findings is the conclusion that, although difficult to achieve, changes to L2 classroom discourse can, under certain circumstances, be instantiated through use of particular talk strategies, and that the benefits to the learner of such changes to patterns of interaction are considerable. Furthermore, I consider that the potential tension between instructional goals and social interaction might be considered less of a concern within L2 learning than it may be for other curriculum subjects. In fact, one could make the case that L2 conversational talk is a curriculum goal in its own right (van Lier, 1996; Hall, 2010; Gánem Gutiérrez, 2008) and if so, that it is appropriate to match the discourse genre to the curricular purpose (Wells & Mejía Arauz, 2006), thereby removing particular objections to developing L2 conversational interaction on the grounds of incompatibility with instructional aims (Seedhouse, 2004). In this light, my study could be seen as strengthening the case for spontaneous L2 use in the secondary languages classroom, not solely for moments of talk that surface between activities (Todhunter, 2007) but rather as a valid learning activity in its own right. To achieve spontaneous L2 interaction with novice learners, it is helpful if teachers relinquish content control, respond with interest to learner

contributions, actively seek interactional symmetry and balance out the linguistic asymmetry with strategic phatic language use.

The role of spontaneous L2 use in teacher-learner dyadic interactions within a whole class setting is supported so far in this discussion by attesting to individual learner appropriation of language, enhanced interactional competence and widening discourse participation. I have also explored in some depth the affective affordances of these unplanned interactions. There is, however, a further aspect to consider. Returning for a moment to my initial rationale for the central role of dialogic interaction in L2 learning, I included the notion that learning opportunities through spontaneous meaning-focused interaction would be available to individual learners and additionally to other learners in the class. There has not been a specific focus on these vicarious learning opportunities in the L2 literature to date, but insights from previous studies of classroom interaction showed that learners could benefit from secondary participation. My study adds substantially to these findings by providing further evidence that learners may benefit and how this may be happening. I discuss the opportunities for distributed learning arising from secondary participation in whole class spontaneous L2 episodes in the following section.

10.5 Distributed learning in spontaneous L2 talk episodes

Ohta (2000) found Japanese as FL students reacted to teacher recasts provided in the class. She found that the students were most likely to react to teacher recasts when they were not addressees of the recast feedback. This is an initial suggestion that learners may benefit from secondary participation, perhaps from the additional 'space' for thinking that is created when they are not directly implicated in an interaction. Student self-report data in my study indicate that attending to both teacher and learner utterances in the dyadic exchanges may lead to a conscious comparison of the language use of the two interlocutors and enables the noticing of correct forms. Key to this discussion is the notion of attention. One of the criticisms levelled at teacher-led whole class interaction is that it does not make the best use of classroom time, engaging students only individually. This view may be justified where learner utterances are isolated in closed IRE/F sequences, and is supported in fact in my student interview data, where one student compares the difference between Spanish and German lessons, noting that in the former, where the lessons adhere to the IRE/F model, there is a tendency to switch off once you have given your answer. The one very recent study of 'interventionist' DA conducted in a primary L2 Spanish class where the focus was on teacher-fronted whole class interaction reported that it was not easy to determine how much attention learners were paying to the interactions (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011). This was not a specific focus for my

study either, but one of my study's most significant findings extends the affective dimension of the spontaneous L2 talk identified in the teacher-learner dyadic interactions to those learners who were participating vicariously. It seems that the elements in the spontaneous episodes that promoted higher levels of learner activity amongst primary participants also triggered a high level of attention from secondary participants. Learners reported the interest that is generated through the unpredictability, not knowing what others are going to say, as well as the attraction of hearing their friends speaking in German. These factors seem to generate intrinsic interest and give the exchanges an authenticity, such that learners are prepared to invest attention in the talk and validate its opportunities by participating voluntarily, whether as primary or secondary participants.

Another important aspect of distributed learning in this context is the finding that learners benefitted in different ways, supporting findings in other studies that 'learners appear to have their own agendas for which aspects of the language they decide to focus on at any given time' (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p.209). Whilst one student indicated that she actively compared the teacher and learner's language use, another reported making use of the time to plan his next contribution to the conversation. He reports paying close attention to what was being said, whilst at the same time thinking through his next utterance, additionally making use of his notes and wall displays to support his planning. This suggests that the dyadic teacher-learner interactions played out within the whole class setting represent a rich cultural artefact for other learners, who interact with it, and other forms of mediation, creating their own ZPDs and benefitting vicariously from the learning situation. An important factor here might also be the topic stability that many of these spontaneous episodes evidenced. On several occasions the talk was entirely based on one picture stimulus and, whilst learners were free to initiate and contribute any ideas, the topics that emerged shared a common point of reference, the picture that was visible throughout. Although somewhat speculative, I suggest that the cumulative familiarity of topic parameters may also free up capacity for learners to plan to talk. Finally, it is significant to note the individual and independent way learners appear to benefit from these whole class interactions. One learner's comments show a sense of competitiveness motivating his participation. This would resonate with findings on group dynamics in educational settings, which show a prevailing individualistic orientation (Poehner, 2009).

My study's findings contribute a new perspective to 'the persistent, unfortunate and unhelpful debate about the relative benefits of teacher-led, whole class sessions and activities where the learners work together without the teacher in small groups' (Mercer, 2002, p.18-19). Pointing up the benefits of secondary participation in whole class spontaneous L2 talk

may encourage it to be seen as a valid way to support learner autonomy, to help learners to bridge the gap between pre-communicative practice and spontaneous L2 use, and as valuable preparation leading to more confident peer-peer interactions and conversations beyond the classroom. Teacher-led spontaneous L2 interactions are, of course, not to be viewed as an end in themselves. However, the findings from a previous classroom study indicate that learners may appropriate ways of interacting from teacher-fronted discourse (Ohta, 1999). In that study learners were observed appropriating IRE/F patterns of interaction. We might therefore expect that when learners are supported to topic manage, ask questions, narrate, use humour and disagree with their teacher in teacher-led whole class discourse, that they might transfer these interactional competencies to peer-peer situations in the classroom, and then, more importantly, to situations beyond the classroom. I turn now to consider the final contribution this study makes to a sociocultural theory of spontaneous L2 use.

10.6 Spontaneous L2 use in instructed settings: an hypothesis

The discussion up to this point has focused on my study's contribution to the theory of spontaneous L2 use in the secondary foreign languages classroom, in particular to a theory of the teacher's role in dialogic support in L2 classroom use. I have considered the value of teacher-led dyadic interactions within a whole class setting from the perspective of individual gains in linguistic and interactional competence, as well as the opportunities afforded by secondary participation in these exchanges. I have not suggested that these interactions replace other types of interaction in the classroom, but instead have considered how they might relate to other types of interaction.

   At this point, to relate my study once again to SCT, I return to re-consider the theoretical rationale for spontaneous L2 use from the perspective of Vygotsky's notions of 'scientific' and 'spontaneous' concepts (Vygotsky, 1962/1986, 1987). As so little theorising has been done vis-à-vis the place of spontaneous L2 interaction in classroom settings, this remains speculative. However, I return briefly to the hypothesis that spontaneous L2 use in the classroom may provide one aspect of the necessary practical activity that Vygotsky viewed as essential so as to avoid the stagnation of theoretical or conceptual knowledge (Vygotsky, 1987).

    As I noted in chapter 4 of this thesis, language learning in the English secondary classroom proceeds in a more conscious and deliberate way than L1 learning. Learners are generally exposed to grammatical structures explicitly, whether in L1 or L2, and come to accumulate some rule-based knowledge of the language. As has been amply shown in a vast body of SLA research, explicit knowledge is not necessarily reflected in learners' spontaneous L2 use

(Ellis 2008b). There are different theories within SLA that claim to explain why this is the case. The foundation of Vygotskyan theory is its dialectical unity that brings polarised elements into inter-dependent relationship (Lantolf, 2008a, 2010; Poehner, 2011; Van Compernolle & Williams, 2011). Wells (1994) lent support to the view that dialogic interaction within the learner's ZPD is the locus of development for both everyday (spontaneous) and scientific (theoretical) concepts. Applying this view of language learning, I hypothesised in chapter 2 that spontaneous L2 interaction in the secondary foreign language classroom may offer learning opportunities in two specific ways. Firstly, it might represent a way in which conceptual knowledge may be connected to spontaneous knowledge through meaning-oriented practical activity. Secondly, it might provide an opportunity for the further development of spontaneous concepts.

The findings of this study provide some initial, tentative indications that teacher-led spontaneous L2 use does provide opportunities for both. Learners as primary and secondary participants in this discourse show evidence of using knowledge previously encountered in more deliberate, form-focused classroom activity in these exchanges, and furthermore, of achieving more independent control of these linguistic resources. In addition, there are signs that they encounter and use new structures and lexical items in these spontaneous interactions, which they use with less support in subsequent interactions.

Returning to the more specific contribution my study makes to a theory of the role of spontaneous interaction in language learning and the teacher's role in supporting L2 use in the classroom, I outline my concluding hypothesis here. Not reducible to a simple formula whereby we can say that if teachers produce particular responses or design specific tasks then spontaneous learner L2 use will result, the evidence from my study suggests that if teachers approach communicative L2 use in their classroom taking on board certain principles, such as a commitment to meaning-focused interaction, to creating conditions whereby learners are given control of the content of the conversation, to scenarios in which the teacher genuinely doesn't know the answers to questions s/he asks and is interested to hear what learners say, and to situations where humour is injected by both teacher and learners, then this will trigger higher levels of learner spontaneous L2 use.

This teacher role unites affective and cognitive support. The teacher is uniquely positioned to offer optimal scaffolding to the individual in spontaneous dyadic interactions. Previous studies of peer-peer collaborative dialogue stressed the affective dimension but, as I mentioned in chapter 2, there is uncertainty about the contingency of the feedback peers can offer one another. The 'feedback' studies show how powerful the teacher's adjusted feedback can be in enabling the learner to grow towards higher levels of independent language use and

the gains in conceptual understanding that result. My study demonstrates that it is possible for the teacher to offer both affective and cognitive scaffolding through spontaneous talk opportunities.

In my analysis of lesson data I was able to show examples of language learning in relation to vocabulary acquisition, grammatical structures, and others related to functions of language use, including questions, exclamations, humorous suggestions and other initiations. Learner use of language in these examples is an indication of acquisition to a certain extent. But my main interest is that they are all framed within a spontaneous context. They are examples of independent, volitional learner L2 use without direct elicitation. The spontaneity of use in these interactions is of fundamental importance to the learning opportunities in three different ways.

Firstly, the spontaneity is the quality of the interactions that provides the opportunity for learners to use language for different functions and to adopt different roles in the discourse. Secondly, the spontaneity is the stimulus for language learning because the intrinsic interest it inspires holds the attention of the secondary participants, who listen and understand. Thirdly, and as a related point, the spontaneity allows learners to choose the words they use, increasing the chance of retention because they are more likely to attend to the meaning of words they have been able to select themselves.

For this dialogue to be intrinsically spontaneous and communicative both interlocutors need to use the language spontaneously. To a certain extent the teacher can plan to be spontaneous, both at a macro level of task planning, but also at a micro level of adopting a communicative or conversational stance with the sorts of responses this involves. However, the teacher also needs to adopt communicative strategies in the way s/he interacts with students as the conversation unfolds. S/he needs to incorporate a high level of responsiveness and to inject humour, for the interaction to be perceived as genuinely spontaneous and communicative.

In the section that follows, I review the study's limitations and suggest areas where further research is required.

10.7 Limitations of the present study and areas for further research

As with any inquiry, particularly a holistic study of classroom interaction, there are limitations to its scope and its findings, some of which lead inevitably to further questions and the basis for further research. I review here only those limitations pertaining to the study's theoretical implications as I explore issues relating more particularly to pedagogy and methodology in the concluding chapter. As previously mentioned, my study's focus on

spontaneous interaction was incompatible with a specific linguistic focus for the teacher-learner dyadic interactions. Given that most instructed L2 learning involves planned instruction that follows a structural syllabus, it would seem useful to look at how teachers might combine spontaneous meaning-focused interactions with more structured interactions whereby they would pre-select a linguistic focus and plan sets of regulatory prompts, maintaining in both the principle of progression from implicit to explicit feedback.

My study's somewhat unstructured and incidental focus on secondary participation offered important, yet tentative insights into its learning affordances. Further research could now be done to discover more precisely what learners learn through secondary participation in this and other types of classroom interaction and to determine whether spontaneous interactions do spark higher levels of conscious attention than other forms of interaction. A further limitation of this study was that its unique focus on teacher-led discourse did not allow an exploration of the relationship between teacher-led classroom interaction and peer-peer interaction. Following suggestions in the research (Ohta, 1999) that teacher-fronted discourse patterns transfer to peer-peer interactions, an important direction for future research would be to explore more fully the extent to which positive changes to patterns of participation in whole class interaction emerge in peer and group interactions. This is potentially very important work. To date, research in L2 classroom discourse has tended to polarise teacher-led and group work, in recent times very strongly suggesting the superiority of the latter. Learner-learner interaction, often foregrounded in task-based learning approaches, is not unproblematic and research into task-planning, design and implementation issues indicates that it is not always possible to channel learners' talk particularly with this age group (Kasper, 2004). More work is needed to explore more fully whether, and to what extent, spontaneous teacher-led discourse might better prepare learners to make optimal use of peer-peer and group interactions (Mercer, 2002). In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I consider my study's pedagogical and methodological implications.

11 Conclusion

In the previous discussion chapter, I explored the extent to which my study contributes to a theory of spontaneous L2 use in the secondary foreign languages classroom, as well as the extent to which its findings develop sociocultural theory, in its application to L2 learning. As I noted in the introductory chapter to this thesis, the overall research purpose of my study was to contribute to the development of a theory of target language or L2 use within classroom-based foreign language teaching and learning, with respect to the role of spontaneous teacher-learner interaction and its relationship to L2 classroom learning. Situating my study within the secondary foreign language classroom context in England, in which the classroom is the main, if not only, locus for L2 interaction and where, at the time of this study and to the present day, inspection findings (OFSTED, 2008, 2011) indicate minimal learner L2 use, strengthened not only the theoretical case for L2 classroom interaction, but also added professional and pedagogical dimensions to the enquiry. It is appropriate therefore that I dedicate this concluding chapter to the contribution my study makes to the pedagogical knowledge that informs teachers' practice in terms of oral interaction in secondary foreign language classrooms, both within the school context of the present study but also more widely within the English secondary school context. This will include a consideration of the impact of aspects of its methodology on the knowledge created, the findings generated and the implications for further work. Although, as I consider later, there are several points where methodological and pedagogical matters overlap in this study, I begin with a brief summary of the main methodological implications.

11.1   Methodological implications

In this action research case study, I combined microanalysis of lesson observation data from 18 lessons with teacher reflections from semi-structured interviews mid- and post-study, and student perceptions from stimulated recall sessions conducted post-study. Whilst confirming the contribution that these methods make, both individually and collectively to qualitative case study research, I consider here briefly, in addition, some of the limitations of the approach taken.

11.1.1 Research methods

The most important aspect of this study was locating and accessing spontaneity of L2 use. The intervention strategies meant that to a certain extent spontaneity was, at least theoretically, 'designed-in' but, as I detail in chapter 6, the intervention programme

represented a set of principles rather than a mechanistic formula. It was undoubtedly an issue that teachers were so different in their understanding and approach. The important element is the individual teacher's thinking and conviction of the value of generating talk and responding to students in a spontaneous way. The implication is that this takes time. As described in detail in chapter 9, there is a longitudinal dimension to the development required to bring about change to individual teachers' approaches, and this varies dependent on their existing pedagogical tendencies and beliefs. For the researcher, this is a potential issue, particularly within a study with a fixed intervention period.

A core component of this study's methodology was the video-recording, transcription and analysis of lesson data. At the analysis stage I exploited fully the advantages that this method offers in terms of the opportunities for repeated viewings and minute transcription; however, I consider now that some opportunities for incorporating the video data into the collaborative dimension of the action research were missed (Leung & Hawkins, 2011). The study's design did not integrate phases for teacher-researcher collaboration based on a shared viewing of the lesson data, either during or post-intervention, which could arguably have been a way to focus on the intervention programme more as a process of collaborative inquiry rather than individual endeavour.

Interviews represented an invaluable source of data for the expansion, explanation and validation of the lesson transcript data. My analysis of interview data proceeded as a conventional approach to qualitative data analysis, following a process of open coding, thematic categorisation, subsequent reduction and data analysis. I recognise, nevertheless, that these findings represent at best just a partial account of the teachers' views, understandings and attitudes towards the practice of implementing the teacher talk intervention strategies, and of the students' perceptions about their learning from the spontaneous talk episodes. That said, the strength of these data lie in their ability to provide a secondary perspective to the microgenetic analysis of lesson data, and their importance is confirmed as much in those instances where they provide a supplementary or contradictory interpretation as when they substantiate and corroborate the microanalysis.

With respect to methods a final limitation I mention concerned the student perception data, which were fundamentally important to this study's findings and yet could have been still more influential had they been gathered at several points during the intervention period. On reflection, I could have done more than simply solicit learner views as a source of secondary data by involving them in certain stages of the analysis and data interpretation. I recognise that this might not only have further strengthened my research findings, but could have

impacted on those learners' intrinsic investment in the learning process (Murphey & Falout, 2010).

In summary, I would in future work seek to include a more recursive and integrated approach to the interpretive analysis, building in teacher and learner perspectives earlier in the study through a sharing of lesson data and follow up discussion, than was realised in this design. I believe that this is an important consideration for planning future action research.

11.1.2 (Action) Research and the pedagogical imperative

This action research case study, despite any methodological limitations, confirmed the value of systematic, classroom-based inquiry in educational research. In this form of research, whilst the goal is always improvement of some kind, this is never guaranteed. Change and knowledge, on the other hand, are inescapable. Furthermore, there are always two dimensions to that change and knowledge. Although the focus is on improvement that generally concerns issues related to learner progress and performance, the change in practice also leads to a growth in professional knowledge.

Since Hargreaves's (1998) influential paper linking teacher research to a vision for school improvement, the culture of thinking about what it means to be a teacher is showing noticeable signs of change. Over the past decade, many government-funded initiatives supporting a 'practitioner-researcher' model of professional development within English schools have sponsored this change, including The National Teacher Research Panel, The Teacher Training Agency, Best Practice Research Scholarships, and most recently within foreign language teaching, the Linked Up Scheme. I return to the latter initiative in the section on the professional implications of my study. First I consider the contribution this action research study makes to the current debate about the connection between SLA research and language teaching.

One strand in this debate concerns the applicability of SLA research findings to classroom practice. Within the research community, there are a variety of positions on this. Despite the fact that the discipline of SLA was originally a study of language learning to inform language teaching (Ellis 2010) and there was therefore, at its inception, a strong link between theory and practice, some researchers have come to prefer a non-interface position, claiming that SLA is concerned with discovering how languages are learned, and it would as yet be highly premature to apply this knowledge to how they are taught (Gass & Mackey, 2007). Lightbown (2000), on the other hand, believes that the proliferation of classroom-based studies of language learning over the past 15 years makes it more likely that SLA research can provide teachers with valuable insights, although a cautious approach is recommended. Ellis

(2010) believes that teaching should be research-informed and identifies certain factors that may facilitate an appropriate exchange of knowledge.

A second strand of the debate about the relationship between research and practice, concerns the role of teachers as researchers. Whilst Ellis (2010) considers that a two-way transfer of technical knowledge (from researchers) and practical knowledge (from teachers) would be highly beneficial, he perceives limitations as far as the influence of teaching and teacher-based research on the SLA agenda is concerned, commenting that he 'cannot think of an action research study that has had any impact on SLA' (Ellis, 2010, p.189). The suggestions Ellis makes for bringing researchers and teachers closer are sound but reveal an emphasis on the importance of teachers accessing and understanding SLA findings. A rather different perspective on this issue is presented by Lantolf (2010) who describes the need for research to engage with classroom practice as the 'pedagogical imperative' (2010, p.163). Drawing directly from Vygotsky, Lantolf presents a dialectical model of theory and practice that reiterates the relationship between scientific and spontaneous concepts explored earlier in this thesis. In this model, practice is given a fundamental role to play:

> Practice pervades the deepest foundations of the scientific operation and reforms it from beginning to end. Practice sets the tasks and serves as the supreme judge of theory, as its truth criterion. It dictates how to construct the concepts and how to formulate the laws.' (Vygotsky, 2004, p.304, cited in Lantolf, 2010, p.165)

In addition, the relationship between theory and practice is seen as essential for the individual teacher, researcher, and the area of research and teaching more widely. The mode of research envisaged in this unified model of praxis resonates with descriptions elsewhere of action research. It is about 'causing change through active, intentional, and systematic intervention in the very process one wishes to understand' (Lantolf, 2010, p.175).

This is a vision far removed from the current situation within language teaching in England. In a recent review of the current position of language teacher research engagement in England, Borg (2010) reported that research is very much a minority activity for most language teachers in schools. This study, therefore, represents an important contribution to the body of work that promotes teacher engagement in research and contributes to on-going professional development. Before exploring two specific ways in which this project has led to further teacher activity, however, I describe the study's pedagogical implications.

11.2 Pedagogical implications

I approach this discussion from the position that any research inquiry targets enhanced understanding rather than a list of direct solutions. I am aware that any prescriptive tendency

fails to reflect the complexities involved in language teaching, and that teacher individuality and learner differences cannot be subtracted from the equation without seriously distorting the results. There is a tension here as the rather frenetic nature of teaching in schools gives teachers an appetite for practical recommendations for change that address their immediate priorities. However, like Lantolf (2010), I believe that research should contribute both to theory, to practice, (and thence also to policy-making). With all of this in mind, I structure the discussion of the pedagogical contribution of this study around two of my original research questions in section 11.2.1, and then proceed to explore the pedagogical implications for practice in section 11.2.2.

1) Does experience of the intervention programme result in a higher ratio of learner: teacher L2 output?

2) Does the L2 talk produced by the intervention groups in whole class interactions reveal qualitative evidence of improvement in the language produced?

11.2.1 How spontaneous L2 talk contributes to L2 learning

Spontaneous talk strategies change the pattern of oral interaction in the classroom. In terms of learner talk there are more questions and other initiations, longer utterances and an increase in overall learner talk. Overall there is a higher ratio of learner L2 talk. The implications for L2 learning that are evidenced in this study are gains in terms of vocabulary acquisition, greater control over partially-acquired grammatical structures and greater communicative competence. This study did not set out to compare specific aspects of L2 learning within certain discourse formats however. There is no claim that vocabulary is not acquired, nor that structural knowledge is not consolidated within the IRE/F pattern of interaction. The empirical testing of suggestions in the literature that learners retain better the language that they have generated in personal meaning making (Hawkins, 1987) also lay outside the scope of this study. However, the distinct contribution that spontaneous talk makes to L2 learning is the opportunity for learners to develop aspects of strategic and interactional competence, whereby they become more active participants who control the content and direction of the conversation.

There is evidence from student perception data, although this is one area that requires further inquiry, that learning through secondary participation is greater when the interaction is spontaneous because learners are interested to attend to it in a more sustained way than in question and answer display exchanges. The study's findings indicate that learners can benefit in different ways as secondary participants. For example, one learner described comparing the teacher and learner's talk and noticing aspects of difference, in particular

learner errors and teacher re-casts. Another learner reported using the time to listen carefully to the conversation whilst planning his next contribution.

11.2.2 Strategies for generating spontaneous talk in the classroom

Open questions

One of the central strategies of the intervention programme, asking open questions (or closed questions in a referential context) was fundamental to generating higher levels of talk. One of the reasons for this seems to be the impact of asking questions to which there is no one (or any) correct answer. The effect is to re-frame an interaction that might otherwise feature language only for display or rehearsal as a genuine information or opinion exchange. The teacher, who does not know what the learner is going to say, must listen and respond rather than evaluate or correct. This resonates with the findings from other studies that demonstrate the benefits when topic control is in the hands of the learner (Wells & Mejía Arauz, 2006; Slimani, 2001; Todhunter, 2007).

Graduated scaffolding from implicit to explicit moves

Soliciting and supporting learners as they stretch their linguistic resources to express meanings in unstructured, unplanned situations requires skilful interactional work from the teacher. Confirming findings from previous studies of meditational feedback in L2 learning (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Nassaji & Swain, 2000), opportunities for learning are maximised when teacher talk moves proceed on a scale from implicit to explicit. In spontaneous talk this is no less important than in the more structured form-focused exchanges in previous studies. What is different, however, is that the teacher is not able to plan a sequence of feedback moves in advance but must react to learner utterances as the conversation unfolds. The principle of initiating with the most implicit prompts is in line with the goal of generating conversation and encouraging maximal learner participation. Student self-report data confirm that explicit correction is a disincentive to participate in interaction, particularly in conversation.

Phatic language use

The use of particular talk moves supports learner initiative in spontaneous interactions, encouraging them to adopt a more symmetrical stance, whereby they ask questions, take control of the topic, narrate events, offer opinions, and essentially, hold the floor for longer stretches of time. This process is initiated when the teacher cedes topic control, but is given further support when the teacher responds to learner contributions with conversational moves,

such as echoes and interested intonation. This is significant as it serves to counteract the linguistic asymmetry with interactive symmetry. A further phatic use of language, for example, repeating and reformulating questions in the absence of communicative breakdown, serves to buy the learner additional time and functions as 'dialogic padding'. This relieves the learner of the responsibility for maintaining the interactional flow at key moments, allowing him/her to focus on planning to talk.

Humour

Student, teacher and lesson data in this study support the notion that humour facilitates spontaneous L2 use in several ways. First, it contributes to the perception that these interactions are real conversation. Secondly, humour is felt to reduce anxiety and mitigates the fear of taking part. Thirdly, the humour of the teacher triggers learner use of humour in the discourse, a further factor in achieving interactional symmetry.

To summarise, the single most important measure a teacher can implement to shift classroom talk from L2 rehearsal to L2 use is to ask questions to which there are multiple (if any) answers. In encouraging learners to express their ideas, dialogic support is most beneficial when it is graduated and is no more explicit than the learner requires at each turn. Using the teacher turn to bring in humour, maintain the conversational tone and to 'hold the floor' to give learners additional 'in flight' planning time provides additional scaffolding in these interactions.

11.3 Professional implications

In this conclusion I have considered the methodological and general pedagogical implications of this study's findings. I am mindful, in so doing, that as an action research study, a core aim was to contribute to the practice and development of the teachers involved as reflective practitioners and language teachers, and that one measure of this study's validity should be its power as a strategy for local inquiry. During the study I have had cause to reflect on the tensions between the academic requirements of doctoral research and the principles of teacher research, and where reconciling the two has proved difficult, it has been necessary to adhere to the demands of the former. Since completing the analysis of this study's data, as a practitioner-researcher in the same institution I have had the opportunity to have further discussions with the project teachers and other teachers within the languages department. The on-going impact of this action research project is evident both in continuing individual teacher development as well as classroom practice in the field of learner spontaneous L2 use.

Whilst the focus of the study was in a particular time frame, the project's teachers had their own time frames for development, beyond the closure of the project and at a different pace. The ripples of the project are being felt beyond its closure. This is one of the facets of action research in which the researcher is a practitioner and where the researcher's colleagues are practitioners too. With multiple teacher involvement, it is to be expected that developments in practice will outgrow the boundaries of the initial project and this case is no exception. It therefore seems appropriate to dedicate the final section of this thesis to the work beyond the study. In this respect I focus on both the continuing development of the three study teachers and the broader impact of the study beyond the project, through a collaborative project involving practitioners in eight secondary schools.

11.3.1 Development of the three project teachers

In the second part of the analysis in chapter 9 I analysed the development in Teacher 1's perceptions about her practice in relation to spontaneous L2 classroom interaction. Two and a half years after the intervention period on which this study's findings are based, I returned, in a different capacity, to observe a different class of Year 9 German learners with this same teacher. My observation of the learner talk in the lesson, together with a brief discussion following the lesson, led to further perceptions about this teacher's personal developmental trajectory with respect to the role of spontaneous talk in L2 learning.

In the lesson itself, I observed that the main teaching activities in the lesson cast the teacher in the role of respondent and the students as initiators. It was the first lesson following the half-term holidays and learners were invited to ask the teacher questions about her holiday. Interestingly I noted that in this scenario the fact that the teacher was in the role of primary knower was no barrier to spontaneity. This was because it was a genuine conversation and not an exercise. The pace of the talk was quite fast during this activity and the questions learners generated used a variety of structures and vocabulary. It was interesting to observe that learners did not ever repeat the content of a previous question, indicating that they were attending to the whole interaction even when not the primary interactant. The nomination of speakers was not consistently in the hands of the teacher; at times learners simply self-selected, without overlapping with each other. Each question was treated as a genuine request for information and answered by the teacher conversationally. A second activity required that learners ask questions that could have produced a list of statements provided by the teacher. The teacher had construed the statements in such a way that they would be able to generate multiple possible questions. During the teacher-led whole class discourse, a total of 30 unscripted questions were asked of the teacher. Appendix 10 contains a list of all the

spontaneous learner language produced in this lesson. Further opportunities for learner talk were then provided as peer-peer tasks that replicated the photo stimulus task. A final observation is that humour was shared and used by both teacher and learners. At one point a student turned around to explain a 'running joke' to me in German, clearly sensing that I might otherwise feel excluded from the class interaction.

During discussions following this lesson, the teacher revealed her on-going development since the formal end of the project and described in detail her approach to spontaneous talk. This involves a gradual build up and progression in terms of spontaneity that makes use of more structured tasks and activities, focusing on particular functions such as asking questions, giving definitions or giving extended opinions. It is clear that she has developed a conscious, systematic approach to developing spontaneous learner talk, and that she is continually refining her strategies to take account of different classes, languages and ability levels. Furthermore, she feels confident enough to share her on-going practice with colleagues in the department and more widely.

Teacher 2, in her post-study interview and in discussions since, revealed an on-going preoccupation with spontaneous talk, although she also acknowledged that participation in the study enabled her to sustain her focus on it, and that since the conclusion of the intervention period, she has allowed other priorities to hold sway. She was very clear that the project has left her able to vary her third turn to solicit spontaneous talk, but admits that she does not always do this, if she is more focused on accuracy. In the course of the discussion, Teacher 2 mentioned particular aspects of her teaching, however, developed as a result of the project, that have become instrumental in her own teaching, as well as in that of other colleagues in the department. The first of these was her focus on question-asking. Finding that students wanted to ask questions in her lessons during the project, but were not always able to do so, led to her idea for some structured tasks to promote question-forming and enable more spontaneous use of questions in the classroom. These tasks have been embedded and further developed in the department's work. In addition, Teacher 2's interest in promoting colloquial, conversational language use inspired her to write some lesson material with the German foreign language assistant, and her primary resource writing for Spanish KS2 classes was also influenced by an awareness of the importance of building in opportunities for talk.

Teacher 3, the control class teacher, also benefitted from her participation in the study, although the development in her pedagogy came about more as a result of her interest and engagement in discussion with me and other project teachers initially, and was then fuelled by her role as head of department and, more particularly, as lead teacher in the second phase of a

Linked Up Award Scheme focused on generating opportunities for spontaneous talk in the secondary classroom.

As I mentioned previously, the Linked Up Award Scheme was a government-funded initiative for language teacher professional development that ran for two years. At its inception the scheme aspired to promote teacher engagement with research, although the model that finally emerged was closer to one of collaborative inquiry to promote reflective practice. Nevertheless, the Linked Up project that developed in my school encouraged a group of teachers in local secondary schools to focus on the development of speaking skills, more specifically on the ability of students to use language they know creatively to enable them to respond more spontaneously 'making up their own sentences in an unrehearsed situation' (OFSTED, 2008). Our project, entitled Talking to Learn, was initiated by me but subsequently led in its second year by Teacher 3, who extended its scope to eight secondary schools.

As is expected and appropriate for a teacher-led project of this nature, the approach was practical and experimental, rather than theoretical or rigorous. Teachers collaborated to generate a range of different tasks and activities to promote spontaneous talk, producing resources for the classroom that were widely shared. Evaluation was done eclectically, using a variety of methods to gauge learner enjoyment as much as record evidence of spontaneous learner contributions. This by no means detracted from the seriousness of the endeavour, nor the tangible sense that the project led teachers and learners to a much better understanding of the difference between planned and spontaneous talk, the skills that support both, and the strategies to generate them.

My consideration of the ways in which this project has sparked further professional development is not intended to provide further validation of this study's findings. The continuing work on spontaneous talk amongst teachers prompted by involvement in the study is not comparable in that sense, but its inclusion in this thesis points up the variety of positive ways in which teachers may engage in change activity in their classrooms, and the validity of each in its own right, as well as the possible felicitous inter-relationship between research and teaching that may emerge as a result.

11.4 Concluding remarks

Finally, to return to the findings of this project, I conclude that the episodes of spontaneous L2 classroom talk widen the interactional platform on which learners are permitted to operate, opening up for them the opportunity not only to try out new interactive resources but also to adopt different discourse roles. The locus for learning is three-fold: linguistic, interactive and

social. The teacher's dialogic support, scaffolding, predisposes learners to the range of interactive practices that match, to a certain degree, the requirements of real conversation outside the classroom. Learner responses in this study show a positive orientation to the opportunities afforded to them both as primary and secondary participants in these interactions, as well as the appropriate emergent interactive capabilities. In sum, the potential for learning through spontaneous L2 talk as identified in this study commends its further investigation by both teachers and researchers. In the words of one of the project's class teachers:

> Seeing [the students] struggle also helped me to realise what my role was beyond just providing the chances to speak and being encouraging when they tried: I needed to react to what it was that did still hold them back at times from speaking. I needed to allow lots of opportunities, even if just for small amounts of time, for them to try out their L2. I had to stop correcting every mistake when they were speaking spontaneously and focus on whether the message was being communicated. I needed to take some risks myself and bring me into the classroom through stories, pictures, shared jokes, favourite words that meant there was a real purpose and desire to speak German.

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Appendix 1

Transcription system used in pilot study and subsequently in main study

1. T = teacher; P = pupil, PP = pupils

2. Each line is numbered for ease of reference

3. Pauses are indicated in brackets:

(.) indicates a pause of a second or shorter;

(.3.) indicates the length of pause beyond one second.

4. XXX is used for speech that could not be deciphered

5. ...... indicates an incomplete utterance

6. Words are italicised to show a very heavily stressed word

7. Words are underlined to show overlapping speech between two speakers.

8. ? = Rising intonation indicating a question

9. ! = exclamatory tone

10. Some contextual information (for example gestures, eye contact, body language) is given in ( ) brackets.

11. English translation of each line is provided on alternate lines, italicised and in [ ] square brackets.

Adapted from Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005:29

Appendix 2

Initial coding framework from pilot study

Teacher language coding

CQ	Closed Question
QO	Open Question
EX	Extension / follow up
TE	Teacher Evaluation
EE	Extended Exchange
TR	Teacher restatement of learner response
TE	Teacher Explanation

IRE	Initiation-Response-Evaluation exchanges
non-IRE	Alternatively structured interactions

Learner language coding

LR	Learner Response
R	Reason or justification
LI	Learner Initiation
LQ	Learner Question
LU	Longer Utterance
LA	Learner Agreement

Teacher behaviour

Hum	Use of humour
Writ	Writing on board
Gest	use of gestures

Appendix 3

Coding framework for interactional pattern

T	Teacher talk in L2
TE	Teacher talk in L1
P	Learner talk in L2
PE	Learner talk in L1
PP	Paired oral work in L2
PPE	Paired oral work in L1
A	Audio-(visual) input (CD or Video)
O	Other task (including reading comprehension, written activity, textbook task)

Appendix 4

Coding framework for teaching and learner talk elaborated in response to all lesson data

Teacher talk

CQ	Closed Question
QO	Open Question
EX	Extension / follow up
TE	Teacher Evaluation
EE	Extended Exchange
TR	Teacher restatement of learner response
TRC	Teacher re-cast
TR+	Teacher amplification of learner statement
TRQ	Teacher restatement as question

IRE	Initiation-Response-Evaluation exchanges
non-IRE	alternatively structured interactions

Learner talk

LQ	Learner L2 Question
LU	L2 Longer Utterance (7 words or longer)
SP	L2 Short Phrase (up to 6 words)
SW	L2 Single Word
R	Reason or Justification
LI	Learner Initiation L2 – any length
LQ L1	Learner L1 Question
LI L1	Learner L1 Initiation
ENG	Learner L1 response – any length

Appendix 5

Coding framework of teacher and learner talk in non-IRE interactions

Learners	Teacher
1. Learner initiates to introduce new ideas into the interaction (LI)	1. Teacher uses (frequent) referential questions (open & closed) (RQ)
2. Learners ventures 'incomplete' or 'partially-formed' utterances – ungrammatical yet communicative (LV)	2. Teacher echoes learner contribution as question or confirmation (EC)
3. Learner responds readily (RR)	3. Teacher repeats or rephrases question (RE)
4. Learner introduces contrary ideas to that of peer or teacher (CI)	4. Teacher shows interest in tone of voice (INT)
5. Learner negotiates meaning (NM)	5. Teacher manages class (CM)
6. Learner negotiates form (NF)	6. Teacher uses (frequent) phatic statements and questions (PH)
7. Multiple learner involvement (ML)	7. Teacher waits (WA)
8. Learner hesitation (HE)	8. Teacher responds to content rather than form (CON)
9. Learner introduces humour (LH)	9. Teacher prompts (PR)
10. Learner asks question (LQ)	10. Teacher summarises main points of interaction (SU)
11. Learner prolongs interaction (PI)	11. Teacher personalises comment or question to learner (PC)
	12. Teacher attributes learner contribution by name (AT)
	13. Teacher introduces humour (HU)
	14. Teacher makes other conversational response (CR)
	15. Teacher teaches directly or feeds (DT/F)

Appendix 6
Letter to parents

November 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian

As part of my ongoing professional development, I am currently pursuing a part-time PhD at the University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education. This follows my completion of a Masters in Educational Research in 2005, in which I explored the role of spontaneous student talk in the language learning process.

My PhD study focuses again on learner interaction and I'm interested to find out more about the role of teacher behaviour and teacher talk in promoting higher levels of learner talk in the foreign language.

As part of this study, I plan to observe and video record 6 lessons in your son/daughter's German class. I will transcribe the lessons and these transcripts will form the basis for my analysis. All transcripts will be anonymised and confidentiality is guaranteed. The video material will only be viewed by me and will remain in my possession at all times.

In the final written PhD report to be published in January 2012; full anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained, just as was the case in my MEd. report in 2005.

If you would like any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the college by email, rhawkes@comberton.cambs.sch.uk or phone 01223 262503 ext.222.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Hawkes
Assistant Principal
Director of Language College

Appendix 7

Classroom language phrases

das ist richtig

das ist falsch

das ist klasse

das ist schlecht

Ich habe ein Problem

Ich habe eine Idee

Ich habe vergessen

Darf ich auf Englisch reden ?

Wie heisst …..auf Deutsch ?

danke

bitte

Appendix 8

Question-elicitation task

3 Und du? Was sind deine Lieblingssachen? Schreib Sätze.

4 a Lies die Texte. Schreib die Lieblingssachen auf.
Beispiel: Miriam: Lieblingsfarbe – blau, Lieblingssport – ...
Jürgen: Lieblingsmonat – Oktober, ...

Miriam hat viele Lieblingssachen! Ihre Lieblingsfarbe ist blau und ihr Lieblingssport ist Basketball. Ihr Lieblingsfach ist Englisch. Am Mittwoch hat sie dreimal Englisch, also ist Mittwoch ihr Lieblingstag.

Jürgen hat keinen Lieblingstag, aber sein Lieblingsmonat ist Oktober – dann hat er Geburtstag! Sein Lieblingsfach ist Informatik, und seine Lieblingsfußballmannschaft ist Borussia Dortmund. Sein Lieblingskleidungsstück ist eine Jeans und sein Lieblingshaustier ist seine Katze.

Grammatik

His and *her*

Instructions
Teacher (or a learner) faces away from the text after a brief reading time. Learners ask questions of the teacher/learner in German to elicit all the information from the text. Can extend away from the text too.

Appendix 9

Odd one out task – requiring justification in answers

Was gehört nicht dazu? Was ist die Ausnahme?			
1	toll	langweilig	prima	interessant
2	Kunst	Sport	Englisch	Deutsch
3	ich gehe	sie gehen	du gehst	sie geht
4	ich lese	ich schreibe	ich treffe Freunde	ich schlafe
5	wir essen	du isst	ich esse	sie essen

Appendix 10

Spontaneous learner L2 talk from one post-study lesson observation

NB: Errors have not been edited out, though they are indicated to the right, in the English translations

Was hast du in den Ferien gemacht? *[What did you do in the holidays?]*

Bist du ein fremd Land gefahren? *[Did you go a foreign country?]*

Hast du Schokolade gegessen? *[Did you eat chocolate?]*

Hast du IronBru getrunken? *[Did you drink IronBru?]*

Wie war das Wetter? *[What was the weather like?]*

Es hat geregnet? *[It rained?]*

Wie geht deiner Eltern? *[How are your parents?(,s missing and wrong case)]*

Hast du Strawberry Fair gegangen? *[Did you go Strawberry Fair?(wrong aux.)]*

Was hat Smitty in den Ferien gemacht? (The teacher's cat) *[What did Smitty do in the holidays?]*

Deutsch ist schwierig, ja? *[German is difficult, yes?]*

Hast du mein Goldfisch genommen? *[Did you take my goldfish?]*

Wie findest du Mathe? *[What do you think of maths?]*

Das langweiligste Fach ist Geschichte oder? *[The most boring subject is history, don't you think?]*

Magst du Pizzasaft? *[Do you like pizza juice?]*

Denkst du, dass Alex ist ein bisschen verrückt? *[Do you think that Alex is a bit mad?(wrong word order)]*

Was ist das langweiligste Fach? *[What is the most boring subject?]*

Was du in dein letztes Deutschfach gelernt? *[What you learnt in your last German subject? (multiple errors but message communicated)]*

Englisch ist interessant, oder? *[English is interesting, don't you think?]*

Möchtest du ins Kino gehen? *[Would you like to go to the cinema?]*

Findest du Englisch langweilig, oder? *[Do you find English boring, or?]*

Später kannst du Schaflaufen ? *[Later can you sheep running?]*

Was ist eine Schulregeln? *[What is a school rules?]*

Warum kannst du nicht mir nach Cambridge gehen? *[Why can't you go me to Cambridge?]*

Magst du Geschichte? *[Do you like history?]*

Wie findest du Geschichte? *[What do you think of history?]*

Frau G.........., ist das du? *[Mrs G........, is that you? (incorrect verb form)]*

Was musst du nächstes Jahr gemachen? *[What did you have to do next year?]*

Was musst du am Freitag machen? *[What do you have to do on Friday?]*

Ist Mathe langweilig? *[Is maths boring?]*