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**PARTICIPATION, COLLABORATION AND LANGUAGE USE IN
ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE ADULT LEARNING GROUPS
THAT SHARE OR DO NOT SHARE A COMMON LANGUAGE
BESIDES ENGLISH**

BY

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GVRTAN001

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of
Masters of Philosophy in Education**

**Department of Education
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2004

DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Tanya Gavron-Stadtmaer

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“A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle”

Gibran (1960)

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Lai buna

ABSTRACT

The study attempts to answer the question: "How is learning, interaction and information exchange affected by whether learning groups are composed of people who share or do not share a common language (besides English)?"

I carried out the research at English Foreign Language (EFL) classes which were held for peoples of Africa. Data were collected through audio and audio-visual recordings, field notes and semi-structured follow-up interviews.

The findings indicated that learning, interaction and information exchange were affected by the composition of the group. These differences were related to the interactive and dialogic nature of exchange in the 'cross language groups' where conversational techniques (such as turn-taking) were used in order to engage in an interactive and collaborative dialogue. As a result, learning, interaction and information exchange occurred more readily in 'cross language groups' than in 'common language groups'.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is becoming increasingly important with the growing number of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in South Africa (and other English speaking countries) from elsewhere in Africa. The acquisition of the English language is significant for their integration into South African society and for their interaction within the greater South African community. According to Dimitriadou (2004:1), refugees are placed within a broader context of “ethnic minority populations”. However, there is one critical distinction that sets refugee students apart from such a group – “a legal and social determination as a refugee” (Dimitriadou 2004:1).

In this study I examine one EFL (English Foreign Language) project in Cape Town which offers free English language classes to people from non-English speaking African countries where Swahili, Arabic, French or Portuguese are the *lingua franca*. Since the students at the project came from different African countries (with different *lingua franca*), it was possible to construct both 'common language' (where students share a common language besides English) and 'cross language' (where students do not share a common language besides English) learning groups.

Although researchers have considered that speakers of different languages experience different problems in the English language (Swan & Smith 1987), and although research has been conducted on issues such as bilingual education (Hornberger 1988) multiculturalism and the development of multilingualism in society and in Higher Education (for example in the development of a language plan by the Centre for Higher Education in the University of Cape Town in 2004) (Centre for Higher Education in the University of Cape Town 2004), little research has been conducted

on the differences between 'common language learning groups' and 'cross language learning groups'. Extensive research amongst children, however, has suggested that bilingual education, where classroom use of a home language as well as English is encouraged, is preferred to English only education (Cummins 1996).

In South Africa (and in other English speaking countries) English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers may have to work with groups of students who do or do not have a *lingua franca* in common. It is therefore important for EFL teachers to be aware of differences between 'common language' learning groups, who share a *lingua franca* other than English and 'cross language' learning groups, who do not share such a language. Teachers need this awareness so that they can adapt their teaching methods, classroom organisation and teaching materials accordingly.

However, the outcomes which have been determined by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate / the Royal Society of Arts (one of the most widely recognised EFL accredited examining authorities for the training of EFL teachers) for English Foreign Language teacher-training only give limited attention to the differences between 'common language' and 'cross language' groups at the diploma level (Hawkes 2002).

In this study I will look at how learning, interaction and information exchange is affected by whether learning groups are constituted of people who share or do not share a common language besides English. I will do this by contrasting collective responses to reading exercises in 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. I will examine the benefits and the drawbacks of constituting groups as 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. I set out the key question that I seek to answer in this research below:

1.2 Research question

How is learning, interaction and information exchange affected by whether English Foreign Language (EFL) learning groups are composed of people who share or do not share a common language (besides English)?

1.3 Background

In 2000 I completed the Cambridge / Royal Society of Arts Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), an internationally recognised 120 hours certificate in teaching English to speakers of other languages. As part of the course, all the trainee teachers had to conduct several practical teaching classes with groups of around six non-English speaking refugees. It became apparent to me that there was a need for English language classes for refugees in South Africa - especially for those who were unable to attend language classes due to financial constraints (the high cost of English classes and the high unemployment rate among the refugees).

On completion of the CELTA training (in November 2000), a fellow teacher and I established English Foreign Language (EFL) classes for a small group of refugees, teaching the students voluntarily in a park. We later approached the Cape Refugee Forum (now called ARESTA) to assist us in acquiring premises at the Rondebosch Library. Other teachers have also volunteered their time on occasion to teach the classes.

Initially when the classes started there were only four students. All the students came from Angola and all the students spoke Portuguese.

However, since then the classes have grown to around a constant fifty students on different levels, in different classes, with an average student attendance (taken in 2002) of 72%.

Further, initially there were no women in the classes, but now the classes have a gender ratio of 1:3 women to men. Moreover, according to the student enrolment forms (which are completed by all the new students at the school), the classes have students from Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lebanon, Mozambique, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia and Somalia - with different first and second languages which, according to the students (as per the enrolment forms and discussions with the teachers and students), include Arabic, French, Portuguese and Swahili.

My involvement in English Language Teaching (ELT) over the past few years has led to many questions about ELT and about student interaction - regarding issues relating to different group dynamics. There appeared to be differences between 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. By 'common language' groups I refer to students who share a common language other than English. By 'cross language' groups here I refer to students who do not share a common language other than English. The common language is usually a *lingua franca* from their home countries and regions and is usually French, Portuguese, Arabic or Swahili.

From my experiences in working with different groups, it became apparent that the CELTA course does not address issues relating to the differences in group dynamics (and interaction). I realised that teachers had to work with 'common language' and 'cross language' classes without understanding the differences and / or similarities between 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. For this reason, I decided to explore the differences as regards cultural norms, task management and information

exchange between 'common language' and 'cross language' EFL groups in this dissertation.

1.4 The students

The students in the EFL classes have come to South Africa for a variety of reasons. These reasons emerged in the students' written work (see Appendix A and Appendix B), through conversations with the students and through discussions with the teachers.

Firstly, according to the students, internal conflict and civil war have been the main reason for their seeking asylum in South Africa. These conflicts have been over political control or ownership of economic resources. Some of the students from Rwanda and Burundi have come to South Africa as refugees to escape persecution and ethnic cleansing. Secondly, students have come to South Africa to escape wars and fighting between countries. Thirdly, many of the students have come to South Africa for educational reasons. It was brought to my attention by some of the students that education in countries such as the DRC is very costly and irregular. According to various students, the teachers often strike over wage increases - thereby disrupting lessons and classes.

Finally, although most of the students have university degrees, many of the students feel that they need to further their studies and have come to South Africa to do so. Other students want to study for their first degree. Often the need to further their education is associated with a lack of economic opportunities within their own country and, when they are in South Africa, lack of employment in South Africa. Despite the fact that many of the refugees in the classes are skilled, educated people (as detailed below), most of the students are either unable to secure employment in South Africa, or accept low-skill and low-wage employment such as security guards and dishwashers, in order to generate an income.

According to one of the teachers at the library, most of the students study English “for employment, self employment, self pride, to be able to communicate with locals, to understand English labels – for example shopping.” The teacher later added,

“they all had the same dream – improve their English, get work and to improve their situation but each had an important contribution to make. I saw them each as individuals with their own imagination”.

For these reasons, the students in the classes choose to attend so that they can improve their English. By improving their English, the students feel that they will have better access to higher educational opportunities in English-speaking countries and better opportunities for employment, while at the same time allowing them access to local and global development within a work environment.

Many of the students feel that, by learning to speak English, they become empowered because they are able to communicate in a national language - thereby improving their chances to be employed (and / or to get better jobs), to earn higher wages and to interact without fear of being seen as an outsider. The fear of outsiders or xenophobia has been reported on by the local and international press, politicians, policy makers and various organisations (Lawyers for Human Rights 2001; Sichone 2002; Dumbutshena 2002).

The students stated that they chose to attend the classes because of the qualified, experienced EFL adult specialist teachers (most of the EFL teachers in the other schools have attended a theoretical 10 or 45 hour introduction to TEFL course and not a CELTA), and because, as mentioned previously, the classes are at no cost.

New students join every week. The new students are tested and placed (based on their level) into one of the existing classes. Each class is on a different level and the project

runs three to four EFL levels (depending on the number of teachers). All the classes cover the four skills (writing, reading, speaking and listening) as well as vocabulary and grammar.

The project uses a levels scale for student placement in classes which is accepted and used by both local (within South Africa) and international EFL schools. The levels on the scale include Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper- (or Late) Intermediate and Advanced (Lower-Advanced and Upper-Advanced) (Curtain & Pheby 2000).

The classes cater for students at Beginner/Elementary, Pre-Intermediate/Lower Intermediate and Intermediate/Upper-Intermediate levels. The Elementary students are divided into two classes, Beginner and Elementary, whenever possible (since the class can become large). The Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate level students are usually combined due to resource constraints.

In the research I focus on the Intermediate/Upper-Intermediate class since the students on those levels should have a "Limited but effective command of the language... e.g. particularly in an exchange of simple factual information." (UCLES 1999:4).

Furthermore, although classes (for adults as well as young learners) are normally between one and eight students, the refugee classes were, on occasion, much larger. As the teacher involved in the observations stated (regarding the division of a class into groups)

“It is critical not to have large groups as it can inhibit group interaction and teacher monitoring. This is a successful element of ESOL teaching ... A group size should be limited to 4 but preferably 2 to 3 - for a teacher to monitor as monitoring can be invasive and not possible... the teacher does not dominate but rather monitors ... the teacher will not facilitate or intervene – the lessons are learner-centred and outcomes-based so students develop their language skills.”

In the research I study two contrasting examples of English Foreign Language (EFL) groups ('cross language' groups and 'common language' groups) at one school setting. I analyse transcripts of audio and audio-visual recordings of classroom talk of the EFL 'cross language' and 'common language' groups and I use socio-linguistics and language pragmatics theory in order to address the question: how is learning, interaction and information exchange affected by whether learning groups are constituted of people who share ('common language') or do not share ('cross language') a common language (besides English)?

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

In the first part of the following chapter I briefly examine a body of writing which relates to globalisation and to African refugees and asylum seekers. The review identifies the background of the participants in the study. In the second part of the chapter I examine a body of scholarship which relates to English as a Foreign Language. The writing allows for the contextualisation of refugees in EFL and for a discussion around relevant EFL concerns including group work, talk, use of mother tongue, context, participants and views on cross and common language groups. In the third part of the chapter I examine a body of scholarship which relates to language dynamics in the classroom and among the participants within the classroom environment. The literature allows for the identification of aspects relating to learning, information exchange such as turn-taking, utterances and politeness, interaction and expectations, and around the theories of the New Literacy Studies.

Chapter 3 introduces and explains the research methodology and data collection strategies and analysis and interpretation strategies to be used.

Chapter 4 presents and analyses data as regards 'common language' and 'cross language' learning groups. In particular I am concerned with patterns of participation and learning in these differently constituted groups. I examine whether participation and task-completion are better achieved in groups where participants share or do not share a common language besides the one they are learning (English). The presentation includes an outline of the students in the EFL class.

Chapter 5 further examines the reasons for the differences as regards participation and task completion between 'common language' and 'cross language' learning groups. I continue with a detailed examination of audio and audio-visual recordings and also examine the follow-up interviews and the questionnaire responses. The results support and expand on the findings in Chapters 4 and 5 that interaction and conversation are greater in 'cross language groups' than in 'common language groups'.

Chapter 6 integrates the theoretical framework (from chapter 3) with the findings (from chapters 4 and 5) to show that, unlike 'common language groups', 'cross language groups' engage in interactive and collaborative dialogue and display subtle linguistic strategies through their practice of conversational English.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Refugees and Asylum seekers in Africa

Discussion in the previous chapter focused on the participants and my involvement in the Rondebosch library EFL classes, and how the topic of this research developed.

The discussion below briefly expands on the situation and the context of the EFL refugee class (and classroom) by looking at global issues around EFL classes and at refugees and asylum seekers in Africa.

2.1.1 Globalisation and the English language

Historically the spread of the English language (globally) was linked to the migration of English speaking people from the British Isles to the Americas, to Africa, and to Australasia (and to colonisation). The immigrants took with them the resource of language and the potential to adapt to new and changing sociocultural contexts. However, the new global spread of the English language has affected / influenced other languages (Block & Cameron 2002:5-7).

According to Block and Cameron there is a tendency in contemporary globalised conditions to view languages as economic commodities (2002:5). The treatment of "language" as an economic commodity has meant that languages are being evaluated and valued according to a global market value system. In other words, the evaluation of languages has meant that languages are viewed and determined as linguistic commodities with exchange value in the global market and, as such, certain languages carry more value than other languages.

Wars throughout the world, including on the African continent, have seen people leaving their countries of origin to seek asylum in sympathetic countries (such as South Africa). English language learners (including asylum seekers) learn English so that they might be able to participate within the global and within the local English speaking communities (Harmer 1991:4).

Dimitriadou (2004:2) identifies that Schellekens (2001) and Bloch (2002), in separate studies, determine that language proficiency is of critical importance within the labour market and that the lack of proficiency reduces a future employee's probability of securing employment. However, Dimitriadou (2004:2) argues that most refugees do not have the required English language skills to meet prospective employers and educational institution standards.

2.1.2 Conflict and uprootment

The students who attend the classes are African refugees who have come to South Africa because of internal and external conflict, persecution and lack of educational and economic opportunities. I will now look at the situation of the students as refugees according to how they are viewed by the South African government.

Although uprootment is not a new concept, uprootment in Africa can be life-threatening since it exposes people (especially women and children) to life-threatening conditions (Blavo 1999:1). According to Blavo, the current uprootment in Africa is a direct result of the struggle for independence, the struggle for social transformation (as a result of conflicts between political and traditional leaderships) and the struggle for economic transformation (relating to urbanisation and to conflicts between traditional and political leaderships over agricultural land and resources such as gold, copper and diamonds). The struggle for social and economic transformation in African countries continued in the post-independence era (Bravo 1999:4;8).

Furthermore, the conflicts, which have marked the post-independence era, have also stemmed from ethnic upheavals, border disputes (over artificial boundaries), political confrontations and human rights abuses (Blavo 1999:5-6,9-11). Wars and civil unrest in Africa have affected the entire continent. Some countries in Africa have produced refugees, other countries have received refugees, while other countries (such as South Africa) have both produced and received refugees (at different points in history) (Blavo 1999:1).

Refugees are often perceived according to how they are portrayed by the mass media. African refugees include a cross-section of people from across the African continent (North to South to East to West), from individuals to small groups, from adults to children, from men to women, and from different social, economic, educational, religious and political backgrounds.

2.1.3 The vulnerability of refugees

"The moment an individual decides to leave his country of origin to seek refuge in another country, he places himself in a 'vulnerable situation'" (Blavo 1999:20). Blavo identifies thirteen main problems that people seeking refuge have to endure including:

1. Uprootment, such as being unable to escape persecution, not being caught or killed while fleeing from the country of origin, possibly being refused entry to another country and having to establish oneself in that country;
2. Difficulties in obtaining and retaining refugee status;
3. Protection and safety concerns such as being ill treated by officials and people in the country of origin and in the host country;
4. Lack of assistance from authorities (such as the police);
5. Difficulties in adjustment as a result of cultural, social and linguistic differences;

6. Urban problems and having to deal with issues such as crime and unemployment;
7. Vulnerability to crime and to circumstances;
8. Education-related problems such as not having papers to prove educational levels, not having the means or rights to study and not being able to communicate in the language of the host country;
9. Employment problems - such as restrictions on rights to employment and language problems;
10. Health-related problems, including the inability to get to a health facility;
11. Travel-related problems, such as not having travel documents;
12. Cancellation and withdrawal of refugee status
13. Xenophobia in the host country.

(Blavo 1999:20-45)

These thirteen problems are all applicable to refugees in South Africa - including the importance of the English language (points 5, 8 and 9).

Despite the increase in stateless people throughout Africa and despite the fact that South Africa created millions of refugees during the Apartheid era, South Africa has played a nominal role in assisting refugees in Africa as a refugee-recipient country. According to statistics, the number of deportations has steadily increased since 1990 (with the exception of the period during the 1994 elections) (Sinclair 1998:9).

All refugees fall under the Aliens Control Act No. 96 of 1991 which determines the conditions required for the entry of legal immigrants and for the deportation of illegal immigrants. According to section 41, asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa "are granted temporary leave to stay" (Sinclair 1998:9). The procedure for deciding who should or should not be granted asylum (and refuge) has been criticised as unaccountable and unclear (Sinclair 1998:9-10).

The South African government has signed the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention and the 1967 UN Protocol. In so doing, the government has committed itself to controlling refugee access to privileges and to rights through the implementation of legislation that is in line with UN policy guidelines. Given that the legislation must be in line with the UN policy guidelines, the South African government has to reconceptualise the rights of refugees in South Africa accordingly. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) the basic level of protection involves "...taking all necessary measures to ensure that refugees are adequately protected and effectively benefit from their rights" (cited in Sinclair 1998:10). According to Sinclair these rights include the rights to food provisions, water, health services, education, skills training and to the creation of economic possibilities (1998:10).

However, until recently, refugees without study permits were not allowed to attend English language classes.

2.2 English as a foreign language (EFL)

The discussions so far have focused on the participants, my involvement in the Rondebosch library EFL classes, the situation of refugees in South Africa, global issues around EFL classes, and refugees and asylum seekers in Africa. The discussion below expands on the situation and the context of the EFL classes and on the identity of a refugee student of English (including concepts such as social capital). The discussion looks at a body of scholarship on the issue of mother tongue in EFL, what is meant as EFL / ESOL, the EFL / ESOL classroom including (teacher and student obligations and concerns), group work, talk and interaction in an EFL classroom, input, and cross and common language groups. I will then continue (in part three of

chapter two) with an examination of the debates within socio-linguistic and New Literacy Studies that are relevant to my concerns.

2.2.1 EFL, ESOL and ESL

What does it mean to be an ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) speaker or student? An EFL student (or speaker) is a non-native speaker of English who comes from a non-English speaking country. The EFL speaker may study English in an English speaking country (where they are staying for a limited period of time – as with a refugee whose status is temporary) or in a non-English speaking country. An ESL student (or speaker) is a non-native speaker of English who resides in an English speaking country, that is to say where English is taken to be an official language (Curtain & Pheby 2000). In South Africa English is an official language.

A third term, which is becoming internationally adopted, is ESOL. In a declaration of the UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) on the adoption of its new “ESOL” identity it declared that

“ESOL stands for ‘English for Speakers of Other Languages’. It is already widely used in the UK, USA and elsewhere, as a more inclusive alternative to EFL (English as a Foreign Language).” (UCLES 2002)

Both acronyms, ESOL and EFL, are referred to in this dissertation.

2.2.2 The use of mother tongue in EFL (ESOL) and ESL classrooms.

Schweers (1999:1-4) presents Auerbach's argument that a language besides English might have to be used in an English second language (ESL) class where the learning of the English language is associated with specific negative socio-cultural and political circumstances. In countries such as Puerto Rico, the English language is imposed on the students and the students harbour resentment towards the language. Under such circumstances, the students might resist learning the language.

Therefore Schweers (1999:1-4) suggests that a student's mother tongue language might be useful as a tool to encourage a student's self-expression and to overcome this resentment and resistance to English (by not forcing the students to use English during an ESL class). Furthermore, Schweers (1999:1-4) advocates that the students' mother tongue language might also need to be used to explain concepts and to provide assistance to those students who are in need of help.

Schweers (1999:1-4) continues with Auerbach's line of reasoning by asserting that a teacher might have to use the student's mother tongue in an ESL class in order to provide the student with a sense of security. The students' mother tongue might also have to be used in order to validate their experiences and sense of self-expression. In so doing, the teacher may use the learners' mother tongue to address issues of power and identity both within and outside the classroom.

However, English as a second language (ESL) only accounts for a small percentage of the total English language learners. Most learners, including refugees in South Africa, are not ESL learners of English but EFL (English foreign language) learners of English. The majority of EFL educators do not promote the use of the mother tongue in the classroom. The reasons for this will be examined in further detail throughout the literature review and will be applied to the data findings.

2.2.3 Identity: a refugee student of English

Refugee students of English are usually incorporated into a broader context of ethnic minorities - despite the fact that they are legally and socially determined as refugees (Dimitriadou 2004:1). This distinction, according to Dimitriadou (2004:1), sets them apart from this broader grouping – placing the refugee into a more specific social and legal context.

Many refugees and asylum seekers from war-torn areas suffer from personal loss and trauma-related problems. They have lost their homes, their family members, their jobs, their professional status and some require medical assistance (Spry 2002:1). They often arrive in the country of asylum with limited (if any) financial resources and documentation.

Most people who seek asylum in a foreign country are not aware of what to expect when they arrive in the asylum country. They usually have little or no understanding of the language/s and culture/s of that country and they are often unaware of the administrative procedures and processes that await them (Spry 2002:1).

Furthermore, as a result of limited financial resources and support, many asylum seekers and refugees, if they are granted asylum, tend to live in low standard (or sub-standard), high crime-rate areas (Spry 2002:1).

The citizens of the asylum country often view refugees as outsiders who want to take away their jobs and their financial resources. In many areas xenophobia is a serious issue for refugees and most refugee students feel as if they are negatively represented in the media (Dimitriadou 2004:8).

In a news article for the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) Dempster wrote

“In South Africa, the locals call them the Amakwerekwere - a derogatory term for the foreigners who have come south in search of a better life, or who are fleeing political strife and economic hardship in their own countries... Abuse of the Amakwerekwere on the streets by South African citizens has been compounded by the frequent ill-treatment that both legitimate asylum seekers and illegal immigrants receive at the hands of police and officials from the Department of Home Affairs.” (Dempster 2003:1-2)

Although the students bring their trauma into the classroom (Dimitriadou 2004:9), for many refugees, English language classes become a safe haven (a place of friendship, acceptance, refuge and safety) and a place where relationships amongst different linguistic and cultural groups can be formed (Spry 2002:1). As a result, the students may use this safe haven to address some of their trauma through interactions with fellow students and with their teacher.

In a study of refugees attending Further Education Centres in Britain, Dimitriadou (2004:6) found that refugee students often discussed their problems and issues relating to their circumstances as refugees, with their teachers. The teachers at the library, as with the teachers at Further Education colleges in Britain, found that the students would speak to them about their problems, would write letters to the teachers (Appendix A) wherein they would tell of their circumstances or life history, and that they would use written and oral exercises to share their experiences.

2.2.4 Social capital

Xenophobia and trauma may also be caused by the refugees not having the social capital or set of resources that are embedded within networks or social structures (Dimitriadou 2004:3). These resources are something (or someone) that can be used so that a person, organisation, country (or the like) can function properly. It is

something (or someone) that the person, organisation, group, country (or the like) have at their disposal (Collins COBUILD Dictionary 2003).

These resources determine the social and cultural practices of a given social structure (or network). They relate to the way in which people from the same social structure (or network) would behave and, as such, determine how much identity, power and information they would hold in different contexts.

New resources can be added to acquire greater social capital and access (Dimitriadou 2004:3). Therefore a group can increase their access to power, identity and information through acquiring further resources. However, if a group does not have the required set of resources, they will not be able to access the norms and obligations, relationships, identity, power and information associated with that social structure (or network) and, as a result, they will be marginalized.

Refugees arrive in an asylum country (such as Britain or South Africa) with their own culturally influenced social capital (which is usually different to that of the asylum country). The refugees are expected to interact with local communities as soon as they are allowed entry into the country. There they are required to communicate with people with different social capitals. The refugees are expected to adopt, or at least utilise, the social and cultural practices that are dominant in those communities. They quickly learn that “if they do not adapt to the host society’s dominant social and cultural practices they will be marginalized” (Dimitriadou 2004:4).

The ESOL (EFL) social structures (which include the school environment, the teachers and the co-students) are among those structures that refugees in English speaking countries have to encounter. In an ESOL (EFL) social structure or network the set of resources (social capital) which the refugees would have to encounter (and acquire) would take the form of access to relationships, norms and obligations

(Dimitriadou 2004:3). This acquisition would then allow the refugees access to power, identity and information within the EFL environment and social structure.

However, as discussed, social capital is a set of accessible resources (people or things) that can be used to function effectively. Therefore, it can be derived that, in an EFL and English speaking society, the English language is an essential resource for accessing power, identity and information (an issue which will be re-addressed in chapter 5).

2.2.5 The ESOL / EFL environment

Erdentug (date unknown:1) argues that classroom interaction is influenced and controlled by rules that are agreed upon by the teacher, by the students and / or by a set of cultural norms and expectations.

As such, the classroom is a unique environment with its own set of rules regarding interaction and turn-taking, regarding the selection of the next speaker, regarding the length of each speakers' turn and regarding the content of the discussion – all of which are predetermined by the teacher (Van Lier as cited in Erdentug, date unknown:2).

The classroom environment is also influenced by several ESOL (EFL) objectives.

These include:

“To provide the opportunity for people to acquire and then develop spoken and written English with some emphasis on grammatical structures.

To encourage and enable students to progress to further education, training and eventual employment.

To provide information about systems, institutions and services available to students and their families.” (Prince et al, 1999:50)

Therefore the ESOL (EFL) environment provides the learner with an opportunity to encounter the cultural and societal norms of the host country. It also provides the learner with an opportunity to acquire the English language. This is of critical importance for refugees since it makes the possibility for interaction and negotiation within the wider community available to them (Dimitriadou 2004:1).

2.2.6 Student and teacher obligations

As discussed, most refugee students feel that they have an obligation to assist family members and other members of their community. They want to give them money and to make sure that they are safe. The students regard English as a way that they can achieve this and, at the same time, to rebuild their own lives (Dimitriadou 2004:7-8).

According to Ben Barkat (1997:1), a teacher is responsible to assist “students to express themselves freely in the language and also to think in the language (problem solving)”. Therefore students are

“encouraged to find logical relationships and describe processes using: generalisation, exemplification, analysis synthesis, evaluation, contrast, comparison, cause, effect, purpose, interpretation, summarizing, stating opinions...” (Ben Barkat 1997:1)

In order to do this, students are expected to have the required language and discourse markers. These language and discourse markers should assist the students to engage with different concepts and to find the links between these concepts so that they can effectively progress from one concept to the next (Ben Barkat 1997:1).

According to Dimitriadou (2004:7) most students understand the need to speak English and are more than happy to share and exchange information. According to Ben Barkat (1997:1), most students in EFL contexts in fact ask for more English

conversation. In an article on being an effective EFL teacher, Martin (2002:1) states that a teacher should expect students to use English all the time but come to accept if they only use English almost all of the time.

Colleges in the United Kingdom encourage English usage in the ESOL (EFL) classroom even though many students (in lower levels) who share a common language find it unusual to communicate in English. However, it is common practice to promote English and to encourage everyday English language usage (Dimitriadou 2004:7).

2.2.7 Group work

Group work was introduced into English foreign language teaching in the 1970's after it was found that 80 percent of class time was spent by the teacher on teacher talk time (TTT). Attempts were made to reduce the teacher talk time and to encourage the students to participate and interact with the English language (Andrewes, date unknown: 1). As a result, peer teaching and student-centred activities were introduced into the EFL learning process.

Long and Porter (2004:1) argue that there are at least five pedagogical arguments (for the use of group work) and at least two psycholinguistic significances to the use of group work. According to their findings (Long and Porter 2004:1), group work increases student motivation, creates a positive learning environment, increases the students' opportunity to practice speaking and using the English language, individualises instruction and improves the quantity as well as quality of the students' talk (through increased practice).

Long and Porter (2004:1) also argue that group work has

"...taken on increased psycholinguistic significance due to new research findings on two related topics: 1) the role of comprehensible input ... and 2) the negotiation work possible in conversation between non-native speakers, or interlanguage talk." (Long and Porter 2004:1)

Group work provides the students with the opportunity and time to practise speaking and using English in a "non-threatening environment" (Andrewes, date unknown:1). This environment affords the students a space where they can practise using English without the teachers' continual interference and without the teachers' assistance (since the students are expected to work together and to help each other).

Without the teachers' influence, students (working in a group) can find their own way to address a given problem. It allows students to share ideas and to use each other's experiences and abilities (to apply their experiences and ideas) to find solutions to the problem (Taylor 1992:249).

According to Long et al (Nunan, date unknown:2-3) students produce a higher quantity of talk when they are in groups (than when they participate in teacher centred activities) and a more modified form of interaction occurs within the group. Nunan (date unknown:2-3) argues that this modified form of interaction takes place because students have unique contributions to make to their group's work.

According to Dimitriadou (2004:7), students work well together during the lessons. They exchange work and help each other. Information is "...generously exchanged among students" (Dimitriadou 2004:7).

Therefore group work reduces the dependency on the teacher (Andrewes, date unknown:1) while at the same time encouraging student talk time (STT),

collaborative and group-directed learning, and the development of interpersonal and communicative skills.

This is in contrast to the teacher-centred classrooms where the teacher determines the turn distribution (turns are discussed in 2.3.4) and the rules regarding turns. The teacher also selects the next speaker. As such, the teacher, in a teacher-centred classroom, is able to control the turns in his / her classroom. This control can have a negative affect on the students since it limits the students' power and it reduces the students' motivation (Erdentug, date unknown:2).

Long and Porter (2004) also found that not only the quantity but also the variety of student talk increased during group-centred activities (which was not apparent in teacher-centred activities) and that the students also utilised a more varied selection of speech acts in these group-centred activities.

Long and Porter (2004) examined a variety of interactional features which occurred during group discussions. They found that

“...(r)epair was a composite variable, consisting of confirmation checks, clarification requests, comprehension checks, and three communication strategies (verification of meaning, definition request, and indication of lexical uncertainty).” (Long and Porter 2004:9)

However, Porter (Long and Porter 2004:9) argued that there were very few occurrences of what Tarone (discussed in Long and Porter 2004:9) referred to as "appeals for assistance" (these "appeals for assistance" include requests for clarity of terms and of meaning) (Long and Porter 2004:9). They also found that students seldom corrected, and even more seldom mis-corrected, other students' grammatical and lexical errors. Long and Porter suggest that students seldom attempt to correct each other's grammatical and lexical errors (in a discussion) because they are unable

to "provide each other with the accurate grammatical and sociolinguistic input "
(Long and Porter 2004:9).

Instead the students use prompts, words or phrases, to continue or to finish another students' utterances and to assist that student (the one who is experiencing problems). These prompts are usually stated while the student is speaking (Long and Porter 2004:9).

Nevertheless, Long and Porter (2004:16) maintain that teachers are very enthusiastic about spending substantial amounts of time on communicative activities - even if errors are made while the students communicate with each other.

Therefore, Long and Porter (2004:14), based on their findings and on the findings of other writers, argue that students obtain a higher level of practice in group work exercises, that the students practise a much wider range of language functions (including interpersonal functions) in group work exercises, that the level of grammatical and lexical accuracy is the same in group work-centred practice as in teacher-centred practice, that the level (occurrence) of co-student utterance completion and correction is greater in group work, and that student negotiation and conversation is higher in group work than in teacher-centred language practice (Varonis and Cass, referred to in Long and Porter 2004:10-12).

Long and Porter further argue that more negotiation occurs in mixed language groups ('cross language' groups) than in 'common language' groups (Varonis and Cass, referred to in Long and Porter 2004:10-12).

2.2.7.1 Comprehensible Input in Language Acquisition

Group conversation allows students to practise their language skills and knowledge in a non-threatening environment. It also provides students with the opportunity to manipulate the input which they have received. Concurrently, through a process of active negotiation (in which the students are involved), the students are able to make the input more meaningful (Varonis and Cass, discussed in Long and Porter 2004:10-12).

Long and Porter (2004:7) argue that language learning and comprehensible input are directly related. An increase in input (through conversation and active listening) leads to an increase in the quality and quantity of learning. Long and Porter (2004:7) refer to what Krashen calls the Input Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, students will improve their language if they are presented with some aspect of the target language that they do not yet understand or know (and which they will not understand out of context). The new aspect of the target language (for example grammar, phonetics, vocabulary, function) is presented to the student within the context of language that the student already knows and understands. Furthermore, in order for the student to improve his/her language, the student has to understand what he/she is intended to achieve. Here Long and Porter (2004:7) explains that to "... "understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the utterance" (Long and Porter 2004:7). Further,

... learners must be put in a position of being able to negotiate the new input, thereby ensuring that the language in which it is heard is modified to exactly the level of comprehensibility they can manage (Long and Porter 2004:7)

Some of the English input, which an EFL student would have received (and would have affected an EFL students' language acquisition), would have been through interacting with mother tongue English speakers. Long and Porter (2004:6) suggest

that mother tongue English speakers have experience in talking with non-English speakers and are aware as to how to modify their speaking to be able to communicate with non-mother tongue English speakers. They suggest that, in doing so, mother tongue English speakers reshape conversations in order to help non-mother tongue English speakers to understand and to participate in the conversation. Long and Porter (2004:6) further suggest that mother tongue English speakers also use clarifying devices such as questions, comprehension and confirmation checks and repetition to find out what the non-mother tongue speaker is trying to communicate. One such method, which Long and Porter (2004:6) identify, is to move the subject of the sentence or question to the start of an utterance. The mother tongue speaker would therefore say "Ice cream, do you eat it?" instead of saying "Do you eat ice-cream?".

2.2.7.2 Group work: Local and global

Group work activities also encourage collaborative task work. They require a student to develop interpersonal and communicative skills. These skills assist students to interact with other students (and other people) both inside and outside the classroom environment. For this reason, students should be encouraged to develop an ability to respect other group members (Taylor 1992:249).

Concurrently, the interpersonal and communicative skills and knowledge, which the students acquire within an EFL classroom, must be transferable to other interactions which they may experience with other students (and with other people including English speakers) both within the local classroom and within more global environments.

It is therefore essential that the classroom has a link to the real world and to real contexts (Taylor 1992:249). That is to say that - what is acquired or learned in the "local" context should be applicable and relate to the more "global" or "distant"

contexts. According to Taylor (1992:249) “What is learned is embedded in a larger setting – one which is encountered in real life”.

Group work is essential in the working world. Students should therefore be encouraged to develop English inter-personal skills and improve communicative skills (Taylor 1992:250). As such, group-directed learning should contain an aspect of problem solving (Taylor 1992:249).

2.2.7.3 Group work and the teacher

Group work also makes time available for the teacher to provide assistance and encouragement where needed. Most importantly, and critical in EFL teaching, group work provides the teacher with the opportunity to monitor the class, to detect problems and to identify concepts which the students still do not understand (which may otherwise be impossible to notice) that emerge during the activity. These problems can be addressed during feedback sessions with the whole class. Concurrently, group work frees the teacher from the traditional role of an instructor (Ben Barkat 1997:2).

Most students, however, are used to a teacher who assumes the traditional role as a director or an information supplier. As a result, students are not initially expected to know about classroom group work processes such as arguing, interrupting, active listening and turn-taking. The students are usually introduced to group work through various techniques and methods. The teacher may explain the aims and objectives of the exercises, the teacher may use encouragement, the teacher may make the student aware of the language and functions of the language (regarding different circumstances), and the teacher may encourage peer assistance (Ben Barkat 1997:2). Eventually, students learn that group work allows for greater peer teaching, group correction and support (Ben Barkat 1997:2).

2.2.7.4 Problems with group work

However, according to Wheeler (1994:48), there are several problems with group work. These include:

1. that the class might become too noisy
2. that students might learn each others' mistakes (a concern expressed by some of the students at the English classes). However, according to Porter (whose findings are discussed in Nunan (date unknown:2-3)) learners do not learn the other learners' errors even if they feel that they are doing so.
3. that one student might control the group while the other students are silent
4. that students might use their mother tongue (another concern expressed by the students during the interviews and in the questionnaires)

As quoted in Dimitriadou (2004:7) "...some of the students would translate a word or instruction to their friends in order to help them". However, Wheeler (1994:48) suggests (to address the fourth point) that the use of mother tongue reduces when the teacher circulates and reminds the class to speak only in English.

2.2.7.5 'Cross language' and 'common language' groups

Long and Porter (2004:16) refer to both their research as well as to the research conducted by Varonis and Cass on "non-native speaker" communication. According to their research, "groups of mixed native language backgrounds tend to achieve greater amounts of negotiation" (Long and Porter 2004:16) and as such they suggest that teachers should group "...students of mixed language backgrounds together where possible" (Long and Porter 2004:16).

'Cross language' classes are preferable firstly because more negotiation occurs in mixed language groups than in common language groups (Varonis and Cass, referred

to in Long and Porter 2004:10-12) and secondly because 'cross language' classes (and groups) help prevent the development of what Long and Porter (2004:16) refer to as "classroom dialects". These classroom dialects are often unintelligible except by students or speakers who share the same mother tongue or common language (Long and Porter 2004:16).

Nevertheless, Long and Porter (2004:16) stress that, although findings have shown that in EFL negotiation (and communication) in mixed language groups is better than in common language groups, negotiation (and communication) is still successful in common language groups.

2.2.7.6 Most EFL classes are 'common language'

However, according to Bowen (2004:1) most EFL classes consist of students who share a common language.

Despite this fact, Bowen (2004:1) argues that it is easier to find English speaking activities that can be used in 'cross language' groups than in 'common language' groups. Nevertheless, speaking activities play a vital role in promoting fluency and for providing the contextual practice of the linguistic and functional aspects of the English language.

Bowen (2004:1) argues that there are a number of problems that are experienced in 'common language' classes that do not appear in 'cross language' classes. These problems help to explain why it is easier to find activities for 'cross language' classes. These problems include:

1. an apparent lack of need to use English because the students have a common language. English may even be seen as useless.
2. more chance that students will be less interested in other members of the class.

3. English is less likely to be used when a common mother tongue can perform the same task but with less effort.

Most importantly, the more interesting and motivating a task is (especially competitions), the more chance that the shared mother tongue will be used to complete the task successfully and first (Bowen 2004:1).

2.3 Key concepts and theoretical resources

Discussions in the previous chapter and the current chapter situated the participants and the context of the research. The following section of this chapter will draw on a discussion of selected readings in sociolinguistics that look at concepts such as pragmatics, context and interaction (including utterances and turn-taking) in order to establish the ground for an exploration of interaction in ‘common language groups’ (groups which have a common language other than English) and ‘cross language groups’ (groups which do not have a common language other than English) of adult learners in the context of an English foreign language (EFL) classroom. I also look at aspects of language socialisation, talk and New Literacy Studies to enhance this discussion.

Sociolinguistic perspectives on communication will be used to address issues of interaction, information exchange and learning. I am concerned to outline key concepts and theoretical resources that I will use to analyse and to make sense of the data. I will start the review by presenting an argument by Erickson to provide an overview of the issues of social interaction.

2.3.1 Social interaction

When people speak they do more than simply produce debate style speeches - they interact. In the social practice of interaction, the speaker is only one part of the action. There is at least one participant who is actively listening (not passively receiving) within the communicative action. When a speaker speaks, the listeners react. The listeners engage with the speaker by means of a variety of verbal and non-verbal actions or modes of communication (such as changing facial expressions, looking at an object the speaker is referring to, concentrating on the speaker or breaking eye-contact with the speaker). Furthermore, the listener may produce brief utterances or "back channels" such as "ja", "hmm" or "ah!" while the speaker is speaking or pausing, to show that they are listening (Erickson 1996:288). The concurrent utterance may consist of lengthy overlapping talk which occurs at the same time as the speaker's talk. Different speaker-audience (listener) relationships may include multiple simultaneous speakers, multiple audience and multiple conversational "floors" in which turns would be taken (Erickson 1996:289).

At the immediate moment of conversation, the speaker and the listeners mutually influence each other. The influences include what Erickson calls "retrospective-prospective aspects" (1996:289) which occur during the moment of the utterance. During the conversation, the speaker is informed as to the listeners' reactions through the listeners' own backchannelling, nodding, utterances, etc. Concurrent to the speaker reacting to the listeners' reactions, the speaker has to anticipate the listeners' future reactions. The listeners' reactions to a past utterance (once the utterance has taken place) become part of the past sequence of utterances and become retrospective (Erickson 1996:289).

In all languages there are observable speech streams, speech behaviours, speech volumes and pitches, stressed syllables and body motions that provide a rhythmic foundation for utterances at a clausal level (Erickson 1996:290).

"Fluency in verbal performance, then, can be thought of as a matter of participating adequately with interlocutors in a shared framework of mutual interactional timing - literally "going with the flow" of interaction. One needs to know phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse conventions in order not only to be able to produce an utterance in conversation but to do so in the right time." (Erickson 1996:290)

However, in order to perform fluently, there needs to be more than sociolinguistic and linguistic competence. There also needs to be an "...ecology with auditors in which the auditors and speakers complete one another's activity adequately..." (Erickson 1996:290) thereby meeting each other's expectations regarding shared timing and listening cues (as read by both the speaker and the listener). Thus if

"...the timing of listening and speaking activity is off, or if the speaker or listener does not know how to read the other's implicit signals in mutually congruent ways, the speaker cannot speak fluently and interaction will fall apart." (Erickson 1996:291)

Sociolinguists have looked at the relationships between social backgrounds of speakers (such as professions and social class), speech style (such as dialect, register and politeness) and the superordination and subordination of the speaker and audience (Erickson 1996:291). They have argued that the social divisions which exist between social backgrounds determine distinct speech communities or networks.

Moreover, conversations are dynamic because a person's social identity is dynamic and can adjust to given and different contexts (Erickson 1996:292). According to Erickson (1996:292) people bring numerous potential identities to any given encounter and we choose our identity (or identities) within that encounter strategically

(and not usually consciously). The strategy may include the utilisation of shared affiliation which is revealed through various aspects of speech.

I will now look at pragmatics, various aspects around interaction / context and participant including utterances, turn-taking, polarity and politeness, context, the concept of the 'Radical Middle', and social practice in more detail.

2.3.2 Pragmatics

Bartlett and Holland (2002:10) introduce the concept of "in practice" (referring to pragmatics and to culturally resourced actors who produce culturally motivated performances). Firstly, pragmatics considers the use of contextualised utterances and secondly, it considers the ability of a social participant to adjust to (and to engage in) different contexts. Furthermore, pragmatics can be used to develop a contextual relationship between the language user and the language in use (Slembrouck 2002:8). Pragmatics considers the implicit meaning dimensions of language use. These implicit meaning dimensions of language use include assumptions that an interpretation (of particular wording) is conditional on the acceptance of these implicit meanings (Slembrouck 2002:8-9).

For instance, the concept of reference is an example of a pragmatic theme (Slembrouck 2002:10). The concept of reference considers how people develop associations between a situational context and an utterance of speech (including shifters of deictic elements for example "he", "they", "soon", "today", "last year"). Deictic elements or shifters are so named because their meaning changes according to the occasions of use and according to the user (or point of reference) (Slembrouck 2002:10). Further, the deictic elements are interrelated with other contextual variables within a stipulated situation and in this way they can affect the meaning/s attributed to associated lexical (vocabulary) elements (Slembrouck 2002:10). For example, "I will

see you there" implies that the reader is aware of who "I" am and to which "you" the "I" is referring. Furthermore, the "there" must be understood by both the "I" and the "you". In this way, the sentence belongs in a specific context. In context, the sentence becomes appropriate. Therefore, pragmatics refers to the utilisation of utterances within a context (Slembrouck 2002:6).

2.3.3 Utterances

There are various forms of utterances, or spoken words and sounds, within a conversation, which include: simultaneous utterances (two or more utterances which start at the same time); overlapping utterances (utterances which do not start simultaneously or at the same time but occur during the same time); and contiguous utterances (which occur when adjacent utterances follow from one another without an interval and without overlapping) (Maxwell Atkinson & Heritage 1986:ix-x).

Schlegoff (1986:30;34) argues that the utterances are only understandable firstly, when they are viewed as part of a sequence of an action and secondly, when they are viewed according to their position in that action. A current utterance sets up the direction for future and subsequent talk (Schlegoff 1986:34). That is to say, the current speaker in the current turn determines what the next speaker will achieve in the next turn, thus achieving what Schlegoff and Sacks (1973:296) refer to as the sequential implicitness of a turn's talk.

By producing an utterance, a current speaker sets the stage for possible future utterances. These future utterances would be relevant to the current or previous utterances, and each in its turn, would determine possible future utterances which may be produced (Schlegoff 1986:31-34). Therefore, on the one hand, Schlegoff (1986:32-35) suggests that most utterances (as in adjacent-pair utterances) link to previous and

future utterances. On the other hand, an utterance might be used to avoid a predetermined action set by a previous speaker.

Adjacency pairs (including question / answer, invitation / acceptance (or rejection) sequences), according to Schlegoff (1986:32-33), have three common properties: they cover the length of two utterances; they occur one after the other; and each utterance is produced by a different speaker. Also, as with other utterances, intervals may occur between the utterances - such as in the case of untimed pauses.

However, although interruptions and interutterance gaps have been considered as violations of transitions from one utterance or turn to the next, Schlegoff (1986:33) suggests that some interruptions might be intentional and so are placed with a specific purpose.

Speakers show that they understand the sequential nature of an utterance through references to an utterance within a turn in a sequence. In other words, a current turn's talk is linked to a previous turn's talk (Schlegoff 1986:33;38).

2.3.4 Turn-Taking

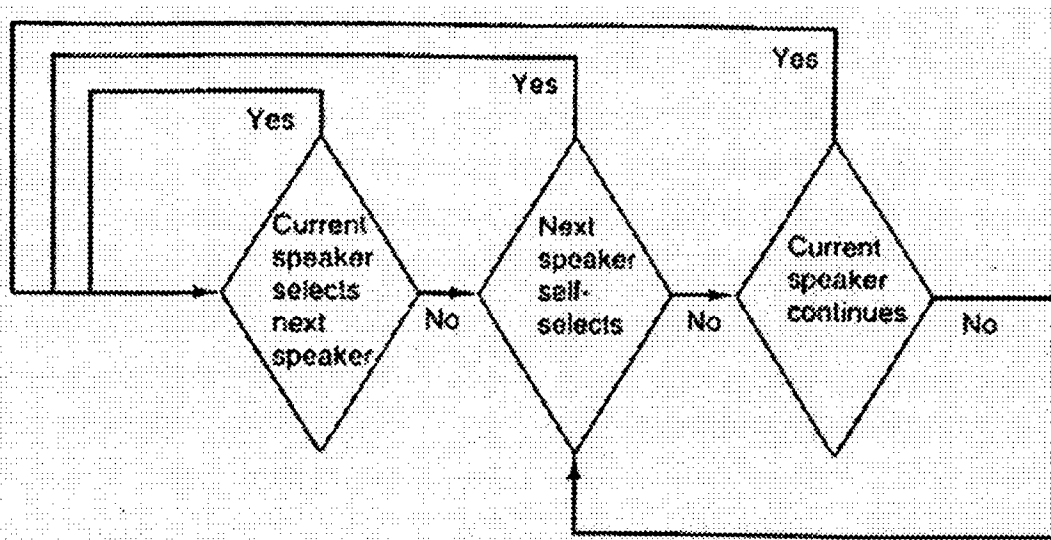
Turn-taking is a socially determined behaviour (Coates 1994:177). It is used to express social meaning and reflect social interaction and dynamics. That is to say, turn-taking differs between and within different cultures. For this reason, Coates argues that different groups of people have different turn-taking strategies (1994:177).

Each turn taken within a conversation can be seen as preceding to and leading from another turn. Each turn is based on the interpretation of what has been said and how it was said (in previous turn/s). In this way, each turn allows the speakers to update and to develop their knowledge and their background assumptions on the discussion.

Turn-taking requires the turn-takers to be able to use and to interpret contextual variations which are used in the turns (for example sequencing and structural organisation of turns).

The Sacks, Schlegoff and Jefferson model (in Coates 1994:178) is the most widely accepted model of turn-taking in conversation. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the mechanism involved in assigning turns to participants during a conversation.

Figure 1 SSJ Model of turn-taking in conversation (Coates 1994:178)



Based on the SSJ model of turn-taking in conversation, the following can be derived. Firstly, the current speaker can choose to select the next speaker. The identification of the next speaker may be made through techniques such as posing questions or saying the name of the next speaker. Secondly, the current speaker might not select the next speaker and under such circumstances another speaker may choose to speak. Thirdly, if however, no speaker is selected or self selects, then the current speaker may choose to continue speaking.

Therefore, turn-taking involves different participants in a conversation. During the conversation, one person (current speaker) talks. The talk of the current speaker is either followed by the next speaker or is followed by the current speaker - continuing his / her talk.

Each turn belongs to one speaker. However, a meaningful change of a speaker can only occur at a transition relevance place or TRP (at the point where the current turn is complete and the next turn can start), and only in situations where speakers are able to accurately predict the end of a current speaker's turn, there will not be a gap between the speakers' turns (Coates 1994:178;184).

However, the SSJ model on turn-taking in conversation, according to Coates (1994:179), does not account for situations in which two or more participants share the floor at the same time. Shared floor involves two or more speakers, who overanticipate the end of the current speaker's turn or violate the current speaker's turn. Under such circumstances, overlapping and interruptions (respectively) may occur. Interruptions also occur when a speaker takes a turn before the TRP (Coates 1994:179).

As mentioned, overlapping occurs when two or more people speak at the same time - when the next speaker overanticipates the end of the current speaker's turn (Coates 1994:178). The overlapping results in the last word or syllable of the current speaker occurring at the same time as the next speaker's first word or syllable.

Additionally, there are various ways of overlapping including: timing error; backchannelling (which occurs when the person who is speaking, speaks without taking the floor for example, uh-huh); two potential speakers taking the floor (when the floor is open); the speaker and the listener taking the floor (when the floor is open); collaborative completion (when one or more people assist in co-producing an

end to a turn); and when co-participants make comments or ask questions (Coates 1994:180).

2.3.5 Polarity and politeness

Overlapping talk, interruptions and shared-utterance construction can be used to show a participant's polarity - that is to say, a positive or a negative polarity. Where two or more sections of utterance (produced by two or more speakers) occur either simultaneously or adjacently, and where the utterance of the second confirms, repeats or extends the first, then that utterance is said to have a positive polarity to the first utterance. The second utterance shows shared values or views to the first utterance. In contrast, negative polarity is seen when a second utterance disagrees with or ignores the first utterance. As a result, negative polarity utterances are often seen as aggressive and interruptive (Coates 1994:185).

Another issue related to positive polarity is positive politeness. Brown and Levinson (1978:106) propose that positive politeness utterances are used to show common ground through showing common points of views, opinions, knowledge, etcetera. Positive politeness utterances may take the form of backchannelling such as "yah" or "that's right" (Coates 1994:186).

When two or more people express a shared commonality, by commenting on an utterance started by another speaker or say something simultaneously, the utterances are seen as co-operative and show positive politeness (Coates 1994:186).

2.3.6 Interaction among participants

Grice (reviewed in Slembrouck 2002:6-7) studied and derived four maxims which he used to explain the information exchange that occurs during interaction. The four maxims include quality (the sincerity of a participant's contribution); quantity (the adequacy of a participant's information); manner (the avoidance of ambiguity); and relation (the relevancy of the information). However, according to Slembrouck (2002) Grice's maxims ignore various important aspects which need to be addressed. That is to say, when applying Grice's four maxims, Slembrouck (2002:6-7) maintains that one needs to consider aspects which Grice neglected to take into consideration. These aspects include non co-operative participants (which are unaccounted for in Grice's maxims since social exchange or social transactions rely on the act of co-operation). The co-operation principle presupposes that all the participants contribute to the talk (text), and that all the participants show a willingness to co-operate and to participate in that talk (text). Grice further neglected the background knowledge of the participants which according to Slembrouck (2002:7) is required to ensure that interaction occurs between the participants.

2.3.7 Context and interaction

As discussed, in order for interaction to occur, speakers have to be willing to participate with each other. This interaction changes and the roles of the speakers change according to the context. On the one hand, Slembrouck looks at the interaction of language and of context through the Interactional Socio-linguistic method (2002:18-21). According to Slembrouck, situated behaviour is where interaction and society come together. This interaction and the level of interaction are informed by the culture and by the situated processes within a speaker's interpretative constructions, intention and frame of reference (2002:18).

Contextualisation is critical for informing the course of interaction, especially in the manner in which the speakers use contextualisation cues (Slembrouck 2002:18-19). Contextualisation cues include code switching, style switching, rhythm, and lexical or syntactic choices (Slembrouck 2002:19). In other words, contextualisation cues refer to verbal (and non-verbal) signifiers which, together with lexical and grammatical signifiers, create a contextual base. This contextual base allows for the development of situated interpretations (Gumperz in Slembrouck 2002:19). Gumperz explains that contextualisation cues affect the manner in which messages, which are communicated between speakers, are interpreted and are understood (1997:379).

Another view regarding context and language is that of the discourse-orientated perspective. According to the discourse-orientated perspective, every facet of the collective natural history pertains to analytic events in what Slembrouck refers to as an "entextualising / co(n)textualizing process" (2002:20). The perspective questions whether such concepts as text and culture exist, since documents and people are continually being recontextualised (Slembrouck 2002:20).

2.3.8 Communication within a socio-cultural context

According to Cook-Gumperz & Keller-Cohen, a classroom may be a multicultural or multilingual site with multiple identities and multiple voices (1993:286-287).

The teaching of multicultural (and multi-lingual) groups of foreign language learners can bring into question different communicative styles and teaching / learning strategies (Nurmi and Kontiainen 1995:67) as well as different mother tongue languages and increased variable possibilities (with regard to communication, interaction, learning, and the production of group work).

Social contexts and social experiences (such as whether students have ever participated in a debate or whether students have ever interacted with people from other countries) are also important considerations when looking at adult education and at adult learning.

Sociocultural theory argues that the role of language is linked to a socio-cultural context in which a language is used. In other words, language is interlinked with culture and with learning. Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997) suggest that language is a concept which includes the spoken, the written and the visual forms of communication. An individual uses a language to communicate different meanings and messages in different contexts. In this way, language is used to make sense of experiences, to express experiences (cognitive, social, emotional) and opinions, and as a means for social interaction. Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner argue that these means assist in personal development (1997:369).

Therefore, linguistic communication includes the understanding, the competency and the knowledge of how to use language and of how to create meaning within a specific context. This includes the understanding of how to apply that knowledge and when to apply that knowledge.

There are various ways in which people can participate and apply their knowledge within communicative activities. According to a socio-cultural perspective, participants actively engage in communicative practices that are culturally defined (Nurmi & Kontiainen 1995). Participants, in different social contexts, utilise various languages and tools of interaction at different times. For example, in a classroom the language a student is expected to use in a debate on global warming is different to the language a student is expected to use when narrating a story about a loved one. In the classroom, the student is also expected to use the appropriate type of interaction and tools of interaction. In the example (above), the student would be expected to know

the difference between a debate and a narrative and how to interact accordingly. In this way, each classroom situation (and environment) requires its own specific language for interaction.

Nurmi and Kontiainen emphasise the importance of communication and of the metacognitive skills in the learning encounters. They suggest that learning is a process which is used to help people to adapt to different environments. These processes of learning involve the integration of micro-cultures (individual, family and community cultures) and macro-cultures (cultures within a society) that occur as a result of cultural encounters. Most intercultural learning problems are related to social exchanges and to social mobility. Intercultural exchanges (between people of different cultures) require learners to be aware of relevant expectations and rules which apply during those exchanges. As a result, learners should be aware of rules and expectations which apply when people from different cultures interact and exchange information (1995:65-66).

Intercultural exchanges are facilitated by "culturally determined scripts" (Nurmi & Kontiainen (1995:66). That is to say, intercultural communication is facilitated by knowing the activity, knowing how the actions (in a communicative activity) unfold and knowing how to participate in the communicative activity. Although scripts may be different for different cultures, through experience of a culture, people can learn how to participate within the intercultural exchanges. The length of intercultural and interlinguistic interactions (interactions between people of different cultures and languages) influences learning. These interactions often require the individual to socialise into a new reality (social, cultural and linguistic) (Nurmi and Kontiainen 1995:65-67).

Nurmi and Kontiainen argue that the development of metacognitive and communicative skills is important for the mobility and socialisation of the participant

in the new reality. In an English class, learners may need to be able to communicate with other learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds - creating new intercultural and interlinguistic interactions.

2.3.9 Language socialisation

Language socialisation (including active listening) entails the appropriate, meaningful and effective use of a language (Ochs cited in Kasper 2000:2). Most socialisation occurs through participation “rather than through explicit instruction” (Kasper 2000:2). “... topics, turn-taking, models of storytelling and rules of politeness” (Blum-Kulka cited in Kasper 2000:2) are all part of the rules which regulate conversation and which play a critical role in what Kasper (2000:2) calls the “pragmatic socialisation of novices”.

Language socialisation and socio-cognitive theory argue that knowledge and the knowledge of language are created through interaction and participation and, as such, cannot simply be transmitted (Kasper 2000:2-3).

Parallel to the proponents of the language socialisation theory, Nunan (date unknown:1) argues for a hypothesis in line with the experiential philosophy of learning by doing. He states that learning can only occur through a process of doing - that “language is acquired as learners actively engage in attempting to communicate in the target language” (Nunan, date unknown:1). Therefore aspects such as quantity of “input” and “intake”, need to talk, uninhibited practice, participation and the environment will affect language acquisition (Nunan, date unknown:2-3).

However, language acquisition will only take place once the student has “understood the messages in the target language” (Nunan, date unknown:2-3).

Similarly, Erdentug (date unknown:2) raises what Seliger refers to as High Input Generators (HIG) and Low Input Generators (LIG), terms which were used to determine and define different types of learners in a classroom interaction (through student participation models). Based on these models, students who instigate communication gain more input from the interaction and, as a result, acquire the target language faster than those students who do not initiate communication or generate higher input (Erdentug, date unknown:2).

According to Erdentug (date unknown:4) there are various stages to learning including “meaningful interaction” and “active participation” (Erdentug, date unknown:4). In a three-stage process, “active participation” must take place before “meaningful interaction” can occur and once “meaningful interaction” has occurred, learning can start to take place (Erdentug, date unknown:4).

Language acquisition and learning can be promoted through participation in tasks that require students to negotiate meaning (Erdentug, date unknown:2-3). This can only be achieved when “learners engage in tasks that ‘push’ them to the limits of their current competence” (Nunan, date unknown:1). Group work activities provide learners with greater opportunities for participation within such tasks (Erdentug, date unknown:3).

2.3.9.1 Talking to learn

Long and Porter (2004:4) refer to the extensive research which was conducted by Barnes at British primary and secondary schools. Barnes focused his research on children who engaged in what he called “... ‘talking to learn’” (Barnes 1973:20) - talking, in other words, in a way and for a purpose quite different from those which commonly characterize interaction in a full-class session.” (Long and Porter 2004:4).

Barnes (cited in Long and Porter 2004:4) stated that small group environments allow students to express themselves more freely and to be less concerned about creating coherent and explicit sentences and less worried about seeming uncertain or unclear about one or another opinion. Barnes (cited in Long and Porter 2004:4) refers to this as exploratory talk - since he claims that the decrease in concerns and the increase in confidence (in other group members for assistance) allow students to start putting words to ideas and feelings. As a result, such talk contains aspects such as hesitations, false starts, pauses, and expressions such as "I think maybe..." (Long and Porter 2004:4).

However, exploratory talk is unlikely to occur if the students are concerned that the teacher is listening and judging them (and expecting students to produce accurate utterances), if the classroom is too formalised and unaccommodating, and if the teacher controls the talk too greatly (Long and Porter 2004:4)

2.3.9.2 Talk

Exploratory talk is just one kind of talk. Wegerif and Scrimshaw (Mlotsa 2001) identified four types of talk that can occur within a classroom. These four types of talk are: disputational talk; cumulative talk; tutorial talk; and exploratory talk. All four types of talk, based on the work of Wegerif and Scrimshaw, are discussed in Mlotsa (2001).

Firstly, disputational talk which promotes confrontation, engagement and discussion, can be used to resolve disagreements and to encourage the individualisation of beliefs, ideas and decisions. However, disputational talk cannot be used to encourage group co-operation towards a shared understanding or an issue or towards the development of shared knowledge (Mlotsa 2001).

Secondly, cumulative talk which encourages students to talk without actual engagement or the development of a dispute, can be utilised to achieve agreement among students.

Thirdly, tutorial talk involves a one-sided discussion that is led by one student (the leader) who has his or her own belief. The leader is usually the person who is assumed to have all the answers (Mlotsa 2001).

Fourthly, exploratory talk (as discussed above), encourages collaborative learning. Exploratory talk is used to get students to work together towards common or shared knowledge. Exploratory talk allows students, through a process of collaboration and negotiation, to gain a better understanding of concepts and ideas (Mlotsa 2001).

2.3.10 Language learning in context

Talk and interaction, reading and writing all form part of productive learning. This productive learning includes learner-to-learner talk; spontaneous sharing; and learner-to-learner assistance. Productive learning requires a learner to respect a fellow learner's language/s, social practices and beliefs. Mutual respect is necessary to ensure continual access to each other's cultural, cognitive and linguistic resources and local knowledge. For this reason, educators should respond sensitively to cultural topics and learners should be encouraged to use their own knowledge and language awareness to actively participate within the classroom (Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner 1997:374-375).

An examination of a language learning environment (such as a classroom) is essential for the development of a socio-cultural understanding of language learning and for the prevention of conflict (which arise from the lack of consideration regarding the interconnectedness between learners, the educator and the context). Gutierrez,

Baquedano-Lopez and Turner suggest that educators should investigate their own classrooms so that they can develop a socio-cultural understanding of what occurs in their language learning environment (1997:372).

An investigation into language learning environments and into a socio-cultural understanding of those language learning environments has led to a body of literature being written on what Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner call the Radical Middle (1997:372). They use the concept of the Radical Middle or the Third Space as a means of discussing the ways in which readings are taught in a classroom. The construction of the Radical Middle is the first step in the development of a Third Space. The Third Space is a learning environment where two scripts (sequences of events) intersect so that authentic learning can occur. Within this space, shifts in knowledge and in knowledge representation are created (1997:373).

Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner suggest that classrooms are active areas in which the scripts (sequences of events) associated with the classroom life are developed. These scripts determine what constitutes appropriate behaviour within the classroom (1997:371). They further argue that a learning environment which would allow for the potential for authentic learning (or advancement towards one's potential) to occur, could be created in a context in which "two normative patterns of interaction" (two accepted ways of interacting) and where a Third Space represents the possibility/ies which could arise (as a result of a change of expectations). This environment would however require a change in the way teachers view education, in the way students are taught and in the way knowledge and knowledge representation are perceived (1997:372).

2.3.11 The New Literacy Studies (NLS)

As discussed, language and context influence each other. Halliday (in Kress 2001) proposes that language is shaped by society. A language is developed by a community in order to perform specific social functions such as to communicate meaning. As a society evolves and expands, new meanings and languages are created to accommodate these changes.

"The New Literacy Studies researchers start by conceptualising literacy not in terms of skills and competencies, but as an integral part of social events and practices. This means that particular attention is given to people's use of oral language around texts, and to the ways in which the meaning and use of text is culturally shaped." (Maybin 2000:197)

The New Literacy Studies (NLS) writings have supplied an alternative approach to the traditional perspectives on literacy (which defined literacy according to the functional aspects and skills of reading and writing).

Street (1984), Gee (1992) and Barton and Hamilton (1998) argue that literacy includes both the function of the skills (reading and writing) and the social practices involved in those skills. According to Baynham (1995), literacy is a situated social construct and not a universal given.

In contrast to the traditional perspective, the NLS recognises that there are multiple literacies and not just one literacy (as advocated by the traditional perspective). These literacies change (and are distinct) depending on the place and time. They vary "from one context to another and from one culture to another and so, therefore, do the effects of the different literacies in different conditions" (Street 2003:1).

The New Literacy Studies stresses the social practices in which literacy and language are embedded. Street (1984), Gee (1992) and Barton and Hamilton (1998) argue that

literacy and language are part of a social process. This view of a social process emphasised the social relationships and institutions in which literacy is situated (Hamilton 2000:16).

Connections have been drawn, by theorists such as Bartlett and Holland, between the theories of the New Literacy Studies and Social theories (Street 2003:3). In so doing, Street (2003:3) argues that the NLS has been drawn into debates around Bourdieu's concepts of social structures, defined as "... history brought to the present in institutions" and *habitus*, defined as "... history brought to the present by a person" (Street 2003:3).

Proponents of the New Literacy Studies have emphasised the participants and contexts rather than the literacy or language itself. According to Baynham and Baker (2002:5), knowledge of language as an "informing aspect of practice based accounts of literacy" has brought together the theory of text and of practice. Therefore concepts such as people, power, culture and context are considered - since they can affect literacy.

Members of the New Literacy Studies group explore various issues including those of discourse, text, power, intertextuality, identity (such as identities in practices), and biliteracy (where any form of interaction around reading and writing occurs in two or more languages) (Street 2003:3)

In order to explore concepts such as social structures, participants and contexts, and in order to examine the social practices in which literacy and language are embedded, Street (2003:1) argues that new terms and new meanings for old terms needed to be created. Among these terms are literacy events and literacy practices.

2.3.11.1 Literacy Events

The term literacy event, according to Barton (referred to in Street 2003:1), was developed from the socio-linguistic concept of a speech event. A literacy event (as defined by Shirley Bryce Heath) is any event around which any meaningful negotiation around reading and writing occurs. According to Heath, a literacy event is “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes” (Heath 1982:93).

Hamilton (2000:16) suggests that there are a number of visible aspects within a literacy event, including the participants (people who are involved in the interaction – such as students and teachers), the settings (the place where the interaction occurs – such as a classroom), the artefacts (material resources – such as paper, pens, handouts and class books) and the activities (the interactions in which the participants are involved during the literacy events – such as oral group work). These literacy events are influenced by the participants and, as such, carry individual and social meaning. Street (2003:1) states that literacy events carry the social models and ideas that an individual brings to the literacy event. These ideas and social models influence the nature of the literacy event, of meaning making during the literacy event, and of other functional aspects relating to the literacy event (Street 2003:1).

2.3.11.2 Literacy Practices

The concept of literacy practices was employed by Street (1995) to account for literacy events, for the social contexts of literacy surrounding those events, and for the contexts within which participants interact and give meaning to those events. Literacy practices are situated within the social practices of a community (for example, interaction between two students). As a result, literacy practices change from one context to the next and are different for each and every society (Street 2003:1).

Street refers to literacy practices

“... as a means of focussing upon “social practices and conceptions of writing”...” as well as “...take into account both “event” in Heath’s sense and of the social models of literacy that participants bring to bear upon those events and that give meaning to them...”(Street 2003:1).

Literacy practices therefore refer to cultural ideas relating to how to think about and do writing and reading in different cultural contexts (Street 2003:2).

2.3.11.3 NLS in practice

Barton and Hamilton (Baynham & Prinsloo 2001) identify several main characteristics of the New Literacy Studies perspective. These characteristics include the belief that literacy is holistically situated, that literacy can be meaningfully realised as situated within society, and that literacy can be understood within a set of social practices.

However, theorists such as Brandt and Clinton have, according to Street (2003:2), criticised the New Literacy Studies for being too focussed on the local context and for not considering how the global or distant contexts affect literacy. In response, Street (2003:2) argues that the relationship between the local and global contexts is critically important to the NLS. These two contexts often encounter each other and, as a result of their encounter, create what Street (2003:2) calls a “new hybrid version” wherein both the global and local literacies are adapted. In this “new hybrid version”, the global (or distant) literacies are adapted to the local circumstances. These local circumstances are changed through the incorporation of the global literacies.

According to Hull and Schultz (discussed in Street 2003:4), students draw on their experiences from outside the classroom (which can be viewed as the global setting) which they then use within the classroom (which can be viewed as the local setting) to gain the local literacies (language). Concurrently, the students have to be able to draw on what they gained in the classroom (local setting) and apply it outside the classroom (global setting).

When applied to EFL, this means that the students bring their experiences with them into the classroom in order to acquire a language, which they can then apply out of the classroom.

2.3.12 Application

The discussion in the literature review and conceptual framework has focused on sociolinguistic perspectives on communication. This was followed by a broader investigation of literature on context, communication and interaction (including utterances and turn-taking) and on the New Literacy Studies. I will use the key concepts and theoretical resources to make sense of the data.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

In this chapter I will present the process of enquiry which I followed in my research - including the methodological approaches, data collection, methods of analysis and interpretation.

The study looks at 'cross language groups' (groups without a common language other than English) and 'common language groups' (groups with a common language other than English - such as Portuguese or French) drawing on sociolinguistic theories of communication and pragmatics to make sense of the data.

3.2 The participants

As mentioned, the case study was conducted at an EFL adult learning project in which I was involved. Most of the participants were university and college graduates from elsewhere in Africa. They claimed to have chosen to study English in order to find employment, to improve their economic situation and / or to further their academic studies.

For the purpose of the research, the participants were given pseudonyms and the participant identities remain confidential.

3.3 Gaining access

I obtained the agreement of the students and the teachers to observe the students, to tape the observations and to interview the students. I explained the purpose of the research and the way in which the research was to be conducted. Moreover, the

details, the purpose and the processes of the research were repeatedly explained to the teachers and to the students (prior to the study, prior to the observations and prior to the interviews). The continual explanation ensured that all the participants were aware of what I was researching, how I was conducting the research, and why I was conducting the research.

3.4 Research ethical considerations

The University of Cape Town's code of ethics for research involving human subjects (<http://web.uct.ac.za/depts/socialanth/dev/ethics/uctethics.htm>) was applied at all times and my proposal received ethical clearance from the School of Education at the University of Cape Town, by way of my research supervisor. The research participants were made aware of the aims, objectives and expectations of the research and I answered all the questions posed by the students about the research. The participants' beliefs and values were taken into consideration. The participants' confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms.

3.5 Research methodology

According to Cohen and Manion, the purpose of reflecting on research methodology is to assist "us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific enquiry but the process itself" (1994:42).

In the research I employed qualitative and ethnographic methods and techniques in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. I therefore consider below the features of ethnographic and qualitative methods to explain my reasons for these choices.

3.5.1 Qualitative

A qualitative method of research was chosen for the study. According to Hoberg, qualitative research allows the researcher to approach the empirical world.

“The data collected, analysed and interpreted is rich in description of people, places and conversations, and is not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions that are formulated, are aimed at an investigation of topics in all their complexity, and especially in context.”
(Hoberg 1999:22)

A qualitative method of research lends itself to a multi-perspective approach which utilises a variety of different qualitative techniques, data collection and analysis strategies. Further, qualitative research is an emic form of enquiry. That is to say, qualitative research can be used to develop an understanding of a particular phenomenon within a specific context through an inductive method of reasoning. In other words, the particular phenomenon can be understood by deriving meaning from the perspective of the subject under investigation, and by deriving concepts from patterns which emerge in the data (De Vos 2000).

In addition, a qualitative approach to the research question allows for a holistic (contextual) investigation of the chosen phenomenon in its transpiring state within a specified context. A qualitative research question was formulated in order to understand (not explain) a specific issue in its complexity and within a specific context (Hoberg 1999). The research question was explored through observations and through subjective explorations. Also, a qualitative format was applied to the research because the data handling, the data collection, and the data interpretation of the research was primarily verbally presented.

Furthermore, the data handling, data collection, and data analysis of research within a qualitative format allowed for a flexible and unique research design. As a result, the

flexibility allowed for the modification of the steps of the observations and the interviews so as to ensure an improved understanding of the study (De Vos 2000:284-285). The concepts which emerged through the analysis were presented in the form of the emerging trends and the data were analysed through the identified emerging trends.

3.5.2 Ethnography

Ethnography as a method is used to make sense of everyday life as it occurs in its natural and occurring state, and in its natural surroundings. Ethnography has developed from sociolinguistic, sociocultural and anthropologic methods of collecting artefacts and first hand data (through the total immersion of the self in a chosen environment) into a form of social research which is used in different fields of study (Hammersley 1994:2-3).

Hammersley (1994:1-2) identifies six features of ethnography as a method:

1. Ethnography is concerned with the methodological selection of empirical data for analytical purposes by focusing on the depth of the problem and not on the breadth (generalisations).
2. The data are collected in naturally occurring conditions and not under laboratory conditions.
3. Although the data are collected through a variety of sources, the main sources of data collection are generally informed conversations and observations.
4. The data collection and categories for interpretation are not predetermined or static. Instead the data collection approach and categories for interpretation are unstructured and flexible.
5. The focus of the research is on quality and not on quantity. Usually the focus is on one setting or group.

6. The data analysis focuses on human actions and activities and the interpretation of the functions and meanings of these activities (Hammersley 1994:1-2).

In this research, all six features of ethnography as described above are visible. Data were systematically collected and selected for analysis purposes. The data were collected during class times (under natural conditions). The data were collected through observation (audio and audio-visual recordings), field notes and semi-structured interviews. The collection and categories for interpretation were flexible and changed as to-ing and fro-ing between the data and the literature occurred. The research focused on a classroom of EFL students from Africa (in one setting). The research was concerned with the differences in learning, interaction and information exchange which occurred within 'common language' and 'cross language' groups (as a response to reading exercises). The data analysis focused on human activities.

Hammersley also points out that ethnography has three positions:

Firstly, that ethnography is better suited to examining human behaviour and characteristics than conducting surveys or experimental research. Secondly, that ethnography can be successfully and efficiently combined with other research methods. Thirdly, that ethnography is idiographic. In other words, an ethnographic method is concerned with the unique aspects of human activities (not just general aspects) and an ethnographic method is concerned with interpretation and not just observation (not just producing a physical description) (1994:4-5).

Ethnographic writings can be discussed under three main headings, following Hammersley (1994:5-6):

1. Discovery

A researcher who uses an ethnographic methodology is more likely to identify important aspects of a phenomenon or human behaviour since the research can be more inductive. This means that the researcher does not attempt to prove a

predetermined hypothesis. Instead the research uncovers the true nature of the phenomenon or human behaviour through the research. In this way, the researcher starts with a general interest in a problem and the theoretical framework and understanding of the problem develops over time (Hammersley 1994:6). In the study, the understanding of the problem developed throughout the process.

2. Understanding

Since people respond differently to the world around them, it is important to understand how different cultural groups orientate themselves within the world and how they interpret and react to external stimuli (Hammersley 1994:6). In the study I looked at different learning groups ('common language' and 'cross language') and I looked at how information sharing, learning and interaction differ in these groups.

3. Naturalism

Naturalism entails the first hand observation of a phenomenon or human activity as it occurs in its natural state. Naturalism is concerned with reducing the impact of the researcher and with the collection of actual data from a natural setting. Therefore naturalism allows for the contextualisation of the phenomenon or social activities (Hammersley 1994:5). The study was conducted through first hand experience of routine classroom activities.

Ethnographic research explores the connections between the scientific and the everyday by considering issues of representation, of relation, and of association (Slembrouck 2002:14).

Furthermore, ethnographic research utilises different techniques (such as triangulation) to ensure that the findings are not idiosyncratic (Hammersley 1994:8). A triangulation process was used in this research where I used interviews as well as a questionnaire to examine conclusions drawn from an analysis of observational data.

Since ethnographic research allows the researcher to determine the data collection methods (Hammersley 1994:7-8), I decided to make audio and audio-visual recordings of the classes. The audio and audio-visual recordings were made while I was attending the class. During the classes (and while the recordings were being made), I made field notes (notes within the classroom).

I decided to conduct the study through:

1. Contrasting collective responses to tasks which were produced between groups of students who share a common language and groups of students who do not share a common language in an English Foreign Language adult learning group.
2. Investigating the reasons for the differences in the responses to the tasks between the groups of students who share a common language and the groups of students who do not share a common language.
3. Exploring the linguistic strategies amongst groups of students who share a common language and the groups of students who do not share a common language.

3.6 Data collection strategies (ways in which data was obtained)

The data were collected through the following:

1. Audio and audio-visual recordings and transcriptions of 'common language' as well as 'cross language' groups
2. A limited number of tape-recorded follow-up semi-structured interviews with identified English Foreign language learning group members and with the teacher.
3. Field notes which were taken during the classes.
4. A written questionnaire (as part of the triangulation process) (Appendix E)

3.6.1 Recording

The recording and transcribing of the classroom observations and interviews assisted in ensuring the reliability of the data collected for analysis. The transcribed recordings provided a basis for further consultation and for further analysis of the observations.

A favourable place from which to tape was found so as to prevent obstructions and obtrusions and so as to ensure that the participants acted as naturally as possible. That is to say, the placement of the recording devices had to ensure the best possible recording with the least possible intrusion. The selection of the best recording position occurred through a trial and error process.

Since the recordings of the observations were used to provide discernible evidence regarding 'common language' and 'cross language' collective responses to given texts, an appropriate project needed to be selected as a case study which could allow for the participants to be placed into either 'common language' or 'cross language' groups. Initially I had planned to use a single tape recorder to tape record the observations. However, after the first observation, I decided to use a tape recorder and a video camera - in case one of the devices provided unusable material, as well as to be able to capture all of the students' contributions.

The participants initially responded to the presence of the recording equipment by speaking very softly. It is for this reason that the first two observations were not considered in the study. However, the participant's response began to change from the third observation as they became used to the presence of the equipment.

The recordings were directly transcribed in full detail. I took into consideration that "everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive

understanding of what is being studied. No statement escapes scrutiny" (Bogdan and Biklen in Hoberg 1999:25).

3.6.2 Field notes

Descriptive field notes were made in the field. They were made as an additional and complementary source of data to the transcribed recordings.

I planned my field-note taking against the Schatzman and Strauss model and Pearse's proposals (1999). According to the Schatzman and Strauss model, the field notes consist of observational notes (the who, what, when, where and how of the activity), theoretical notes (attempts to derive meaning from the observational notes), and methodological notes (reminders, instructions and comments from, for and to the researcher) (1973:99-101) .

Similarly, Pearse (1999:52) advocates that field notes be used to create detailed reproductions of the specific research setting. According to Pearse, a note-taking model should include observational notes (to provide an exposition of events); theoretical notes (to procure meaning/s from the observational notes); methodological notes (to remind and to comment); and personal / experiential notes (which capture personal experiences while in the field).

Accordingly I took descriptive field notes. The field notes included a classroom and group layout plan for each communicative event. Dates, times and event lengths were documented. These field notes included students groupings (into different groups as the teacher divided the students); notes on student interactions; whether students were participating; **who started** the conversation; whether students interrupted each other or spoke at the same time; whether students added information into the conversation; and whether students contradicted each other. I also created a physical sketch of the

classroom layout, student seating positions and changes to these positions (see Appendix C). Further, I drew a number of sketches of students to show body language and hand gestures (see Appendix D). The field notes (including the classroom layout sketches) were drawn up for each communicative event. I also wrote notes on the students and group participation and any interesting discussions which emerged.

Other data which were collected and used (other than field notes and recording) included letters from the students, photographs of the classes, documents, and texts which were produced by the research participants during the recordings.

3.6.3 Observations

The observations and semi-structured interviews were conducted over a period of more than six months. During the observations, the participants were placed into different 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. The 'common language groups' included either students who all shared French as a common language, or students who all shared Portuguese as a common language. The 'cross language groups' consisted of French and Portuguese speaking students or French, Portuguese and Arabic speaking students. Collective responses by and interaction within the groups were critically examined and recordings of the observations were made. More than one recorder was used so that the responses of more than one group's interaction and responses to the same texts could be captured at the same time. The participants' talk and interaction were carefully transcribed. A variety of different and similar collective responses were observed so as to promote the validity and the generalisability of the data. The observations were then analysed as communicative events.

3.6.4 Semi-structured interviews

The observations assisted in selecting the informants for semi-structured interviews. The informants were identified through discussions with the teacher and through the observations. The longest standing class member (the student who has attended the most classes) was selected, as were the most and the least participative members. The longest standing class member was selected because he knew all the participants, he had a good understanding of the classroom dynamics and he participated in the classroom activities. A limited number of semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted. Two French speaking and two Portuguese speaking students were selected. The informants provided a deeper understanding of the research topic and assisted in the identification of developing themes (Pearse 1999:52).

The audio-recordings of the semi-structured interviews were used to provide accounts of English Foreign Language class participants' feelings, views and attitudes regarding given texts and tasks in the English Foreign Language adult learning group. The interviewed participants, or respondents, were asked about their experiences and thoughts regarding differences in working in 'common language' and 'cross language' groups and their explanations as to how and why they felt these differences occurred. The recorded follow-up interviews with group members were transcribed.

The semi-structured interview allowed the questions to be rephrased when necessary - for example if the participants wanted clarity or wanted an explanation of the question. When necessary, the questions were reordered (depending on the respondent's answers). Therefore, the semi-structured interview allowed for a relatively systematic method of data collection which ensured that important questions and data were addressed, such as questions relating to cultural norms, interaction in groups with and without a common language (other than English), as well as questions relating to the students' own experience of these groups.

3.7 Stages in the data analysis

De Vos argues that "The important issue is that a researcher should be able to logically account for stages in data analysis and that the final conclusions be based on generated data" (2000:344). Communicative events were analysed using a number of steps. These steps were adapted from Tesch's eight step approach (De Vos 2000:343). To-ing and fro-ing between the theory and the data occurred on a continual basis.

1. A sense of the whole was created through a careful reading of all the transcribed communicative events. This "feel" of the whole was used to write down patterns which emerged in the overview of the transcriptions of the communicative events, and to randomly identify selected communicative events for future analysis.
2. A careful reading of the transcribed communicative events was conducted to consider the underlying patterns which were emerging in the data. Communicative events from 'common language' and 'cross language' groups were then selected.
3. The transcripts were utilised to determine a list of emerging trends. The topics were arranged into columns of 'cross language' and 'common language' groups - so that the emerging differences and similarities were clearly visible.
4. The data were re-examined and other communicative events were looked at so as to confirm the emerging trends in the data. The field notes were also referred to.
5. Stages 3 and 4 were repeated. At this stage, the most apparent differences between the 'common language' and 'cross language' learning groups were identified and categorised. Related categories were grouped and interrelationships between the final categories were identified.
6. Follow-up interviews were conducted and examined.

7. The relevant data materials from each category were assembled and underwent a preliminary analysis. Data were drawn from the interviews and the communicative events.
8. Finally, selected communicative events were further analysed. The interviews were also further analysed.

The categories for interpretation and analysis were unfixed and flexible.

During all eight stages, to-ing and fro-ing occurred between the literature and the data. Further reading was carried out to help me make sense of emerging trends in my analysis of the data.

The data allowed for the generation of patterns and categories which developed from the data. Throughout the analysis of the data, sensitivity to the possibility of recurring sociolinguistic patterns (such as turn-taking) was applied - in order to establish whether a unifying concept could be determined (Pearse 1999:61).

3.8 Validation of research

A written questionnaire (see Appendix E) was provided to all the students (including the four interviewed students) to test and elaborate on my analysis of the observational data. Such a triangulation process was used to strengthen what Guba's model (cf. Pearse 1999:62) refers to as the trustworthiness, relevancy and vigour of the research by promoting the truth value (credibility of the study), neutrality (free from researcher bias), consistency (consistent if replicated) and applicability (to other contexts) of the study.

The questionnaire was provided to each student in the project during a lesson. The teachers were present to address any questions that the students did not understand.

The questionnaire was written in clear English and addressed questions on the categories which emerged in the communicative events and in the follow-up interviews. Some of the questions in the written questionnaire were the same questions as those asked in the follow-up interviews. The results of the written questionnaire are discussed in 5.4.

CHAPTER FOUR: LEARNING, INTERACTION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE IN 'COMMON LANGUAGE' AND 'CROSS LANGUAGE' LEARNING GROUPS

"How people react to and make sense of each other's communication is, in part, a matter of local framing. We can call this framing an aspect of the "micropolitics" of interaction in a situation. Differences in communication style, including cultural definitions of correctness or appropriateness in speech can be handled very differently by participants depending on the micropolitics by which the situation is being framed ... How we communicate - what kinds of language we use and how much, how fluent or eloquent we are how coherent our speech, how attentive or encouraging our listening may be – is very much a matter of what others are doing in the situation while we are doing what we are doing. Listeners influence speakers and vice versa".
(Erickson 1996:284)

In this chapter I draw on concepts from the literature review and conceptual framework to examine the differences in interaction during task-related talk and group work.

4.1 Student and Teacher Biographies

In order to protect the participants' privacy, the participants' names have been changed. Pseudonyms have been used corresponding with the participant's home language. For example, a French speaker has a French name. The data on the students (including language) were collected from the student enrolment forms (which had to be completed by every new student) and from discussions with the teachers and students. The teacher has been referred to as Teacher.

The teacher is an experienced adult educator with over 25 years adult education experience and with three years adult EFL / ESOL teaching. The teacher holds a masters degree in education and is currently completing a doctorate in didactics. She

is also a SETA accredited trainer, facilitator and assessor. For the purpose of the dissertation, the teacher is just being called: Teacher.

Eva Maria, Lucena and Madelene are Portuguese speaking women. Eva Maria is a 27 year old married woman. She has two children and she works for her church. Eva Maria studied theology as part of her arts degree. Eva Maria had had private English lessons for 6 months prior to attending the classes at the Rondebosch library. Eva Maria attended classes at the library for six months. She is currently furthering her education by studying towards a masters degree at the University of Cape Town. Eva Maria is married with a small child.

Similarly, Lucena also works for her church. Lucena is a 53 year old wife and mother. Lucena's son, Bobo, and husband, Roberto, also attended classes at the project. Lucena and her husband have since returned to Mozambique. Lucena studied Christian education at college. Lucena attended classes for around eight months.

Likewise, Madelene also works for her church, as a nurse. Although originally Madelene studied linguistics and theology at an institute, she decided to study to be a nurse. Madelene studied English for three months prior to joining the classes. She attended the classes for around four months. Madelene is an unmarried, 30 year old woman.

Zico is a 35 year old Portuguese mother tongue Angolan. Although Zico was born in Angola, he spent several years in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a refugee before coming to South Africa. Zico studied communication at an institute. He had not studied English before attending classes. Zico attended classes for around eight months.

Carlos is a student, reading for his masters degree. Carlos comes from Angola. He is in his 30's. He attended classes for approximately a month. He works as a car guard in order to pay for his university studies. Carlos has been living in South Africa for nearly three years.

Joaquim is a Portuguese speaker. He works for his church and he is married. Joaquim is in his late 30's and he has a son. His wife and child were able to come to South Africa with him. His wife is also a student of English. Joaquim has recently returned to Mozambique. He attended classes for approximately three months.

Antonio is the longest attending student. He has attended classes since 2000. Antonio is a 26 year old Portuguese speaking Angolan. Although Antonio started studying towards a diploma in social science, he was unable to complete his studies because of the situation in Angola. Antonio arrived in South Africa in 1999. He used to work in the construction industry until he was injured at work. Since then he has worked as a security guard. However, he is frequently unemployed.

Bruno is the second longest attending student. He has attended the classes since the start of 2001. He is a 32 year old Portuguese speaker from Angola. He is unmarried. Bruno has been living as a refugee in South Africa for over five years. Bruno was studying towards a post-matric qualification in fine art in Angola before he came to South Africa. He currently works at a car hire centre. His greatest aim is to further his studies within the field of fine art. He chose to study English for self improvement (financial and educational) and social reasons.

Michel is a 35 year old unmarried man. Although Michel was born in Angola, he spent most of his life in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Michel is able to speak both French and Portuguese but he has a preference for French (that is to say, although he was born in Angola and can speak Portuguese, he presents himself as

from the DRC and as a French speaker). Michel is a graduate of civil aviation and is currently trying to further his studies within the travel and tourism industry. However, he is currently working as a security guard. Michel has attended classes at the library for nearly two years. He chose to study English in order to improve his life. Michel has recently qualified as a South African tourist guide.

Francis is a 31 year old French speaker from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although Francis had studied commercial law at university, he works as a security guard in Cape Town city centre. Francis hopes to continue his studies.

Blaise is a 34 year old man from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He speaks French as a mother tongue language and he studied for and was awarded a bachelor's degree in economics. Blaise had not attended an English course before joining the Rondebosch library classes. Blaise attended classes for around nine months.

Bebino is married with a child. His wife had also attended classes at the library before having their child. He is a 31 year old French speaker from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although Bebino had studied business at an institute before coming to South Africa, he was unemployed for around a year before getting work as a security guard. He attended the classes at the library for approximately one year.

Amant is a French speaker from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is in his early 30's. He attended the classes for approximately two months. Amant is currently working to save money so that he can study towards a post-graduate qualification and so that he can support his parents and siblings in the DRC. Amant works as a dishwasher at night and as a street vendor during the day. His greatest aims are to return to his studies, to get married (and have children) and to “speak English like the English”

Delphin is a 28 year old man. He is a French speaker from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Delphin has been studying at the University of Cape Town since 2002. He attended the language classes because he wanted to improve his English language competence and because he wanted to meet other people from Africa.

Papy is the oldest member of the classes - he was born in 1944. Papy's son had originally attended classes and brought his father with him to the classes at the library. Papy has attended university where he graduated in the economic science field. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Papy worked as a teacher until he had to leave as a refugee. In South Africa, Papy works as a street hawker - after not being able to obtain employment. Papy lives with his son. Papy's 13 year old daughter, whom he has not seen for many years, lives in the United States of America. Papy attended classes at the library for several months.

Further, the details of the students' ages, gender, languages and occupations were discussed with the teacher. The teacher was asked as to what roles aspects such as the students' race, gender, age, and occupation played in the class. The teacher responded with "none whatsoever" except for Papy as regards his age. The teacher stated the following about Papy and about Papy's interaction in 'cross language' and 'common language' groups

Teacher There was at least 20 to 30 years difference to others. He had children who were co-students. Some showed great respect for him, others felt that he was not part of the crowd. Both resulted in a reserved interaction. Also he was more reflective and took time to answer, which sometimes irritated the others. ...

 The age problem affected both ["common language" and "cross language"] groups.

The students are all at an Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate level in their study of English. Therefore all the students in the group had a "Limited but effective command of the language... e.g. particularly in an exchange of simple factual information" (UCLES 1999:4).

4.2 Task-related talk

Communication is, according to Erickson (1996:284), not only what we say but also whether other people are listening to what we say. In this section I will examine the differences in interaction in 'cross language' and 'common language groups' during task-related talk. I will do this by presenting and analysing extracts from both groups.

4.2.1 Task-related talk in a 'cross language group' (extract one)

In the first communicative event that I examine, the teacher has divided a 'cross language' French / Portuguese /Arabic speaking class into 'cross language' and 'common language' groups. Delphin, Lucena and Michel are working together in a 'French / Portuguese cross language group'.

In this exercise each group was given three words from a text (which the students had previously read). In order to complete the given task, the students were asked to discuss the words and to work out the meaning of each word (without a dictionary). The students were told that they could use any mode of explanation (they could explain the words verbally, they could use pictures to explain the words or they could act out the words). In a follow up exercise the students would be expected to explain the meaning of the words to the rest of the class.

In the extract below, the group discusses the word "sink". What follows is a transcribed version of a tape recording in which speech breaks and sound patterns are marked as follows:

Transcription code

= utterances of the two or more participants which occurred at the same time.

[] was used for description, clarification and to identify pauses and comments.

1. Delphin hmmm
2. Lucena want [what] about ehr then ehr poor poor candoo candoo [can do can
3. do] yeah. Get up all water?
4. Delphin = and in the war, water's not available in the war.
5. Lucena = the waters comin inside
6. Delphin and then the boat
7. Lucena the boat came
8. Lucena = sink
9. Delphin = it came sink, yip.
10. Lucena hmm
11. Delphin So if the boat is fol [full] en have to touch to get the boat. It the boat is
12. fol [full] en
13. Lucena yes
14. Delphin Water will start come inside
15. Lucena Yes
16. Delphin Water the boat and then the boat will sink
17. Lucena If you ehr
18. Michel Tell me when do put the boat is broken?
19. Delphin The boat, the boat broken because is if its broken
20. Lucena = neerh
21. Delphin = It can just go back there for anoter purpose

- 22. Michel = ahuh ahuh
- 23. Delphin = he can he can build this broken
- 24. Lucena [Lucena laughs] No, broken broken.
- 25. Delphin not necessary water
- 26. Lucena = wata warta in the Cape Town. In the Cape Town
- 27. Delphin = wan my car is broken doesn't mean that you cannot touch it

4.2.2 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract one)

Although the students were asked to discuss the word "sink", the discussion around the word 'sink' continued off the word 'sink', through different examples and ideas, into alternative but related topics. However, 'sink' remained a strong theme throughout the topic. That is to say the concept 'sink' led to a discussion relating to 'war' which led to an association to 'boats' which developed into a discussion on 'Cape Town' and which finally led to 'broken cars'. For this reason, the most striking aspect of the event is the way in which the students started the discussion and developed from the given task. The students used their knowledge and their experiences to develop the discussion away from the task at hand and to explore related ideas and opinions.

The theme of 'sink' does not simply lead to a random raising of topics. 'War' is related to the students' personal experience of fleeing from their countries. A boat can sink when it gets overturned or when it is broken. The broken car is compared to a broken boat which sinks when it is broken, unlike a car. This point concurs with Hull and Schultz (discussed in Street 2003:4) who argued that students draw on their experiences from outside the classroom, which they then use within the classroom.

Therefore, from the extract above it can be inferred that the students' talk departed from the given task into alternative but related topics of discussion based on the

students' personal experiences. Through the use of personal experiences and by developing the discussion, the students in the 'cross language group' produced an interactive and collaborative dialogue.

4.2.3 Task-related talk in a 'cross language group' (extract two)

As with the extract above, the communicative event below demonstrates the interactive and dialogic nature of the 'cross language group' talk. However, I would also like to use the event to show how conversational techniques are used in 'cross language groups' to engage in an interactive dialogue and to show how these conversational techniques are used by 'cross language groups' to clarify uncertainties, lexical issues and conceptual issues which develop in the discussion and from the text (and which in turn lead to a departure from the task).

The communicative event below is a transcription of the talk of a 'French / Portuguese cross language group' on a given task. The groups were expected to complete a given task within a given time. As part of the task the group members were expected to discuss and to work out the meanings of selected words. The words came from a text which the students had been given. Zico, Papy and Antonio had been given a random selection of words including "by mistake" and "side" to discuss and explain.

The students sifted through their words and decided to draw the words from their pile for discussion. Papy was the first to draw, the expression, "by mistake", for discussion. Zico drew a word as Papy started to speak (actions recorded in field notes taken on 5 December 2002). In the transcript, Papy presented the expression "by mistake" . However, the students discussed Zico's word - "side".

1. Papy by by mistake - somebody
2. Zico side
3. Papy side
4. Zico side
5. Antonio Side is ah soul [sink?]
6. Zico = what?
7. Papy = neh song hmm
8. Antonio side is song
9. Papy side, soul?
10. Antonio Side, side, soul, soul. See side is something to [do] with a soul. Side,
11. outside. I read a newspaper and ah I went to someone explain to me
12. what he think bout side and he said to see not to be able to see outside
13. Papy = as that you have
14. Zico = He he got a problem
15. Antonio He can come inside he just come the outside and ah when someone just
16. come outside said something like visualabort [visual about. about the
17. visual] speaking about machine
18. Papy So in about what what must I do hmm abort which [What must I do
about this]
19. Antonio hmm

4.2.4 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract two)

As with the previous extract, the first noticeable aspect of the above conversation is that all the group members participated in the discussion. The discussion started with Papy. Papy selected the phrase "by mistake". He said the phrase "by mistake" and followed it with a cue, "somebody?" (line 1). Papy used the cue "somebody?" in order to start a discussion. Instead of responding to the selected phrase and to Papy's cue, Zico (in line 2) presented another word for discussion. Papy (line 3) repeated Zico's

word. Papy repeated the word in order to confirm that the new word was the chosen word - which was to be discussed. Zico (line 4) restated and confirmed the chosen word and acknowledged Papy's agreement to discuss the word. In line 5, Antonio took the floor. Antonio offered his understanding of the word "side". However, in lines 6 and 7, Zico and Papy took the floor simultaneously. They responded to Antonio's input at the same time - resulting in overlapping simultaneous talk.

Despite the simultaneous responses to Antonio's input, Zico and Papy replied differently to Antonio's explanation. On the one hand, Zico responded with an aggressive question form - "what?" (line 6). On the other hand, Papy responded with an interjection "neh song hmm" (line 7). It appeared as if Antonio had noticed that the other two group members did not understand his explanation and for this reason, Antonio took the floor and repeated his understanding of the word "side" (line 8) - "side is song".

Nevertheless, Papy still appeared uncertain of Antonio's explanation and so Papy responded to Antonio with a direct question (line 9). Antonio's reply to Papy's question was in the form of an elaborate explanation which diverged from what he had understood the word to mean to how he came across the word - "I read a newspaper" (line 11) to how he acquired the meaning of the word "...someone explain to me what he think..." (lines 11 and 12).

Papy and Zico interrupted Antonio at the same time and in lines 13 and 14 their (Papy's and Zico's) talk once again overlapped and occurred simultaneously. On the one hand, Papy attempted to add to Antonio's utterances thereby attempting to cue further discussion (around the word). While on the other hand, Zico stated in line 14 "he, he got a problem". The problem could refer to the person who assisted Antonio (regarding the man having a problem to do with the meaning of the word) or about Antonio himself - being uncertain, or it could refer to the person who could not see (in

Antonio's story). Unlike Papy's response, Zico's response was negative since the comment referred to someone having problems.

Regardless of the criticism (by Zico), Antonio continued his turn, in line 15, by interrupting Zico and Papy. Antonio continued to explain his understanding of the word "side" Antonio applied the word in a sentence. However, Papy once again took the floor in order to get further clarity. It appeared as if Antonio concluded the discussion through a back channel "hmm" (line 19) before Papy was able to fully understand what Antonio had intended to say.

However, the ways in which Antonio attempted to assist the other students to understand what he thought the word meant concurred with Long and Porter's (2004:9) view that students use prompts, words or phrases, to continue or to finish each others' utterances and to assist each other (as discussed).

Although all three participants participated in the discussion, they did so in different ways. Antonio led the discussion through controlling the floor by attempting to provide the meaning of the given word. Antonio attempted to provide the meaning of "side" through different means. Firstly, Antonio tried to give an alternative word to "side". Secondly, he tried to explain the meaning of the word by means of associating the word with other things such as "See side" and "soul" (line 10). Thirdly, Antonio provided an elaborate explanation of how he found the word and how he acquired the meaning of the word. Fourthly, Antonio applied the word in a sentence. Fifthly and finally he explained how he had utilised that word in the sentence.

Although Papy initially attempted to initiate the discussion (by proposing a word), his utterances changed into responses. During his talk time, Papy repeated Zico's words (line 3), and responded to Antonio's utterances through questions (line 9) and through

statements (line 13). Papy also attempted to stimulate further discussion (line 13) and tried to get clarity (line 18).

Like Papy, Zico firstly used his turn to introduce a word to be discussed (line 2). He then used his talk time to confirm that the word "side" was the chosen word (line 4). However, Zico used his following talk time to comment on Antonio's explanation. His comments occurred through rhetorical questions (line 6) and through criticism (line 14).

Despite the appearance that Zico and Papy were in fact aware that the description was inaccurate, neither of them suggested the correct meaning of the word. Instead, both Zico and Papy criticised and commented on Antonio's explanation.

4.2.5 Reasons for task-related talk in a 'cross language group'

On the one hand, we have seen in each of these extracts that in the 'cross language group', talk time was used for talking and for negotiation (which concurs with the findings of Varonis and Cass, referred to in Long and Porter (2004:10-12)) rather than for simply working out the solution to the task. On the other hand, most of the task-focused talk centralised around explanations and prompts. These explanations were used for a variety of reasons. Firstly, they were used in order to clarify lexical issues (such as when the students are uncertain of certain words which are part of the given task or when a fellow student uses words which are unclear to other students).

Secondly, they were used in order to clarify uncertainties pertaining to the given task (the students often restate what needs to be achieved or done in a given task). Thirdly, they were used in order to clarify conceptual issues and meanings (when the students feel that they need to explain what they are saying and / or meaning).

Therefore the use of explanations can be related to Taylor's discussion (1992:249) that students (working in a group) share ideas, share experiences and find their own way to address given problems, to Long and Porter's (2004:9) reference to the use of prompts and repair (as discussed), and to Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner's (1997:374-375) learner-to-learner assistance.

Thus, although the talk is task related, the students in 'cross language' groups spend time on explanations and other related talk. The talk does not remain focused on task completion but instead the talk is focused on task discussion.

4.2.6 Task-related talk in a 'common language group' (extract three)

However, unlike in 'cross language groups', in 'common language groups' the talk was focused around task completion. In other words, students within 'common language groups' focused on the task rather than on group interaction. That is to say, students in 'common language groups' focused on completing or finishing a given task within a given time. As a result, the conversation in 'common language groups' was kept to a minimum.

Students in the 'common language groups' (as shown in the extract below) worked silently on their own, trying to complete the exercise before working together. In other words, in each of the 'common language groups' the talk consisted of students who first worked on their own on the given task. After a length of time, usually spanning several minutes and after the teacher's reinforcing of the time limitations (by asking students to start finishing off), the students, in their groups, started to talk. The talk often started with an initiation by one member of the group. The initiated discussion was either followed by further silence or by singular, dispersed comments. The comments were often individual answers to the task - which the students had worked out silently on their own. Therefore, in 'common language groups', the talk

remained focused on task completion with limited task related discussion and explanations, as I illustrate below.

Let us look at an example of a 'common language group' extract. In this example, Zico and Lucena have been placed into a 'Portuguese common language group'. The teacher has given the students a follow-up comprehensive exercise based on a given text. The students have already worked through the text, have already analysed and discussed the vocabulary in and around the text and have already completed a comprehension exercise based on the text. The teacher has instructed the students to work together, in their groups, in order to work out answers to the given exercise. What follows is a transcription of the discussion between Zico and Lucena. Lucena and Zico have been working silently on their own for a few minutes.

1. Zico See, see and ehr
2. Lucena and ehr
- [a very long pause]
3. Lucena Okay [pause] yes
4. Zico It's trollling [trying?] work
5. Lucena What was doing at the time of the accident?
6. Zico Shu [She]
7. Lucena Wats erh
8. Zico She's, she was, she's she was, she she sinking, she is sinking.
9. Lucena They were eh sittehr [sit ehr]
10. Zico the question of what they were both doing
11. Lucena They were they they were ahr they were looking
12. Zico You you they were swim

4.2.7 Analysis of a 'common language group' (extract three)

The first noticeable aspect about the observation is the fact that the students worked on their own before working together. As a result, the students do not talk about the task or around the task. Instead, the students read out the questions (line 5) and discuss / provide their answers to the given questions (line 8 to 12) - which they have independently worked out. Although both students worked out their answers independently, the students present their answers during the exchange. In line 5, Lucena repeats a given question. Zico and Lucena (lines 6 and 7 respectively) follow the question with interjections and backchannelling. Zico then provides his answer (line 8), and Lucena provides her answer (line 9). Zico then introduces "the question of what they were both doing" (at the time of the accident) (line 10). Lucena provides her answer to the question (line 11), followed by Zico providing his answer to the question (line 12). Therefore Zico and Lucena present their answers as a point of discussion. However, they do not appear to discuss their answers. That is to say, they present their answers to each other and then move on to the next question. Thus the talk and interaction in the 'common language group' is used for a summative function - to compare answers.

The second noticeable feature is the number of utterances, the length of utterances and the content in each utterance. Although the observation has eleven utterances, the length of the utterance and the amount of time to make the eleven utterances (a few minutes of silence and around 2 minutes of talking) differs from the continual talk which takes place in the 'cross language groups'. Also, the utterances are relatively short - containing singular lines (lines 8, 10, 11), repetition of the given question (line 5) and interjections and back channels (lines 1, 2, 3, 6, 7). The back channels include: Zico, who initiates the talk, in line 1, with "See, see and ehr"; Lucena's response is also a back channel, "and ehr" (line 2) and a lengthy pause after which Lucena utters a

positive interjection "okay" and after that there is another, shorter pause followed by another positive interjection when Lucena said "yes".

4.3 Group work

As illustrated in the previous section, there were differences between 'common language' and 'cross language' group talk. These differences were related to the level of participation and of student co-operation in 'cross language' and 'common language' groups. There were differences in the level of co-operation (among the students) in 'cross language' and in 'common language' groups.

On the one hand, 'cross language groups' actively interacted with each other, and although the students discussed the topic, the students' interaction led the discussion on to alternative topics. On the other hand, in 'common language groups', the students used most of their time to work through the topic on their own. The students therefore focused on completing the task. The students interacted once they had worked through the task silently, on their own. Thus the level of co-operation and participation was higher in 'cross language groups' than in 'common language groups'.

These findings coincide with Varonis and Cass's (in Long and Porter 2004:10-12) discussion that more negotiation occurs in mixed language groups ('cross language' groups) than in 'common language' groups.

4.3.1 Group work in a 'cross language group' (extract four)

Let us look at three events to explain and to assist this discussion. In the first extract (to be discussed), the teacher has decided to get the class to work in one big group – since there were only five students in the class for that lesson. The group is 'cross language' with Portuguese and French speakers. The teacher has asked each of the

students to identify someone in their country who they feel has done something "incredible". Each student was asked to present in turn. In this event, Antonio (a Portuguese speaker) has to present / tell everyone about someone in Angola (his home country) who he thinks was remarkable. Antonio has remained silent for a while and so a fellow student, Michel, decides to assist him.

[Antonio sat quietly so students attempted to encourage him to speak]

1. Michel You can talk about what's going on in Angola, anything.
2. Teacher For example
3. Michel = Talk about something
4. Teacher = Something who did something incredible
- [Pause]
5. Antonio Arm [Um] in my country, um let me see oh, there are things ahr ahr
6. let me see well I think so in in English ahm the *senador* [sp] you
7. know the *senador* [sp] whos [who] run the oh citi yah in Potuguese ahr
8. Michel Runs the city.
9. Antonio Nah in Portuguese is a *burnardo* [sp]
10. Antonio = *burnardo* [sp]
11. Zico = *burnado* [sp] [whispering]
12. Michel The first, the first man. The winner of the whole Cape Town city,
13. Premier.
14. Antonio Yah but in English the ah...
15. Michel Premier
16. Teacher = The Premier of
17. Michel = Premier
18. Antonio = English ahr
19. Antonio No in English ah the uh *senador* [sp] ah - I think so.
20. Zico = Senator

21. Lucena = ah *Senador* [sp] like a *landbrey* [sp]. *Senedor* [sp] it's in Portuguese
22. Michel = No not the Senator the Premier like erh Magistrate like erh
23. Antonio No the government, the govern ent of city
24. how do you say in English?
25. *govendor de provinsia* [sp]. For example the *govern of provincia* [sp]
26. Teacher You can call it a Premier
27. Teacher = Or I'm trying to think of another name
28. Michel = Yes Premier
29. Teacher um
30. Michel Premier
31. Teacher The name's at the back of my mind, anyway carry on - I'll think about
32. it.
[everyone laughs]
33. Antonio Okay we give up so we teetel [title] it to be a Premier and ah well it
34. happened in 19 97 if I'm not so wrong daat [date] about that but I'm
35. sure something like that and ah one of ah seeds [seats] on my country
36. on *Lugango* [sp] sut [side] of Angola was ah *Welalapo* [sp] was ah was
37. ah problem nah where the crime situation where so much old men cry
38. on the seating and ah this guy was coming up to be Premier on this seat
39. so. Before he was ah soldier you know before and coming a premier so
40. he went there and ah put his finger on this on the this seat on this
41. province and ah finish all crime you know, finish with crime. On
42. something on recall like two mumfs [months] and the seat [city?] start
43. comin a right back on right place and the people was a was a more
44. filling to circulation to circulate during day even night so in three
45. mumfs [months] he put everything on order and ah you know he
46. received a pren on on end of the year. The baker ah give him an the
47. country.

4.3.2 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract four)

A few comments are in order. The first aspect that strikes the observer is the fact that only four of the students in class participate in the event. The second noticeable aspect is that the students share the floor and take turns simultaneously - as reflected in the number of simultaneous overlapping talking - as in lines 3 and 4; in lines 10 and 11; in lines 16, 17 and 18; in lines 20, 21 and 22 and in lines 27 and 28. In lines 3 and 4 as well as in lines 27 and 28, Michel and the teacher's talk overlaps. In lines 10 and 11, Antonio and Zico's talk overlaps. In lines 16, 17 and 18, the teacher, Michel and Antonio's talk overlaps and in lines 20, 21 and 22, Zico, Lucena and Michel's talk overlaps. This aspect concurs with Erickson's position (1996:288-289) on communication, on multiple turns and simultaneous speakers.

Another interesting aspect is the fact that while the French student tried to explain in English and to assist Antonio through the use of the English language (because the students did not share a common language), the Portuguese students assist Antonio by reverting to mother tongue language in order to assist and to explain what Antonio was trying to say. This reversion to mother tongue to assist another student coincides with Dimitriadou (2004:7) discussion that students may use a word or two in a common language in order to assist a fellow student.

However, it appears as if Lucena (line 21) became aware that the word "*senedor*" is not English since she stated "...it's in Portuguese" (line 21), to make the other students aware. Also, despite the fact that Antonio gave a Portuguese expression (line 25), he attempted to provide an English version of the expression through the "govern of" (line 25) as soon as he had said it in Portuguese.

Although the exercise gave Antonio the floor, the three other students (and the teacher) shared the floor in order to assist Antonio to express what he intended to say.

This assistance came in the form of prediction (Michel in line 8), encouragement (Michel in lines 1, 3) and vocabulary or expression assistance (in lines 1, 11, 20 and 21). This assistance concurs with Long and Porter's discussion on the use of prompts and repair to assist other students (2004:9). Dimitriadou (2004:7), who argued that students helped each other, also highlighted the point of assistance.

4.3.3 Group work in a 'cross language group' (extract five)

In the next extract below, students are busy working on the second part of a given task. The students have already completed the first part of the task, which involved working out the meanings of given words. In the second part of the given task, students have been asked to explain the words to the entire 'cross language' class. In the given transcript, Antonio decides to present the word "fall" on behalf of his 'cross language group' (which included Papy). What follows is a transcribed version of the given task.

1. Antonio I've got for [fall]
2. Delphin For?
3. Lucena What word?
4. Papy Fall
5. Antonio For, for, ahrm you can see the trees it depends and sometimes you can
6. see the trees.
7. Papy the leaves?
8. Antonio The leaves the leaves on the trees fall from the trees or you can fall
9. from your car you can fall from ahrthur you can fall ahr if you give
10. the top of this table and the top of that and ahr not strong enough, you
11. can fall down yah.

4.3.4 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract five)

A few comments are in order. The first comment is regarding the participants. Although Antonio chooses to explain the word (on behalf of his group), what transpires is a conversation where four people share the floor. Furthermore, all three participants (with the exclusion of Antonio) pose questions - in line 2 Delphin poses a question, in line 3 Lucena poses a question and in line 7 Papy (a member of Antonio's group) poses a question.

Both Delphin's question (line 2) and Lucena's question (line 3) are used to get clarity. On the one hand, Delphin presents his question by repeating the word he heard Antonio use in line 1, "for". On the other hand, Lucena is more direct and asks for the word to be repeated "What word?". Moreover both Delphin and Lucena interrupt Antonio in order to ask their questions. However, Lucena does not give Antonio time to address Delphin's question before she asks her question and in this way, Lucena also interrupts Delphin's question.

Papy replied to both Delphin and Lucena by providing the correct word. By doing so, Papy assisted Antonio by clarifying the word under discussion. As soon as Papy had provided the word, Antonio started to speak again. Antonio started to talk about trees. However, in line 7, Papy enquired as to whether Antonio intended to talk about leaves (rather than trees). Papy posed his question by providing the word "leaves" in the question - possibly pre-empting Antonio's response or guiding Antonio's discussion. Despite the fact that Papy, Delphin and Lucena interrupt the main speaker, Antonio, in order to ask questions of Antonio, all three (Papy, Delphin and Lucena) pose their questions in completely different ways.

Antonio concludes his presentation by focusing on the word "fall" and using the word "leaves", as given by Papy, to explain the meaning of the word "fall". Although

Antonio took the floor on behalf of his 'cross language group', Papy (a member of Antonio's group) shared the floor to assist Antonio with the explanation of the word "fall". Papy also assisted Antonio when the other class members, Delphin and Lucena, were uncertain as to which word Antonio was presenting.

4.3.5 Group work in a 'common language group' (extract six)

I would now like to present an example of a 'common language' group's talk. I will use the talk to show the difference in the interaction and co-operation in 'common language groups' from the interaction and co-operation in 'cross language groups'. I will do this by considering the utterances which the students produce.

The students had read a text on famous movies and actors, and the whole class had worked on identifying different movies and television programmes. They had been asked to work together in their groups to identify either the three best television programmes or the three best movies of all time. This meant that the students had to firstly decide whether to work with television programmes or with movies. Once the students had decided this, they could then draw up a list of the top three movies or television programmes.

In the communicative event below, students were asked to work in their groups on an exercise. The exercise was discussion-based and the students were not required to write down their answers. The students were expected to present their list orally at the end of the exercise. In this example, Francis and Amant have been placed into a 'French common language group'.

1. Francis Hmmm

[pause]

2. Francis See your, see your programme?

3. Amant [unclear due to background noise]
4. Francis Oh is it okay
5. Teacher Must all decide together. Huh! Two French [speakers], shame.
[Francis and Bebino laugh]
6. Francis Yah, ah.
7. Amant Ah watcha to TV [I watch TV]
8. Francis Yah
- [long Pause, students work on their own]
9. Teacher Favourite. One, two and three - either movies or TV programmes.
10. Which ever one you want but you must agree. But you must get
11. number one, number two, number three
- [pause, students work on their own]
12. Teacher You've got just over a minute left.
- [pause, students continue to work on their own]
13. Teacher Number one, two and three. Either a movie or TV programme - which
14. ever one you want. But you must get number one, number two number
15. three.
- [the teacher gestures to the students]
16. Amant Urr yah.
17. Francis Good. You like Jackie Chan?
18. Amant Good! I like Jackie Chan.
19. Teacher Okay, please if you are finished...[unclear - teacher was speaking to
20. another student] Start to finish off.

4.3.6 Analysis of a 'common language group' (extract six)

The event started with Francis's suggestion that the discussion be based on TV programmes. Amant agreed with the choice in line 7 - "Ah watch to TV". However, as soon as the students had agreed on the television option, they started drawing up

separate lists. The initial discussion appears to have been used to establish the same agreed criterion for their lists (television programmes). From the end of line 10 to line 16 the event consists of long pauses (during which the students worked on their own) and the teacher's various attempts to get the students to interact with each other. The teacher tried to encourage group interaction through the repetition of the question, by providing time limitations and by using hand gestures.

In line 16 Amant initiated a discussion by saying "Urr Yah". Francis acknowledged Amant's initiation through a positive comment and a question (line 17). However, the posed question related to a movie actor. Amant provided a positive response to Francis's question / statement (line 18). However the other groups had already finished the task and the teacher decided to continue. The students in the 'common language group' were unable to complete a group list but they had individual lists which they subsequently presented.

As a result, there was a higher level of co-operation and group work in 'cross language groups' than in 'common language groups'. This lack of co-operation is in line with Bowen's view of 'common language' groups. Bowen (2004:1) suggested that there might be a lack of group negotiation between students in a 'common language' group because there is more chance that students will be less interested in other members of the class. The findings are also in line with Slembrouck's discussion on non co-operation (2002:6-7).

The students in the 'common language groups' complete the task on their own, in silence. Once the students had completed the tasks (on their own), the students came together to present their answers to the rest of the group. In this way, the task related talk in 'common language groups' was used to present pre-worked out answers and to confirm those answers as correct. The answers were usually not challenged by the other group members.

Therefore, on the one hand, the 'cross language group' talk revolved around discussions related to the task. These discussions continued throughout the talk time. While, on the other hand, the 'common language group' talk was summative (since most of the talk occurred once each student had worked out their own solution to the given task).

4.4 Contingency

When the students interacted, it was expected that some form of discussion occurred between the participants and that the utterances which students made linked to one another (either directly or indirectly or through shared knowledge or through shared affordances). Thus a discussion could be viewed as a shared experience where two or more participants shared information and took turns within that sharing of information and held roles (the participants may have been both speakers and listeners since the roles of speaker and listener are reversible) within that sharing of information where that sharing of information contained cues which create contingency.

According to Leo van Lier (2001:98) contingency refers to

"...two distinct characteristics of interaction: first, the signalling of relations between a current utterance and previous utterances, either directly (utterance to utterance) or through shared knowledge or shared affordances in the environment; second, the raising of expectations and the crafting of deliberate ambiguities so that future utterances can find a conversational home..."

and that "Contingent features are most visible in the kind of talk usually referred to as conversational" (Van Lier 2001:99). However, what is meant by the terms conversation and conversational? Van Lier argues that

"...neat boundaries cannot be drawn around the phenomenon of conversation... In conversation, every utterance is connected by many links - some of them

overt, many more of them covert - to previous utterances and through them to the shared (or to-be-shared) world of the participants. Every utterance sets up expectations for what will be said next..." (Van Lier 2001:99)

Therefore the issue of contingency refers to the extent to which the participants set up or leave out enough information for possible further talk to be presented while at the same time, referring to the extent to which participants refer to or build onto previous utterances through further utterances.

Furthermore the

"Success in interaction - that is, the achievement of mutual understanding, contingency, and intersubjectivity - is dependent on the skilful use of all relevant social and linguistic resources, including those described by Gumperz as contextualization cues and those that create contingency." (Van Lier 2001:101)

Within 'cross language groups' the level of contingency was higher than that of the 'common language groups'. In the classroom, group discussions were based on and around topic related material. The topics (and the material) were provided by the teacher. Students were expected to interact with the material through group discussion. As shown, in 'cross language groups', these discussions often drifted away from a focus of task completion to a focus on task discussion. In such cases, the students' concerns became more metalinguistic - focused on greater linguistic matters and concurrently leading to a discussion.

4.4.1 Contingency in a 'cross language group' (extract seven)

In the following communicative event, the teacher placed students into 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. The teacher gave each group a set of questions and asked the groups to work together to work out the answers to the five questions. In this event, Papy and Antonio were placed in a 'cross language group'.

1. Papy Mrs Chopping [pause] Mrs Chopping, Mrs Chop, Chopping was trying
2. to help ehr father-in-law's. What kind of ehr when the accident
3. happend [pause] Weh weh wah she [sings a song] when car
4. started moving forward?
5. Antonio Watypa [What type of a]
6. Papy She she uhr
7. Antonio look she
8. Papy She was sitting in her car. She was sitting
9. Antonio She was sit
10. Papy She was sitting, sitting. Where was she when the car moved she was
11. sitting why were Jim Fried and Rod Jeikin able to act so quickly 'cause
12. I think
13. Antonio Come I
14. Papy hmm, hmm. Jimmy. hmm. Jimmy. Jim
- [pause]
15. Papy Jim and Rod Jenkins were standing, were standing like ne, near by.
16. Antonio Near by
17. Papy Yah so that they standing that they that they were standing um what
18. what were they actually doing there nearby. The yachtsman um ah
19. they was they were seeing and ehr [pause] Yah and urm
20. Antonio Diving , ahr [pause] You what was doing neh she was borro this
21. Papy She was, she was ready for a dive
22. Antonio yah
23. Papy So that he was jumping
24. Antonio What, what water nah
25. Papy Yesa, yesa jumping.

4.4.2 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract seven)

The first striking feature of the communicative event was the way in which the students created an interactive and dialogic conversation through participating in the discussion (which concurs with Varonis and Cass in Long and Porter 2004:26).

Papy started the discussion by asking a question (line 1 to 4). Antonio attempted to repeat Papy's question (line 5) by replacing the word "kind" (line 2) with the word "type" (line 5). Papy interrupted Antonio before Antonio could complete his utterance. Papy started to answer his own question (line 6) but Antonio interrupted him before he was able to complete his utterance. Papy's (line 6) seemed to have led Antonio to look at "she" rather than "what" (line 7). However, Papy interrupted Antonio before Antonio could complete his utterance (line 8) and Papy provided the answer to the question which he had posed (lines 1 to 4). Antonio repeated Papy's answer (line 9) in order to confirm the answer. Papy repeated the answer (line 10). However, Papy appeared to have noticed that Antonio had made a grammatical error in his answer "sit" (line 9) instead of "sitting" and so Papy said the word "sitting" twice (line 10). As discussed, Long and Porter (2004:9) argued that students seldom attempt to correct each other's grammatical or lexical errors. However, Papy does attempt to correct Antonio's error.

Papy then repeated the question, repeated the answer to the question, posed the next question and started to answer that question (line 10 to 12). However, Antonio started to speak before Papy could say what he had thought (line 13). Papy interrupted Antonio with backchannelling and through repeating the name of the one person in the question (line 14). Papy then paused. Papy continued to speak after the pause (line 15). Just as Papy completed giving the answer (line 15), Antonio provided the short version of that answer (line 16). Papy confirmed Antonio's answer "Yah..." (line 17) and then restated the answer - in full.

Papy (line 19) appears to have felt that the answer required further consideration "...Yah and urm" (line 19). Antonio responded to Papy's utterance by interrupting his (Papy's) utterance and by uttering the answer "Diving..." (line 20). Antonio then paused as if waiting for Papy to respond. Antonio (line 20) then continued to repeat part of the question and started to answer the question when Papy interrupted him (line 21). Papy repeated the answer to the question (line 21) and Antonio confirmed the answer "yah" (line 22).

Over the next three utterances (line 23 to 25) Papy and Antonio appeared to be in disagreement. Papy explained that the men in question were about to dive (line 23). Papy addressed the issue of diving by substituting the word "dive" with "jump" (line 23). Papy might have done this to check his (or Antonio's) understanding of the word "dive". Antonio did not repeat either "dive" or "jump" instead he presented the word "water", followed by a negative "nah" (line 24). Papy quickly defended his previous utterance (line 23) with another utterance "Yesa, yesa jumping." (line 25).

The talk in the conversational extract showed contingent as well as dialogic features. The students participated in the event. They shared information, took turns (through the production of utterances) and interacted in a conversation. In this way, relations between previous, current and future utterances were established. The conversational features and utterances concur with Van Lier's (2001:98-99) and Schlegoff's (1986) arguments as discussed.

The above event shows an example of a 'cross language learning group' in which contingency can be viewed.

In comparison with the 'cross language' communicative event, I would now like to present an example of a 'common language' learning group's talk. In this example,

Lucena is in a 'Portuguese common language group'. The teacher has asked the students to work together to answer a series of questions based on a text.

4.4.3 Contingency in a 'common language group' (extract eight)

I would now like to present an example of a 'common language' group's talk. In this example, Lucena, Zico and Joaquim were placed into a Portuguese 'common language' group. They were asked to work together as a group to complete a comprehension exercise. The following extract of a 'common language group' occurred over a period of several minutes:

1. Lucena About a

[long pause]

2. Lucena Well so

[Students work on their own]

4.4.4 Analysis of a 'common language group' (extract eight)

From the transcript it is clear that only Lucena participates in the interaction. Lucena takes the floor on two occasions. She attempts to initiate a discussion on both occasions. However, the other members of her group do not respond to her attempts. After both attempts failed, Lucena also works silently on her own.

4.4.5 Contingency in a 'common language group' (extract nine)

In this example, Papy, Blaise and Bebino were placed into a 'common language' French speaking group. They were asked to work together as a group to complete a ten-question exercise on famous movie people. The students worked on their own for just over four minutes

1 Teacher You have five minutes left.

2 Papy I I make a I make urm

[long period of silence. The students continue working on their own]

3 Blaise Number one, you have?

[short pause]

[Papy and Bebino do not give any answers so Blaise continues working on his own]

[Teacher notices that the group is silent]

4 Teacher Use what you have written to work out answers you all agree on

5 [the teacher gives them a new piece of paper] and write those answers

6 on this piece [of paper] Start with number one.

7 Blaise pencil?

[The teacher brought out her tin of pencils and he took one out which he used during the lesson]

8 Bebino Swarzneger [Schwarzenegger]

[Bebino writes down the name on the piece of paper]

[the teacher leaves]

9 Blaise and de [the] second, Marteen Lourense [Martin Lawrence]

[Bebino writes down the name on the piece of paper]

[short pause]

[Bebino looks at the other students' work and writes down the names Julie Robert and Richar Geer – [Julia Roberts and Richard Gere]]

[long pause as the students continue to work on their individual work]

10 Bebino she is butiful [beautiful]

[Blaise smiled]

11 Teacher Please start finishing off

12 Papy what what were doing, what were doing?

[short pause]

13 Teacher Lets look at the answers. Which group wants to go first?

14 Blaise ohkay

4.4.6 Analysis of a 'common language group' (extract nine)

From the transcript it is clear that all three students, Bebino, Blaise and Papy, participated in the interaction. Blaise contributed four utterances while Papy and Bebino contribute two utterances each. Blaise asked two questions (one of which was for a pencil), produced one interjection (in response to the teachers' question) and presented one answer. Papy produced one utterance and he asked one question. Bebino presented one answer and produced one interjection. Bebino also chose to write down the answers – his answer (line 8), Blaises' answer (line 9) and two other answers that he had read off their individual work.

Interestingly, Papy did not give an answer. However, he was the first student to attempt to initiate interaction “I I make a I make urm” (line 2). He tried to generate interaction after all the students were informed (by the teacher) that they only had five minutes left (line 1). However, Papy did not finish his utterance. He stopped before the end of his turn. No one responded to his utterance, extended his utterance or provided him with assistance. Papy's utterance was followed by a period of silence. The students worked independently during this period of silence.

Blaise was the second student to attempt to initiate interaction. He did this by posing a question (in line 3). He asked whether any of the other students had an answer to question one. The other members of his group remained unresponsive and Blaise continued working on his own.

The teacher then attempted to encourage group interaction (lines 4 to 6). She firstly acknowledged their individual work. Then she gave the group a new piece of paper for them to use together as a group. She suggested that they use their individual answers to create a new, group list on that new piece of paper.

Blaises' pencil must have been blunt or broken because in his next turn, he asked for a pencil (line 7). This question was posed to the entire class (including the teacher) and not just to his group. The teacher responded and lent Blaise a pencil.

Bebino (line 8) responded to the teacher's encouragement. He presented an actor's surname "Swarzneger" (line 8) as the answer to the one question. He supplied the name without contextualising the answer (what the name is in answer to). The other students remained silent and so Bebino wrote the name that he had given on the new piece of paper. The other students did not respond or discuss the answer. Blaise provided the second answer (line 9) "and the second, Marteen Lourense". Neither Papy nor Bebino responded to the answer. Bebino wrote down the answer without any further discussion. Bebino then copied down the next two answers from the other students' work – again without any discussion or further interaction. Once he had done so, Bebino made the comment "she is butiful" (line 10) – referring to Julia Roberts. Blaise smiled. There was a period of silence and the teacher asked everyone to start "... finishing off" (line 11).

There was another short period of silence before Papy asked the question "what what were doing, what were doing?" (line 12). There was no response to Papy's question and no one asked Papy to repeat or clarify his question. The students continued working on their own. The students continued to concentrate on their individual work for about a minute - until the teacher asked for a group to volunteer to give the first answer (line 13). Blaise volunteered his group (line 14).

Although the students gave two answers and although two students asked questions, there was discussion around the answers and no discussion developed off the questions. The students responded to the teachers' statement but the students'

responses and the teacher's statement did not result in any discussion and the comments and utterances (made by the students) were largely unrelated.

It was also interesting that the students did not question Bebino's taking up the responsibility to write down the answers. They also never questioned Bebino when he wrote down the answers (off their individual work), and further the students never commented on Bebino's spelling of the actors' names (phonetically).

Of particular interest is the difference in Papy's interaction in the 'cross language' group (with two participants) and 'common language' group (with three participants) that were presented in 4.4. Whereas in the 'cross language' group (extract seven) Papy interacted with the other students and participated in the discussion (producing long and short utterances), in the 'common language' group (extract nine) Papy kept his interaction to a minimum and did not even present an answer.

Therefore, in contrast to the 'cross language group', the 'common language group' produced less discussion and less conversation around the given task. Concurrently, the talk in 'common language groups', often takes the form of dispersed comments. Moreover, the students within the 'common language groups' focus on completing the given task as accurately as possible. In addition, whereas the 'cross language groups' see the interaction and the production of conversations in the English language as part of the task, the 'common language groups' worked towards the completion of the task as accurately as possible (working on their own). In this way, the 'common language groups' appeared to create a distinction between task completion and task discussion. As a result of the limited amount of discussion in 'common language groups', the talk often consisted of unrelated comments. In 'common language' groups there did not appear to be relations between utterances (deliberately or through shared knowledge or affordance) and the students did not set up for future utterances as stipulated by Van Lier as the basis for contingency (Van Lier 2001:98). These aspects, to which

Van Lier referred, did appear in 'cross language' group talk. Therefore the contingency was much lower in 'common language' groups than in 'cross language' groups.

4.5 Turn-taking

A noticeable difference which existed between the 'cross language' group' talk and the 'common language group' talk lay in the use and absence of bridging techniques, shared space and turn-taking conventions. With the increase in contingency and discussion, in 'cross language' group talk, there also appeared to be an increase in bridging and turn-taking techniques (in 'cross language group' talk). The students in 'cross language groups' used these techniques in order to share space, to share the floor and to take the floor from other speakers.

I will now look at examples of communicative events from 'cross language' and 'common language' groups in order to show the differences in the use of turn-taking and conversational techniques which are used in order to engage in a collaborative dialogue. I will apply the concepts discussed in the theory of turn-taking and polarity and politeness (discussed in 2.3.4 and 2.3.5).

4.5.1 Turn-taking in a 'cross language group' (extract ten)

The teacher divided a 'cross language' EFL class into 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. She (the teacher) placed Lucena, Michel and Delphin into one of the 'cross language groups'. Each group was given a collection of words which they were expected to discuss as a group. Students were expected to use the discussion in order to work out the meanings of each of their given words. The group members were required to complete the task within a given time span. Below is a transcription of an exchange which took place in Lucena, Michel and Delphin's group.

1. Lucena when when we wanna eh we were sink you can dive. You can dive to,
2. yes.
3. Michel Oh, okay
4. Lucena In the city, in dive, dive
5. Lucena = becorse [because]
6. Delphin = you can do dive and swim because you love dive then you start
7. swimming.
8. Lucena uh [shrugs shoulders] not neccessary.
9. Delphin = yehs
10. Lucena = first but you can, you can
11. Delphin = I can
12. Lucena = you can
13. Delphin whatta [water] until I get to water and start swimming
14. Lucena yes but
15. Delphin at least you
16. Lucena ehr what ehr dive whatta [water] seen cover all wif [with] water. Dive.
17. Delphin Dive?
18. Lucena Yes [short pause] dive.
19. Delphin Did you [do it] somewhere in ehr , ah? Its good!
20. Michel Dive. This men, dive mm okay dis [this] poring stuff eh wearing it
21. Michel = you can dive
22. Delphin = ooh yah
23. Michel = if put the
24. Lucena = nah
25. Michel shoes on dus [these] kind of shoes.
26. Delphin Ay, when dis [this] when this word
27. Michel dive
28. Lucena Dive! Give meyan give meyan he is a little bit diver, dive.

- 29. Delphin = people
- 30. Michel = yes ehr diver
- 31. Lucena = he can, you can leave [live] in the water
- 32. Michel in the water
- 33. Michel = like a fish
- 34. Lucena = and ehr help, diver. Another?

4.5.2 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract ten)

Although the students were asked to derive a meaning for the word "dive", the students also discussed words associated with "dive". Most of the discussion occurred around related words such as "swim" and "diver" instead of focusing on the given word (task). Lucena and Delphin's discussion on swimming (lines 6 to 15) is an example of this deviation. Also Michel (lines 20 and 25) added to the word "dive" by talking about the clothing which diver's use. The discussion around the diver was further developed (lines 21 to 33). The discussion on the diver finally concluded when Michel (line 33) likens a diver to a fish.

The likening of a diver to a fish (line 33) was an example of how students used their own experiences, knowledge and beliefs to enhance the discussion. In line 33, Michel associated the word diver to a fish because he knew what a fish looked like and because he knew that the other students had the same knowledge as he. In lines 6 to 7 Delphin posed the statement that people started to swim because they loved diving. In response, Lucena expressed her disagreement with the statement. She (Lucena) used verbal commentary and gesture (shrugging) to show this disagreement (line 8 and 10). However, by incorporating experiences, knowledge and beliefs, the students moved the talk away from the given task.

The participants utilised their experiences, beliefs and knowledge in order to add to the discussion and in order to develop on each other's statements. The use of personal experiences in a classroom concurs with Taylor (1992:249) and with Hull and Schultz (discussed in Street 2003:4). The students used their experiences, beliefs and knowledge by adding information, by expressing opinion (lines 6 to 8); by contradicting each other (lines 13 to 15); by confirming each other (line 17 to 18); and by interrupting each other (lines 13 to 15). The confirmation and negation of the other students' utterance is in line with Brown and Levinson (1978) and Coates's (1994) view of polarity and politeness.

The students utilised shared space during the event. In the event all three students participated in the discussion and all three students talked for almost the same period of time (overall). Lucena initiated the discussion. She also supported her own initiation through using the positive interjection "...yes" (line 2). Michel responded to Lucena's initiation through a positive interjection (line 3). However by responding (in line 3), Michel interrupted Lucena at the same time as he lent her support. As a result of his interjection, Michel shared the floor with Lucena.

The students shared the floor through different means, including by speaking simultaneously (as in lines 9 to 10, 11 to 12, 21 to 22), by interrupting each other (as in lines 10 to 12) and by passing interjections (as in lines 2, 9 and 24).

In the exchange, overlapping simultaneous talk occurred (in lines 5-6, 9-10, 11-12, 21-22, 23-24, 29-31 and 33-34). Therefore, 15 out of 34 lines had overlapping simultaneous talk. The overlapping simultaneous talk varied from interjections (as in lines 9 and 24), to statements (as in line 6) to "I can / you can" phrases (lines 11-12). All three participants experienced overlapping simultaneous talk at some point during the exchange. In lines 29, 30 and 31, all three participants talked simultaneously.

Delphin mentioned "people" (line 29), Michel talked about the diver (line 30) and Lucena talked about living in the water (line 31).

As shown, there were various examples of interruptions in the exchange (such as in lines 13 to 18). In line 13, Delphin talked about swimming and about getting to the water in order to swim. Lucena interrupted Delphin through a positive interjection which she then followed with a contrastive linker. The use of the contrastive linker suggested that she was going to state something to the contrary - "yes, but" (line 14). However, before she could continue her statement, Delphin (line 15) interrupted Lucena with the start of a personal statement which is directed at Lucena - "at least you". It appeared as if Delphin was interrupted by Lucena (line 16) before he was able to complete his statement regarding the possible abilities of his fellow classmate (Lucena). Instead, Lucena used the option to return to the topic "dive" by ending her statement with the word "Dive" (line 16). Delphin repeated Lucena's last word, dive (line 17), in the form of a question - possibly confirming the word. In line 18, Lucena reconfirmed the word "dive" through a positive interjection and through the repetition of the given word "dive".

The extract above showed how the 'cross language group' used conversational techniques (such as turn-taking, overlapping and simultaneous talk) in order to engage in an interactive and collaborative dialogue. These techniques are also visible in the follow-up exercise (presented below).

4.5.3 Turn-taking in a 'cross language group' (extract eleven)

In the follow-up exercise Lucena, Delphin and Michel had to present the word "dive" which they had discussed as a group (the transcript of the discussion was presented above) to the entire 'cross language' class. What follows is a transcription of the talk which occurred during the presentation.

1. Delphin Ahr ah! uhr withoutÈuhr when uhr someone wants uhr uhr good uhr
[Papy cuts Delphin]
2. Papy = What is, what is dive?
3. Delphin = Someone goes to he uhr dive
4. Papy Dive? yes.
5. Delphin If you got thehre swimming pool ehr for some people thehr go urh on
6. thehr sprin boark [springboard] - is it a sprin boark [springboard]?
7. Teacher Diving board
8. Delphin Yah and they dive what
9. Teacher Also
10. Zico So swimming ironing board
11. Delphin Yah

4.5.4 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract eleven)

The extract showed interruptions, overlapping simultaneous talk and task related talk. Delphin had chosen to present the word dive (on behalf of his group). Firstly, as Delphin began to present the word "dive" (line 1), Papy interrupted Delphin's presentation with a question. Papy asked Delphin for the meaning of the word "dive" (line 2). However, Delphin did not stop talking when Papy interrupted him, and so the two speakers' talk started to overlap.

Secondly, during the discussion, Delphin (line 5-6) diverged from the word "dive" to the word "diving board". Even though the group had not discussed the word "diving board". Delphin presented the word diving board as a "sprin boark" [spring board] (line 6). However, Delphin appeared uncertain of the word "sprin boark" (whether it is correct) and so he asked the teacher for assistance.

Zico then took the floor in order to find out more about "diving board" (line 10). Zico used what he knew to familiarise himself with the term. In line 10, he asked whether it is like an ironing board. Delphin confirmed Zico's conceptualisation of a diving board as a swimming ironing board by providing a positive interjection (line 11).

As shown in the transcript, in the group that does not have a common language, their talk also had a higher level of overlapping, interruptions and simultaneous talk (than the group that shares a common language). The frequency of interruptions, shared space and simultaneous talk was higher in the former than in the latter.

The use of these techniques could be associated with various circumstances. Firstly, when a student appeared to believe that he or she had an opinion to express or information to add to the discussion (as a speaker in the group). Secondly, when the student, as a listener, intended to add to the discussion (in opposition or agreement) but could not wait for their turn, or was unable to determine the end of a previous turn (resulting in simultaneous overlapping talk). In other words, in order to take a turn without simultaneous overlapping talk, a student must be able to determine the end of a fellow student's turn. This point concurs with Coates's (1994) discussion on the TRP. Thirdly, shared space, bridging and turn-taking techniques were used by the students when they tried to assist other students and when they tried to lend each other support. The use of overlapping, interruptions and share-utterance constructions to show a students' polarity is highlighted by Coates (1994) and Brown and Levinson (1978). Further, Long and Porter (2004) emphasised the use of prompts and repair, by co-students, to assist each other.

From the extract it is clear that the 'cross language group' used conversational techniques (such as turn-taking, interruptions, overlapping and simultaneous talk) as

well as backchannelling in order to engage in an interactive and collaborative dialogue.

4.5.5 Turn-taking in a 'common language group' (extract twelve)

I would now like to present an example of a 'common language' group's talk in order to show the differences in the use of conversational techniques between the 'cross language' and 'common language' group's talk. I will do this by examining the utterances in the communicative event.

In the following communicative event, the teacher had placed the 'French / Portuguese cross language' class into 'common language' and 'cross language' groups (based on the existing seating arrangement). The students had been given a set of questions based on a given text. The students had already explored the text and had already discussed the vocabulary in the text.

Lucena and Zico have been placed in one of the 'Portuguese common language groups'. Although the teacher had told the students to work together, Lucena and Zico's group had decided to work on their own. A few minutes had passed and the teacher wanted to start going through the answers. The teacher asked the students to start finishing off. What follows is a transcription of the talk between the two students over a period of nearly two minutes - starting from the time when the teacher asked the students to start finishing off (line 1).

1 Teacher Start finishing off

[long pause]

2 Lucena [to Zico] She sinking? [short pause]

3 Zico She sinking

4 Lucena What they were, they were going down , will going they were coming

5 down. They er were. They will go will go. They were will go down.

6 He was, she was sinking down. It was sinking down was sinking.

[pause]

7 Teacher Right start finishing off. Let's look at the answers

4.5.6 Analysis of a 'common language group' (extract eleven)

The first noticeable aspect of the transcript was that the students had worked silently on their own prior to this extract and they continued to work on their own even during the extract (despite the teacher's attempt to encourage them to complete the group task together). Over the two minutes, during which this extract occurred, Lucena made two utterances while Zico made only one utterance. Zico's utterance (line 3) is a repetition of Lucena's question (line 2) - in the form of a statement.

Secondly, Lucena initiated the discussion by pointing to a question in front of her and, looking at Zico, asked the question "she sinking?" (in line 2). It appeared as if "she sinking" was Lucena's answer to a comprehensive question and that Lucena was posing her answer in a question form. Thus Lucena initiated the conversation by posing a question. She therefore expected Zico to respond to her question. After a short pause, Zico responded by repeating her question as a statement - thereby confirming her answer. Lucena proceeded to explain the word and to explain the use of the word "sinking" (lines 4 to 6). The description was followed by a period of silence. The talk was very minimal and the time (during the extract) was used, by the students, to check an answer.

As a result of the minimal conversation and lengthy pauses, there were no examples of overlapping, simultaneous talk or interruptions. The students focused on task completion - the completion of the task at hand. When Lucena attempted to deviate

from the task completion - by explaining the word, Zico stopped talking and continued writing. As a result, Lucena also stopped speaking.

Therefore the students in 'common language groups' did not share the floor and their talk did not display the conversational techniques which were seen in the 'cross language' group's talk. Further, turn-taking in 'common language groups' often took the form of long pauses. The long pauses as a result, signified the end of a turn and allowed the other students to take a turn. This use of pauses concurs with Coates's (1994) discussion on the TRP.

Consequently the talk in the 'common language group' did not display the same level of engagement or interaction in a collaborative dialogue. Instead, the students in the 'common language groups' focused on completing the task individually and with as minimal interaction as possible.

4.6 Elaboration

As discussed, 'cross language' group talk displayed a high level of contingency which Leo van Lier (2001:98) referred to as

"...two distinct characteristics of interaction: first, the signalling of relations between a current utterance and previous utterances, either directly (utterance to utterance) or through shared knowledge or shared affordances in the environment; second, the raising of expectations and the crafting of deliberate ambiguities so that future utterances can find a conversational home..."

The 'cross language' group talk also displayed a considerable use and frequency of turn-taking, bridging and shared space - in the production of task-related talk. The task-related talk was not solely focused on task completion - instead the talk was focused on task-discussion. Thus the talk in 'cross language groups' revolved around

clarification (of the question and of ideas), explanation (explaining what the participants intended to say) and narratives which stem from the given task.

The narratives, in 'cross language groups', usually stemmed from the given task and usually involved personal experiences which were 'anecdotal and personalised'. These personal narratives often developed into complex narratives. These complex narratives often related to past experiences which the participants felt were relevant and understandable. The use of narratives was highlighted by Nurmi and Kontiainen (1995) and use of personal experiences was discussed by Hull and Schultz (discussed in Street 2003), Dimitriadou (2004), Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997), and Taylor (1992). Hull and Schultz (discussed in Street 2003:4) argue that students draw on their experiences from outside the classroom, within the classroom.

The narratives relating to students' past experiences were often used, firstly, to explain ideas or concepts where other students had a problem understanding a task and secondly to create commonalities among the group members. The narratives were also used to clarify statements (which a student had made), to elaborate on a given statement, to overcome a misunderstanding (which arose out of a given statement) and to address any uncertainty which may have developed during the discussion (the use of prompts and repair concurs with Long and Porter 2004). Concurrently, complex narratives were used in 'cross language groups' to address language barriers.

4.6.1 Elaboration in a 'cross language group' (extract thirteen)

In the following communicative event a Portuguese speaking student whom we shall call Lucena, had been asked to talk about somebody who she felt had done something amazing. Lucena had chosen to talk about a Mozambiquean woman. What follows is a transcription of Lucena's presentation to a 'French / Portuguese cross language' class. Lucena used the task to create a narrative. The communicative event showed

how, with the interaction of the group members, the story developed from a presentation into a dialogic and interactive narrative.

1. Lucena Hmm I think um one thing I do I am very impressed impressed [left an impression]
2. so on [pause] so you hear about the Mozambique ee floods? Uh ah
3. tooch ah I e very publy with woman had a baby on a tree. D'you heard
4. about that? D'you heard about that?
5. Michel Yes, yes.
6. Lucena Uhm because all their family climbed climb ded?
7. Teacher Climbed
8. Lucena = Climbed
9. Michel = Climbed on the tree

10. Lucena = On the tree
11. Michel = When the flood?

12. Lucena = When the tree
13. Michel = Flood

14. Lucena Because the flood eh, te water eh going going going up, going up and
15. up and up. She was nine months pregnant. She she went or she climbed
16. at the tree together and then the the flood uhm is is very bad. Ah he
17. couldn't er go down, get down because all, whole area was water. Then
18. he he had eh oh he had a baby, her baby in tree.

19. Michel = In tree [laugh]
20. Teacher = In the tree

21. Lucena Then he he have he had an or he had a gul ten he became famous in all
22. the world he, uh she he went to the United States with her babe y. He
23. he got a lot of things for her babe because the the think I really
24. appreciate er, er I think this is very bad for her but now she um have
25. um most thing for her need because of this, this this fa fact [pucked
26. lips] fact.

4.6.2 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract thirteen)

The dialogic and interactive form of the narrative is striking. Lucena started her presentation by asking whether any of her fellow class members had heard about the recent floods in Mozambique. Lucena encouraged other students to respond and to participate in the narration of the story. Further, by posing the questions, Lucena used her position as the speaker to set up the space for others speakers (to share the floor with her).

Although Lucena used questions to encourage participation, she also used questions to get clarity. Lucena (in line 6) was uncertain of how to pronounce the word "climbed". She turned to the teacher for assistance. Lucena said the word in two different ways and ended the second word in what appeared to be a question - through intonation.

The second striking aspect of the extract is the role that Michel played in the discussion. For although the teacher responded to the second question (the question on pronunciation in line 6), Michel as seen to respond to both the first question (line 4) as well as to the second question (line 6). Michel responded to Lucena's question (in line 5) through a positive interjection, confirming his knowledge of the flood "Yes, yes..". In line 9, Michel not only confirmed the pronunciation of the word "climbed" but also continued the sentence, thereby predicting the end of Lucena's sentence.

Michel's prediction of the rest of Lucena's sentence (lines 8 to 10) proved to be correct.

Further, Michel also put questions to Lucena. That is to say he responded to Lucena's questions and he asked Lucena questions. He used questions to get clarity (line 11). Finally, Michel also repeated Lucena's words (line 19) in order to ensure that what he had heard was correct and in order to show his support for what she had said. That is to say that Michel defended what Lucena had said through repeating her words. Michel's questions and interjections encouraged Lucena to explain what she had intended to say through an elaborate narrative. That is to say, Lucena fully explained what she wanted to discuss. The use of questions concurs with Long and Porter's (2004) discussion on repair and prompts in group work.

A third notable aspect of the extract was the use of overlapping simultaneous talk and shared space. In line 8/9, 10/11 and 12/13 Lucena and Michel continually overlapped in their talk. In lines 19/20 Michel and the teacher overlapped and talked simultaneously.

As mentioned, in line 6, Lucena asked how to pronounce the word "climbed". This was followed in line 7 by the teacher pronouncing the word. Therefore, Lucena selected the next speaker (the teacher) and allowed the teacher to share her space. Although both Lucena and Michel took the opportunity to practise pronouncing the word, and did so simultaneously, Michel continued and predicted the end of Lucena's sentence - "climbed on a tree" (line 9). Lucena then finished the sentence as Michel predicted - "on the tree" (line 10). However, Michel and Lucena continued to share the floor. At the same time as Lucena finished her sentence (line 10), Michel posed a question to Lucena (line 11). Therefore, by completing the sentence, Michel predicted Lucena's conclusion and posed a question during the discussion.

Lucena and Michel's talk continued to overlap and to occur simultaneously (line 12/13). Lucena continued to talk about the tree (line 12) and Michel repeated the word "flood" (line 13). Then in lines 19/20 the teacher's and Michel's talk overlapped and occurred simultaneously. Both the teacher and Michel used their talk time to respond to Lucena's story in a positive manner - by repeating her last words and by laughing. As discussed, the use of turn-taking techniques, polarity and politeness, utterances and shared space in discussions have been highlighted by Coates (1994), Brown and Levinson (1978) and Schlegoff (1986).

A fourth striking aspect of the event was the way in which Lucena diverged from her story in order to clarify the meaning of the word, "flood" (line 14 to 15). In lines 11 and 13 it appeared as if Michel attempted to ask whether the people climbed the trees during the flood (that is to ask about the relationship between the flood and the climbing of the trees). Lucena responded to Michel's question by halting her narration and by attempting to assist him (line 14). However, instead of clarifying the relationship between the flood and the climbing of trees, Lucena attempted to explain the meaning of the word "flood". After her explanation, Lucena returned to telling her story.

Therefore, Lucena elaborated on her story. She developed a complex narrative and added information so as to help other students understand her presentation (as shown in her response to Michel's questions and interjections). Although Michel supported Lucena through positive comments "yes, yes.." (lines 5 and 19), Lucena also used support structures, such as elaborate explanations. She used the elaborate explanations firstly to lead the listener through the story (lines 1-4, 16-18, 21-26), and secondly to clarify issues which she felt appeared to emerge during her talk time (lines 14-15).

4.6.3 Elaboration in 'cross language' and 'common language' groups

(interview extract one)

The four class members who were interviewed (Papy, Michel, Lucena and Eva Maria) at the end of the audio and audio visual recordings (as discussed in the methodology section) were asked about the use of elaboration (by the students). In an interview with Papy, he was asked whether he felt that there were differences in working in 'common language' and 'cross language' groups. What follows is a transcription of this question (from the interview).

1. Papy Uhr no dehrm de people who oo are speaking thehr same language
2. ehr that I'm speaking to um normally they are thehr the people who
3. are from the same country with me. When they saw it is very ehr
4. kindly [kind] and ehr friendly but de other people who oo are
5. speaking in thehr other languages, they are they are kindly to [also]
6. maybe but they they difference between is sometimes I I I don't ehr
7. hear [understand] very well what they are meaning ehr sometimes
8. because ehr ahr until now my English is ehr fair so, sometimes
9. when don't understand very well what they mm they want to to to to
10. tell to me.

11. Researcher Okay. Do you ask them to explain?

12. Papy Yah. I y'ask I I I ask 'em them to explain me what they want to to to
13. say what meaning of thehr idea.

14. Researcher And when they explain to you, do they use stories? Do they explain
15. in full sentences?

16. Papy Yah they explain me ehr sometimes yah thehr stories, sometimes
 17. ehr sentences but it is often about ehr subject ehr such subject that
 18. ehr we we talk about

4.6.4 Analysis of interview extract one

According to the data, Papy felt that all the students spoke "kindly" (line 4) - politely. He also believed that the students, in both the 'cross language' and 'common language' groups, were supportive and assisted each other. However, Papy explained that although everyone was friendly and polite, he could not "hear" [understand] (line 7) what the students of the other mother tongue languages [Portuguese and Arabic] were saying or telling him. In order to understand what the other students were trying to tell him, Papy asked the students for explanations. These explanations were usually topic related and were sometimes given in sentences or in narratives.

4.6.5 Elaboration in 'cross language' and 'common language' groups (interview extract two)

The use of elaborate explanations to assist the other students in understanding what was said was also illustrated in an interview with Michel. In an interview, Michel was asked about the use of elaboration and explanations in talk in 'common language' and in 'cross language' groups. What follows is a transcript of the question from the interview.

1. Researcher When you are talking in groups, do you feel you have to explain
 2. your answer in full, or explain what you want to say in full or do
 3. you feel that you usually give short answers?

[Michel pauses]

4. Michel It's depend the the feeling of the the environment of the day. But
5. generally we allowed the time to our class mate [students give
6. other students the time] to explain in full in full if it's possible in
7. full or we can make ehr short answer.
 [Students regulate]
8. Researcher Do you prefer giving full answers?
9. Michel Yes. I can said why because most of dehr student of them ehm,
10. most of the students in the classmate he don't understand he can
11. ask the question and you will be [short pause] try to give a full
12. answer that can help him to understand what you say.

4.6.6 Analysis of interview extract two

Similar to Papy, Michel felt that the students in both the 'common language' and 'cross language' groups were considerate and supportive.

According to Michel, the length of an answer and the time given for explanations (as part of the answer) were student-regulated. That is to say that the time and use of explanations was determined by the students and by the students' understanding of what other students were intending to say.

Michel argued that elaborations and explanations were used firstly to help other students to understand the topic (what they had to do) and secondly to help other students (the listeners) understand what a fellow student (the speaker) intended to say.

4.6.7 Elaboration in a 'cross language group' (extract fourteen)

The use of elaboration is illustrated in the following example which occurred in a 'cross language group'. The example has two speakers - Michel and Papy (the two class members, part of whose interviews have been discussed above). The other members did not participate. In the following extract, Papy was asked to talk about someone who had done something great. Papy presented a story about a man from his village, in the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), to the whole class. Papy had chosen to present the story of this man because he feels that this man has done something incredible. What follows is a transcript of Papy's presentation and narration of the story.

1. Papy There's a I will tell you, I will tell you er history is um happened in
2. *Kapo* [sp]. *Kapo* [sp] is er one one Province of of Congo DRC er in if
3. in in er 1991. One lady was er married to *Vukabu* [sp] and er she got a
4. boyfriend [While he talks, Papy taps his pen on the table] to. She have
5. told to her *mai-dan* [sp] [perhaps Maiden, her husband] that her
6. husband that this man is her cousin. And er one day the wife and her er
7. boyfriend proceeded to do something against the husband. So they
8. took the bottle and er they what er what is the word?

9. Michel Won, won [perhaps wine, wine].

10. Papy No bottle. And they they er break it. One day the the the husband was
11. coming in night and urm he knocked at the door just when the man
12. who who was into [enter] the house open the door when the man the
13. husband wanted to get him they drove to him the urm the broken of
14. the er bottle and b off [both] of who eyes for this mon were were um
15. um put out of work - I didn't know how I can explain it.

16. [Antonio arrived]

17. Michel [made] them dead.

18. Papy Yah and erm he didn't see again because er both of two wil his eyes

19. were broken. The government sent sent this man to the U S [said "u s"]

20. to treat him but nuffing [nothing] was erm was better for him. He come

21. back to dji u - ee Congo and erm he did his erm study to the school of

22. the the man who could not see again

23. Michel Right

24. Papy Now he is in Kinshasa, he's a professor in this school.

25. Michel A great story [laughs]

4.6.8 Analysis of a 'cross language group' (extract thirteen)

The first striking aspect was the way in which Papy develops his complex narrative.

The choice of a complex narrative relates to Nurmi and Kontiainen's (1995)

discussion where they emphasise that a student is expected to use the appropriate type of interaction and appropriate language and tools of interaction. Papy identifies that

he is required to develop a narrative. Papy recounted a story relating to his experience or knowledge of another person's life. He told a story about someone who had

experienced something tragic, who had faced his tragedy and who had overcome the tragedy.

Papy told the story by presenting selected information. He appeared to have selected information which he felt was important for the story. This information included the adultery of the man's wife; how the wife lied to her husband about her affair (betraying his trust); the woman's second deception (by plotting against her husband); the wife's participation in her husband's tragedy (physically harming her husband and final betrayal of his trust). Further, Papy also included information regarding the husband's innocence; the husband's strife and attempts to become better - including the role of the DRC government; the husband's attempt to deal with his tragedy (by studying); and finally Papy presented the man's ultimate triumph over his tragedy (line 24).

Papy used explicit descriptions to explain what he intended to say. Examples of this explicitness are "...they drove to him the urn the broken of the er bottle and b off [both] of who eyes for this mon were were um um put out of work..." (lines 13-15); "There's a I will tell you, I will tell you er history is um happened in *Kapo* [sp]" (line 1-2); and "he did his erm study to the school of the the man who could not see again" (lines 21-22).

In lines 13 to 15 (first extract above), Papy explained everything in full detail (explicitly) according to the actions and the consequence of those actions - narrating the events for the audience. In lines 1 to 2 (second extract above), Papy followed a narrative convention for beginning a story. Papy introduced his story by stating what he was doing and what he intended to do / to talk about. In lines 21 to 22 (third example above), Papy appeared uncertain of the English equivalent for the word he wanted to use (school for the blind) and so, he presented the meaning of that word in place of the word itself ("... school of the the man who could not see again").

The second striking aspect of the extract was the participants and the roles which the participants played in the extract. Erikson (1996) as discussed highlighted social interaction and speaker-audience relationship.

Two students participated in the event, Papy who presented the story and Michel, who responded to the story. Papy started the event as the current speaker. In line 8, Papy was uncertain of a word and asked for assistance. By posing a question, Papy set the ground for a new speaker (to share the floor). Michel shared the floor with Papy in order to assist him (line 9). Michel suggested a possible word. However, Papy disagreed with Michel's word selection. Papy showed his disagreement by taking the floor through a negative statement - "No" (line 10). In line 15, Papy had problems expressing what he intended to say - despite his explicit explanations. In line 17, Michel again took the floor to assist Papy - by providing a possible expression. Papy affirmed Michel's expression in line 18 with "Yah and erm he did not see again..." and Papy continued with his turn by rewording Michel's expression. Then, in line 23, Michel interrupted Papy through a positive interjection, in order to affirm Papy's story. And then, in line 25, Michel took the floor in order to positively comment on Papy's story.

Therefore, in the event, Papy presented the story while Michel lent his assistance and support to Papy through providing possible expressions and through providing positive interjections and statements. In their attempts to assist the story-teller to overcome the limits of his English, the other students became participants in the narrative. The use of expressions and positive interjections are in line with Long and Porter's (2004) discussion on repair and prompts.

Therefore, in 'cross language groups' the talk was explicit, elaborate (everything was explained in full), dialogic and interactive.

4.6.9 Elaboration in a 'common language group' (extract fifteen)

In contrast, students in 'common language' groups kept their interaction to a minimum. Their interaction often involved short, unrelated utterances (which did not elaborate or add to the previous utterance). These utterances often followed lengthy pauses.

For the following communicative event, the teacher has divided the class into 'cross language' and 'common language' groups. Eva Maria, Madelene, Carlos and Bruno were placed together in a Portuguese 'common language' group.

Each group was given a comprehensive exercise to complete. The exercise was based on an interpretative text (which the students had previously read). All the lexical and grammatical issues were addressed prior to the given exercise. The students were told to discuss the questions and the answers as a group. They were also told to work together to answer the questions. The teacher had set a time limit of fifteen minutes for this exercise. The teacher used the group work time to monitor the students in the various groups and to identify any issues or problems, which still needed to be addressed, during this time.

The students worked on their own in silence for just over six minutes. Eva Maria then shifted her seat and looked at Carlos's work.

1 Eva Maria ahr

[long pause]

2 Madelene [unclear because of the background talking and because she was whispering. No-one responded to her comment]

[long pause]

3 Carlos [looks at the picture] Missus [Mrs] Smit [Smith] smell [smile] she

4 have nice smell [she has a nice smile]

[students laugh]

[short pause]

5 Madelene [looking at Eva Maria and at Carlos] two, she comes quick

[short pause]

6 Eva Maria five, she leave herself, is better?

[long pause]

7 Teacher [turns to the group] Why do you think she does that?

8 Carlos corse [because] somethink [something] she don't

9 understand [understand]

10 Teacher What does she not understand? Talk together and work out what

11 she is not certain about [short pause], what she does not understand.

12 Eva Maria Yah

[the teacher continues monitoring all the groups]

13 Bruno ahrm

[pause]

[The teacher notices that the other two groups have already finished]

14 Teacher Right please start finishing off.

15 Madelene [puts her pen down on the table] Finish all

16 Teacher Please stop. Let's look at the answers.

4.6.10 Analysis of a 'common language group' (extract fifteen)

The event started with Eva Maria's interjection ("ahr" in line 1) which she had produced after she had glanced at Carlos's answers. Carlos did not comment (or share his answers) and Eva Maria simply continued working on her own work. There was a long pause as all the students worked silently.

Madelene then made a comment (line 2). The comment was not discussed or elaborated. Perhaps the comment was unclear (as on the recording). Nevertheless, she

was not asked to repeat her comment or to elaborate on the comment. Thus Madelene's comment was followed by a period of silence.

Carlos broke the silence by commenting on a drawing of Mrs Smith (on one of his handouts). Carlos stated that he liked her smile (lines 3 to 4). Perhaps he indeed liked her smile. However, this comment made the rest of the group laugh. Nevertheless, the other students did not elaborate on his comment. The laughter quickly returned to silence as the students continued writing out their own answers to the exercise.

Then, Madelene (line 5) looked at the other two students and gave the incorrect answer to the second question "she comes quick" (line 5). The other students did not correct the error nor did they provide her with a possible different answer. Instead the students continued working in silence.

Eva Maria then provided the answer to the fifth question (line 6) "five, she leave herself...". She ended her utterance, "she leave herself..." with a question "...is better?". She may have used this question to try to elicit responses from the other students, to confirm her own answer or to reassure herself (that her answer sounded better). The other students did not respond to her question / statement and there was a long period of silence which followed on from it.

The teacher had noticed that the students were silent. She had also noticed, during her monitoring, that they were all experiencing problems with the sixth question. The question asked about the reasons behind Mrs Smith's actions. The students were required to derive plausible possibilities that were not discussed in the text. The teacher looked at the students and asked "Why do you think she does that?" (line 7). On the one hand, the teacher may have used the question in order to elicit a response. On the other hand, the teacher may have asked this question in order to encourage

group discussion and English problem solving skills (through brainstorming and idea presentation and discussion).

Carlos (lines 8 and 9) responded to the teachers' question with the answer "corse [because] somethink [something] she don't understan [understand]". Carlos's response to the answer was followed by a second, clarifying question (by the teacher) "what does she not understand?" (line 10). The teacher used Carlos's word "understand" to ask the second question. She asked the students to work together to identify what exactly Mrs Smith did not understand (lines 10 to 11).

Eva Maria responded to the question with an interjection "Yah" (line 12). The teacher left the group and continued monitoring the class. Eva Maria might have understood the question and had a possible answer (leading to the "Yah" in line 12) – as a result of the teachers' assistance. However, she never shared her answer with the group. Bruno (who had been silent) uttered a short interjection "ahrm" (line 13) and then continued writing. Bruno's interjection was followed by a period of silence as the students continued working on their own.

The teacher had noticed that the other two groups had already completed the exercise. The teacher asked the students to stop working (line 14). Just as the teacher had asked the students to start finishing off, Madelene put her pen down and stated that she had answered all the questions "Finish all"(line 15). Madelene was the only student in the group to answer all the questions by the time the teacher had stopped the students (in order to check their answers - line 16).

The number of turns per student was almost the same except for Bruno who only had one turn. Bruno produced one interjection (line 13). Eva Maria and Madelene took three turns each. Eva Maria produced two interjections and one short statement with a question. One of Eva Maria's interjections was in response to the teachers' second

question. Madelene made two short statements and one unclear comment. Carlos produced two short comments. The first of Carlos's comments was unrelated to the exercise – a remark about an observation he had made. The second comment was in response to the teachers' first question. Although the students responded to the teachers' utterances, they did not respond to their fellow students' utterances.

The students in the 'common language group' did not clarify what they were saying, they did not elaborate on what they had said, and they did not ask each other to clarify any uncertainties or comments (which the other students had made). Two answers were given and on both occasions, remained uncontested or discussed.

Only Eva Maria (line 6) and Carlos (lines 3 to 4) attempted to elicit any responses from the other students. Eva Maria posed a question and Carlos made an observation about the woman in the picture. Although the other students laughed at Carlos's observation, they did not provide their own opinion, he did not elaborate on his observation and the other students did not provide any comments – either about his comment or about the picture. No one responded to Eva Maria's question. Eva Maria did not repeat or rephrase her question.

Although it was clear that all the students (in the group) were experiencing problems with the sixth question, they continued working on their own. The students were unaware that the other members in their group were also struggling with that question. They did not try to get assistance from each other. Even after the teacher left, they continued working on their own. They did not share or put together different possible ideas – the requirement of the question. Those students who had an answer did not share their answer and those students who did not have an answer, did not ask for assistance.

Thus there was a higher level of elaboration and group work in 'cross language groups' than in 'common language groups'. The students in the 'common language groups' worked on their own, in silence. The students only presented an answer once they had answered the question on their own. The answers were usually not challenged by the other group members. The students in this 'common language' group, as with all the other 'common language' groups (recorded over the entire observation period), did not use complex narratives or elaborate examples. As such, there are no 'common language group' narratives from the entire observation period.

In an interview with the teacher, the teacher spoke about the difference in interaction between 'common language' and 'cross language' groups

Teacher Multilingual ['cross language'] groups used narratives so that they can explain to one another – to understand. To practise, to show how much English they know... Monolingual ['common language'] groups - seldom. They preferred to interact with paper rather than one another since they feel they come from similar backgrounds and would prefer to work with other language groups.

This is in line with the writings of Long and Porter and Varonis and Cass (Long and Porter 2004:10-12) that more negotiation occurs in mixed language groups than in common language groups.

Therefore, unlike in 'cross language groups' where the talk was explicit, elaborate, dialogic and interactive (where everything was explained in full), in 'common language groups' talk was implicit and implied (and less expressed).

CHAPTER FIVE: STUDENT EXPECTATION AND THE INTERACTIVE AND DIALOGIC NATURE OF EXCHANGE IN 'CROSS LANGUAGE' AND 'COMMON LANGUAGE' GROUPS

As discussed in the previous chapter, there are a number of differences in the talk of 'common language' and of 'cross language' English Foreign Language adult groups which are related to the interactive and dialogic nature of exchange in the 'cross language groups'. The discussion of the differences has been presented through a comparative analysis of the talk in the 'common language' and the 'cross language' groups. This discussion has examined data from selected communicative events and interviews.

I will now look at the interactive and dialogic nature of exchange by examining the different benefits and drawbacks of 'common language groups' and 'cross language groups' which have emerged during the interviews, during the discussions with students and teachers, from the field notes, from the analysis of the observations and from the analysis of the questionnaire (see Appendix E).

5.1 Interaction: task completion and discussion

As discussed in chapter four, students in 'common language groups' were more task-focused than students in 'cross language groups'. This meant that the students focused on the task and on the completion of the task (which was given by the teacher). The talk around the task was focused on task completion.. Discussions were limited to the giving and the sharing of answers which students had worked out independently. This sharing of answers often did not involve any form of discussion and often took the form of presentations (rather than conversations). Students in 'common language groups' appeared to view the task completion and the practice of speaking English as separate.

In an attempt to acquire a better understanding of the interactive and dialogic nature of exchange, I asked the participants (including the teacher) about interaction and talk in 'common language' and 'cross language' groups.

In an interview with Lucena and Eva Maria, I asked both Lucena and Eva Maria whether the group's talk remained task focused (or whether the talk diverged from the given task). I asked the participants to identify and to talk about what students address in their discussions (for example whether they focused the talk on working out what questions meant or answering the given question). The hand gestures and familiar resource materials (student books) were also used. I asked Lucena and Eva Maria to explain their statements.

Lucena If you need to answer the question I think we worked on the answer but eh I need, we need to know this the story to answer the question ih

[Eva Maria interrupts Lucena]

Eva Maria different question.

Lucena I think you we worked ehm it it question ehr looking for in the answer in in the question that's the word prequisitive.

[Eva Maria laughs]

Researcher Do you do you have something

Eva Maria We wok to the to the know the answer to the question but to know the answers we need know the question clear so we again we need understand what the question hol what means the question so

...

Eva Maria Yah what it means. in not easy to say somebody. A lot of times we ask each other what it means.

In the same interview, Lucena and Eva Maria were asked whether they preferred to be in 'common language' or 'cross language' groups. They were also asked to explain their choice.

Lucena Uhhh I prefer the group that spoke the same language uhh but I know it's same language uhh but I know it's not good to learn [D and E laugh] because we [D and E laugh] we talk with our language too much because when I I did uh I didn't understand or I don't understand some thing you will you we we we we try to explain in our language yah I think it is not good because ifi we are with different groups we start to try to explain in English I think it is better to learn but is easier to to be and uhr the same language group but I think it is Better [Lucena emphasises the word 'better'] to learn in a different language group.

Eva Maria The same. If the choice to just to friendship better our language because all the time chchch just talk about some / think better for explain to us it's easier but to learn definitely.

Lucena [interrupts] Ahrah.

Eva Maria It's better in other country. Because we need to talk English all the time. To learn its the better wif the other wif the other wif the other country.

As can be seen in the interview extracts (above), the students felt that both 'common language' and 'cross language' groups experienced problems in understanding the question and as a result, both groups of students experienced problems addressing the answer.

On the one hand, in 'common language groups' (as can be seen in the extracts above) the students felt that students might revert to a mother tongue language to address a problem - thereby relying on that common language (which concurs with Bowens' findings discussed in 2.2.7.6). On the other hand, the students felt that 'cross language groups' had to rely on the English language as the only common language of communication and that for this reason, the talk in 'cross language groups' may deviate from the given task in order to address any questions related to the given task.

In 'cross language groups', English was used as a common language. The 'cross language groups' had to use English in order to work through the given task, in order to find out more about each other and in order to explain / express their individual thoughts and ideas. Since English was the only common language in 'cross language groups', the groups had to use English in place of their mother tongue (as a common language). Concurrently, students had to use English to express their ideas. And as a result, students appeared to spend more time explaining what they meant - so as to overcome language barriers and so as to stimulate further discussions.

In the interview, Papy (one of the participants) was asked whether he preferred working in a 'common language' or in a 'cross language' groups.

Papy Okay in groups I I like to speak with the people who doesn't speak the same language with me. Because if we are speaking in English it is very good because we are here I'm here to learn how to speak

English and ehr ehr how to read hear it so, it is ehr good practice for me to speak in English, yah

Finally, Papy was asked about the difference between working in a 'common language group' and in a 'cross language group'.

Papy No it is not the same. Because if each other speaking his one language by example who are speaking Portuguese and ehr who are speaking French. If who those one are speaking Portuguese are together and dah those ahr those one who are speaking French are together to. It is not good because this time we not make an effort for learn ehr more about English.

Therefore, according to Papy, in 'cross language groups' students could use the opportunity of group work to talk and to get to know each other without being concerned about switching back to a common language besides English and without being given the choice of switching back to their mother tongue languages.

Although the students were concerned about reverting back to their mother tongues, which is normal in 'common language' groups (Wheeler 1994:48), there were no 'common language' group events where they used their mother tongues. This might be due to the fact that an English only learning zone was negotiated between the students and the teacher. According to this learning agreement, only English is used in the classroom.

Furthermore, according to the teacher, the students are all adults and are aware that using English is important. This is in agreement with Dimitriadou (2004:7) and Ben Barkat (1997:1), discussed earlier, who argued that most students understand the need to speak English and regard conversational practice as important.

In addition, Wheeler (1994:48) suggested that the use of mother tongue reduces when the teacher circulates and reminds the class to speak only in English. The teacher, during the observation, circulated and monitored continuously throughout the group session and, although the teacher did not interfere, she was always present.

However, all three students believed that they attended the classes in order to improve their English - including spoken English. Therefore the students were not only concerned with task completion but were also concerned with the processes of language acquisition (of which speaking is a part) and were concerned with the metalinguistic aspects of the language.

Nunan (date unknown:2-3) argues that aspects such as quantity of “input” and “intake”, uninhibited practice, participation, environment and student need to talk will affect language acquisition and learning. According to the students, this need to talk is based on the students’ knowledge of whether that group has a common language besides English. Further, Nunan argues that the process of language acquisition can only occur through a process of doing - that “language is acquired as learners actively engage in attempting to communicate in the target language” (Nunan, date unknown:1).

5.2 The opportunity to practise speaking English

As previously discussed, group work plays a critical part in EFL teaching since it provides the students with the opportunity to practise speaking and using English in a “non-threatening environment” (Andrewes, date unknown:1).

As shown in the above extracts, the students preferred to be placed in 'cross language groups' because they were unable to talk with the other students in their own language - they had to practise conversing in the English language. This meant that, in 'cross

language groups', the students could not rely on other students to translate for them from English into a common language or vice versa - since the only common language in 'cross language groups' is English. The students in 'cross language groups' therefore had the opportunity to practise speaking the target language – English (one of the primary reasons for group work according to Long and Porter (2004)). To this end, English became both the goal (to be competent within the language) and the common language (language of communication in the group).

Therefore, the practising of English became essential in language learning and acquisition. Language acquisition and learning could be achieved since the students were willing to actively participate in the tasks and to practise using the English language. This point concurs with the discussed scholarship. It concurs with Kasper (2000:2-3), who argues that knowledge and the knowledge of language are created through interaction and participation and that socialisation occurs through participation “rather than through explicit instruction” (Kasper 2000:2). Nunan (date unknown:1) similarly argues that language learning could only occur by doing.

Through discussions with the students (and as presented in 5.4), most of the students appeared to prefer being placed in 'cross language groups' because they wanted to practise speaking and to improve their English.

The concerns which were addressed by Papy, Lucena and Eva Maria (in their interviews) were echoed in Michel's interview. In an interview with Michel, the researcher asked him whether he preferred working in 'common language' or 'cross language' groups. He was also asked to explain his choice.

Michel I can say have a two point to to mark on this question. First of all, the most I learnt with working with the people with who speak different languages because I can I did get more more things from

them and on my own also, the second part is, on my own I also done some research to find if I have some I have some different points in front of those I need um I met in the class.

Further in the interview with Michel, Michel stated,

Michel Not really but in group the people are very interesting to know how do you think about those question or points to to be debated to be debated. The people are very interesting in the group. Most of them they are afraid to to speak but others ehr know what ehree what to when to to share their knowledge.

Michel's response is similar to that of the teachers' response.

Teacher With the multilingual groups there are discussions. I can remember two in particular which were heartly debated and discussed. True life stories, personal experience, life experience and one having to use imagination. Monolingual were more reserved perhaps they felt that they shared similar life stories.

In addition, when the teacher was also asked to compare 'common language' and 'cross language' groups and the differences in interaction (including the reasons for these differences she said:

Teacher The students are willing to work in groups, some have favourites to work with... The dominant members remain dominant whether they are in monolingual or multilingual groups – it does not matter. Interaction in multilingual groups is much more dynamic, enthusiastic, louder and easier to monitor because it is through listening to only

English that you can pick up the common errors and address them. Monolingual groups are much quieter – which detracts from student-student learning. But with the few dominant, they dominate whether in monolingual or multilingual.

...

Teacher Monolingual groups are much quieter and [would] rather do written exercises than spoken and it impairs the group. In multilingual talk is more and the students interact more and laugh more. People enjoy mixing and questions are more diverse in multilingual groups. In monolingual groups, it is not as interactive, there are lots of quiet spots – perhaps they think they have the same point of view. Therefore, for the teacher, monolingual groups are more challenging. The difference, the amount of speech in English, is much more in multilingual groups.

...

Teacher Multilingual group work is better. Students in monolingual groups ask less questions and there is more teacher talk time which is bad. I also think multilingual groups use more turn-taking, the students show respect to other students. Students in monolingual are quiet – as if one person asks [a question] for the group. Whereas students in multilingual groups seem to feel each have the right to ask but, in monolingual groups, the students seem to feel WOW if one person asks – it is alright!

Therefore, in 'cross language groups', the students appeared to use the opportunity of working in their groups (with other English Foreign Language students) to practise speaking English. The use of group work to practise conversation is supported by researchers such as Taylor (1992), Long and Porter (2004) and Varonis and Cass (discussed in Long and Porter 2004). According to these theorists, group conversation

is intended to allow students to practise their language skills and knowledge in a non-threatening environment. Group work is intended to allow students to share ideas and experiences (Taylor 1992:249). It is also intended to provide students with the opportunity to manipulate the input which they have received through active negotiation (and thereby to make the input more meaningful) (Varonis and Cass, discussed in Long and Porter 2004:10-12).

The students in 'cross language' groups used the given tasks to improve their spoken English, to interact, to find out about the students and to share their knowledge (as suggested by Michel) and to use the opportunity to express their own opinions (as suggested by the teacher – the right to give an answer). While the students in the 'common language group' may not have felt that it was essential to interact, to share their knowledge or to express their opinions. These findings agree with Bowen (discussed in 2.2.7) that there is an apparent lack of need to use English because the students have a common language and that there is more chance that students will be less interested in other members of the class. It also concurs with Varonis and Cass's argument (referred to in Long and Porter 2004:10-12) that more negotiation occurs in mixed language groups ('cross language' groups) than in 'common language' groups.

5.3 Conventions and expectations

As discussed, the students wanted to be in 'cross language groups' because they wanted to practise speaking English. When the students were asked in groups to derive rules for students and for teachers, all the groups had a rule that stated that students should speak only English in the classroom.

An 'English only zone' is usually applied in EFL classrooms (such as at the classes in the study). An 'English only zone' is a learning agreement between the teacher and the student that English only will be used and this is agreed to by the students. The

reason behind such an agreement (of an English learning zone) was to ensure that students received as much English practice as possible. Although there are strong arguments which have been presented by theorists such as Cummins (1996) on the benefits of classroom bilingualism, the practice of an 'English only zone' is preferred in EFL classrooms. An 'English only zone' is stressed especially during discussions and talk-related activities - wherein speaking other languages would make the activity appear pointless (Harmer 1991:246). Furthermore, an 'English only zone' allows the students to focus exclusively on English and prevents students from being reliant on translating into or out of the English language. In 'cross language groups' this learning agreement must feel more 'natural' for there is no other common language available for communication purposes. This coincides with Dimitriadou (2004:7) who stated that it might seem unusual to communicate in English when students do have another common language (besides English).

In an interview with the teacher, the teacher was asked about the interaction between the students in common language and cross language groups. The teacher was asked about the use of an English only zone and about the use of mother tongue languages.

Teacher English only zone affects group work... To encourage students to only speak and interact in English, no mother tongue is allowed ... Students are not allowed to use their mother tongue because then acquisition / immersion in English doesn't occur. Students also prefer only English in an English class.

...

Teacher They don't want the teacher to explain something in mother tongue. The students want to help with English terms, they want to help explain terms in English – [rather] than explain in mother tongue. They did not see going into mother tongue as a benefit as they are there to learn English. They didn't even want a mother tongue language accent. They

loved phonetics, they wanted to have an English accent when they spoke English - because acquiring an accent is part of the language learning process.

...

Teacher [but] Students in monolingual groups tended to swop into mother tongue if not watched.

According to Michel, Eva Maria and Lucena (in the extracts below), some students might have found it easier to return to mother tongue. They claimed that when students were able to ask for clarity using a mother tongue or common language besides English (such as in a 'common language group'), that some students did revert to that mother tongue (for that purpose). However, the students were aware that they were only allowed to speak English in the class because of the negotiated learning agreement. Because of this agreement, the students in 'common language groups' (according to Papy, Lucena, Eva Maria and Michel) chose to speak as minimally as possible. This point concurs with Erdentug (date unknown:1) who argues that classroom interaction is influenced and controlled by rules that are agreed upon by the teacher and by the students.

Furthermore, students have argued that, by conversing with people of the same mother tongue, they expect that the errors in speech (which the participants feel are common to same mother tongues speakers) are reinforced rather than corrected. This concern is echoed in the writings of Wheeler (1994:48) but disputed by Porter (Nunan, date unknown:2-3).

In the interview with Michel, Michel was asked about the use of a common language besides English.

Michel Ah ahm find sometimes ehr some of the student ehr want to speak

uhm French or but I usually prefer to explain everything in English because that's helping.

...

Michel You know why we come just to learn more ehr another language wis [which is] English but going back to our language, and when understand English some, we can can have problems of ehr understanding because you can have for example two dictionary but the two dictionary it depend the additional was established and it can give you two different ways of explanation that this can make a barrier on you you ehr good understanding.

Similarly, Eva Maria and Lucena were also asked about the use of a common language (besides English). Lucena and Eva Maria were asked about the use of that common language for explanation purposes.

Eva Maria Ahr some a word what we don't understand. If you say somethink and a I don't know what word you said 'ere then she can explain quickly in Portuguese [Eva Maria rubs her hands and Eva Maria laughs]

Lucena Eva Maria *duglaiish*

Eva Maria Yeah but if you ask you Tanya what you said you will explain to me in English better to under to learn but is easier

[Lucena demonstrates]

Eva Marias' comment is in line with Bowen's findings (2004:1) that students in common language groups are likely to revert back to their mother tongue when common mother tongue can perform the same task but with less effort.

Furthermore, when Papy was asked whether he felt working in 'common language' and 'cross language' groups were the same, he replied:

Papy No it is not the same. Because if each other speaking his one language by example who are speaking Portuguese and ehr who are speaking French. If who those one are speaking Portuguese are together and dah those ahr those one who are speaking French are together to. It is not good because this time we not make an effort for learn ehr more about English.

Since the students in 'cross language groups' actively participate through talk, the talk firstly has a greater possibility of diverging from the task, and secondly has a higher frequency of overlapping simultaneous talk and interruption. As a result, the students are actively engaging in interactive and collaborative dialogue. Through this engagement, the students in 'cross language groups' create classroom cultural conventions of interaction through a process of negotiation, which occurs during the engagement in interactive and collaborative dialogue.

This corresponds with Kasper's (2000:2-3) argument. Kasper (2000:2-3) argues that knowledge and the knowledge of language are created through interaction and participation and, as such, cannot simply be transmitted, and that language socialisation (including active listening) entails the appropriate, meaningful and effective use of a language (Ochs cited in Kasper 2000:2). For this reason socialisation occurs through participation "rather than through explicit instruction" (Kasper 2000:2). "... topics, turn-taking, models of storytelling and rules of politeness" (Blum-Kulka cited in Kasper 2000:2) are all part of the rules which regulate conversation.

As shown in previous extracts, within this negotiated classroom (in 'cross language groups') students use conversational techniques such as turn-taking and shared space in order to participate in a discussion as a speaker (as well as a listener). However, as discussed, the students interrupt each other and their talk overlaps and occurs at the same time. This is in line with Coates' (1994:179) discussion on turn-taking (referred to in 2.3.4).

On the other hand, the students in 'common language groups' do not engage in interactive and collaborative dialogue.

As the teacher stated during her interview,

Teacher Turn-taking, speaking only English, respect for one another, respecting the teacher, minimal teacher talk time, group work - these are all EFL classroom norms. The students are aware of the importance of own acquisition because they are educated ... and they prefer self and group work. Learning is different in monolingual groups ... different learning methods appear in both ... in multilingual groups there is better interaction and usually more questions – they challenge one another. In monolingual groups learning appears to be more rote. There is more use of English in multilingual groups. Multilingual groups are more lively... Monolingual groups tend to work through written exercises by themselves – more individual centred. While multilingual groups tend to discuss so they are more student centred.

Whereas 'common language groups' are more task focused and more concerned about turning back into mother tongue (aware of what to expect in the classroom), and are not as concerned with using English in order to find out more about each other, 'cross language groups' are more interested in the metalinguistic aspect of learning English as a Foreign Language - including the use of language in talk and in the development

of classroom conventions to use the talk. In both cases, the students are aware of the expectations of fellow students and the teacher.

5.4 Students reasons and preferences for group work: questionnaire responses

A triangulation process was implemented towards the end of the research. A questionnaire was given to 18 students (informants and non-informants) (see Appendix E). The students were asked questions regarding 'common language' and 'cross language' learning groups including whether they preferred to work on their own, in 'common language groups' (same mother tongue language), or in 'cross language groups' (different mother tongue language). They were also asked to explain their choice. Those students who chose working on their own had to select a second option.

Of the 18 students, two students stated that they preferred working on their own - one felt that if he had to work in a group, he would prefer to work in a 'cross language group'. The other student stated that, if he had to work in a group, he would prefer to work in a 'common language group'. The two students who preferred to work on their own felt that working on their own allows them to "... gives me knowledge to my self" (Dahab) and "... because with this I have to make more effort to listen and understand better the lesson" (Papy).

Three students stated that they preferred working in 'common language groups' and 13 students stated that they preferred to work in 'cross language groups'.

1st choice:

On their own	2 (11.1%)
'common language'	3 (16.7%)
'cross language'	13 (72.2%)

Group choice:

'common language' 4 (22.2%)

'cross language' 14 (77.8%)

The students presented a number of reasons for their choices. The students who preferred to work in 'common language groups' explained their choices as relating to understanding. Firstly, the students argued that, by working within 'common language groups', they could understand each other better. "I like work in group with the same language make me easier to understand." (Helene). Secondly, the students argued that if they did not understand something, they could explain what they did not know in their mother tongue (or be explained to in mother tongue). "I prefer b because when I don't know a word, I can explain in my language." (Lucena). Thirdly, the students argued that it was easier to communicate with one another in 'common language groups' - and that in 'common language groups', students are more receptive and respectful of each other. Fourthly, that because of the ease of understanding, 'common language groups' could put together more details towards task fulfilment (fulfil the requirements of the task). "I prefer working with people speak the same language as I do because I find that it easier to receipt me and vice versa. And there will be more detail between us" (Abakar).

In contrast to the students who preferred to work in 'common language groups', the students who preferred working in 'cross language groups' provided different explanations for their choices (which cannot be related to a single, broad category). Firstly, the students argued that 'cross language groups' forced the students to understand concepts and ideas - since by having been in groups with people who could not speak the same language as themselves, students were unable to rely on their mother tongue language. "I prefer working with people speak different languages because I force myself for understand" (Joaquim). Secondly, most of the

students preferred working in 'cross language groups' because they found it difficult to speak with each other in the English language and they found that they needed to explain what they wanted to say to each other. "I prefer working with people speak the different language because I find it difficult to speak with them but they can explain to me" (Rosa).

Thirdly, the students argued that they attended English classes because they wanted to improve their English. Some of the students stated that they preferred to be in 'cross language groups' because it gave them an opportunity to practise their English. "Yes, it's the best opportunity for me to practise" (Delphin).

Other students preferred working in 'cross language groups' because it allowed them to be in contact with other languages and to be in contact with people from other countries. Some of the students wanted to learn different languages and some students wanted to learn about different languages (comparing those languages to their own through the medium of English). "I prefer working with people speak different languages to me because I want to know another language" (Barth). By working in groups with people with different linguistic backgrounds and from different countries, the students said that they had the opportunity (in 'cross language groups') to find out more about other countries. "I prefer working with people who speak different languages, for practise my spoken English and to know other informations of other countries" (Serge). In this way, group work in 'cross language groups' allowed for discussions between students from warring countries. And as such, being in 'cross language groups' allowed for non-task related talk.

Finally, although the students stated that they liked being in 'common language groups', most of the students felt that the ability to communicate in a common language (besides English) was a negative. Most of the students preferred to be in 'cross language groups' because they had to use English as the common language of

interaction. "I prefer working with people who speak different language because I can try to improve my English, when I speak with people who speak my language I speak in my language automatically" (Madelene).

In both 'common language' and 'cross language' groups, the issues of understanding, communication and use of mother tongue language were important to the students for different reasons. The students were aware of these issues and their decisions appeared to be based on these issues. On the one hand, the preference for 'common language groups' appeared to be associated with ease of understanding, the ability to revert to a common language for clarification and the ability to complete the given task (because they did not need to confront language-related complications such as the lack of understanding). Therefore 'common language groups' concentrated on being able to work towards the task and to focus on the accuracy of their results (for task completion).

On the other hand, the preference for 'cross language groups' appeared to be associated with the ability to communicate and interact with fellow students (through the use and practice of the English language). Firstly, the students stated that they were able to practise speaking English without the fear of automatically reverting back to their mother tongue language. Secondly, the students felt that they could speak to people from different countries (and find out more about those countries). Finally, the students appeared to prefer working in 'cross language groups' because they were able to concentrate on improving their understanding and fluency in the English language.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

The study has attempted to answer the question: "How is learning, interaction and information exchange affected by whether English Foreign Language (EFL) learning groups are composed of people who share or do not share a common language (besides English)?" During the study, those learning groups which were constituted of people who shared a common language (besides English) were referred to as 'common language groups', and those learning groups which were constituted of people who did not share a common language (besides English) were referred to as 'cross language groups'.

As the research progressed, it became apparent that the learning, interaction and information exchange were indeed affected by whether the groups were 'common language' or 'cross language'. These differences emerged in the task-related talk, group participation, contingency, turn-taking, and in the student's use of elaborate explanations.

According to Erickson (1996:284), communication and manner of communication (including language, language usage, fluency, coherence and attentiveness) are dependent on what other people are doing - since listeners and speakers constantly influence each other. On the one hand, a speaker is informed as to the listener's reaction through the listener's response. On the other hand, a speaker has to anticipate the listener's future response.

Therefore, in order for interaction to occur, there have to be at least two participants. These participants must be willing to be actively involved in the discussion and in the communicative action of information exchange.

However, as shown in the study, students in 'common language groups' worked silently on their own. Talk and interaction were restricted to a summative function of comparing answers. In comparison, the data showed that participants in 'cross language groups' actively interacted with each other and displayed greater group participation and interaction. These findings coincide with Varonis and Cass's findings (Long and Porter 2004:10-12) that 'cross language' groups display a higher level of negotiation than 'common language' groups.

Furthermore, although the students in 'cross language groups' discussed the given topic, the students' discussion often appeared to develop away from the topic. However, they gained practice in conversational English.

As discussed, it is expected that when students (participants) interact, that some form of discussion takes place between the students (participants) and that the utterances made by the speakers (participants) link in some way to previous and future utterances made by other students / participants. As stated by Van Lier (2001:98), the relationship between previous, current and future utterances may occur directly (from one utterance to the next utterance) or through shared knowledge or experiences. According to Van Lier (2001:98), the relationship of utterances and the "raising of expectations and the crafting of deliberate ambiguities so that future utterances can find a conversational home" are both characteristics of an interaction. These characteristics were referred to by Van Lier as contingency (2001:98). In order for interaction to be successful, Van Lier (2001:101) argued that mutual understanding, contingency and intersubjectivity must occur, and that the success of the interaction depends on the appropriate use of social and linguistic resources. The students in 'cross language groups' gained practice in displaying these subtle linguistic strategies through their practice of conversational English.

Analysis of the data indicated that the level of contingency was higher in 'cross language learning groups' than in 'common language learning groups'. In 'cross language groups', the students appeared to be more concerned with the metalinguistic aspects of the English language, and, even though students were expected to complete various tasks, the students focused on talking with one another. Further, rather than focus on task completion, the students often raised conversations around experiences, knowledge and beliefs which the other students might share with them in order to stimulate and develop discussions.

According to Hull and Schultz (discussed in Street 2003:4), students draw from their experiences of the global setting (outside the classroom) to inform their interaction within the local setting (within the classroom). Thus the students in 'cross language' groups use their experiences, knowledge and beliefs in order to participate in the conversations and interactions.

As a result, the students' conversations (in 'cross language' groups) contained numerous utterances which were linked to each other either directly or through shared affordances. This was different to 'common language groups'. In 'common language groups', conversation and interaction was kept to a minimum and, as a result, the talk in 'common language groups' consisted of dispersed and unlinked utterances. To this end, the level of contingency in 'common language learning groups' was very low.

According to Erickson (1996:288-289), two or more utterances made by different speakers might overlap and occur at the same time during a conversation. These overlaps might vary. On the one hand, a listener might produce a back channel or a brief utterance while the speaker pauses or even while he / she speaks (showing that the listener is paying attention to what the speaker is saying). On the other hand, the overlapping might take the form of multiple simultaneous speakers, audience and conversational floors on which turns are taken at the same time.

As discussed within the study, each turn within a conversation is based on the interpretation of previous turns, and, for this reason, turn-taking requires participants to be able to use and to interpret contextual variations which emerge during the turns.

Coates (1994) argues that the generally accepted SSJ model on turn-taking does not address such overlapping and simultaneous talk. Instead, Coates suggests that overlapping and simultaneous talk might occur for different reasons including timing error, backchannelling, two potential speakers taking the floor concurrently, speakers and listeners sharing the floor at the same time, collaborative completion of an utterance, and / or as a result of co-participants being involved in a discussion at the same time through presenting questions or by commenting on the speaker's utterance (Coates 1994).

Furthermore, overlapping talk, interruptions and shared utterances and floor space might also occur as a result of politeness and / or a participant's positive (or negative) polarity.

As has become evident through the research, there is a noticeable difference across the two kinds of groups in the use (and absence) of shared space and turn-taking techniques, overlapping and simultaneous talk and interruptions between 'common language' and 'cross language' learning groups, that is to say, differences in the manner of information exchange. On the one hand, turns (turn-taking) in 'common language learning groups' take the form of unrelated or loosely related utterances, separated by long pauses. The students do not share the floor and thus overlapping, simultaneous talk and interruptions are minimised.

On the other hand, the increased level of contingency and interaction in 'cross language learning groups' appears to result in an increase in the use of shared floor

space and turn-taking techniques. The research also showed that the 'cross language' groups' talk contained interruptions, overlapping and simultaneous talk. The increase in the use of turn-taking techniques appears to be associated firstly with students' desire to express their opinions (or to transmit information), and secondly with the students' attempt to participate in the discussion.

As pointed out, the difference in information exchange and sharing of the floor between 'common language' and 'cross language' learning groups does not only appear in the use of turn-taking but also in the use of elaborate explanations. According to Erickson (1996), speakers react to listeners' responses and have to predict future responses, while at the same time producing utterances which are linked to previous and future utterances. However, Van Lier (2001:98) argues that, in order for contingency to occur, expectations and deliberate ambiguities have to be constructed so that future utterances would be possible in a conversation.

Furthermore, Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997) argue that languages are used to communicate different meanings and messages in different contexts. In an encounter (Erickson 1996), participants may utilise different shared affiliations.

The contextual aspect of language implies that a participant needs to adapt to different contexts (Slembrouck 2002:9). As a result, participants are expected to be able to make assumptions of the requirements for participation, and to determine how much to say and what to say.

In 'common language groups' participants do not clarify what they attempt to say - the talk is implicit and implied. In addition, the students expect that the other students are able to speak the same language as they do and, if the participants experience problems, they return to that common language for clarity. In this way, participants in 'common language groups' avoid long descriptions and complex narratives. This is

different to 'cross language groups' where the talk is explicit - everything is expressed in full.

As discussed in the research, information in 'cross language groups' revolves around clarification, explanation and personal discussion. Personal discussions lead from the given task and often relate to personal experience. These personal experiences appear to be used to clarify ideas, concepts or misunderstandings which other students might be experiencing; to explain what they intended to say; to create commonalities with other members of the group; and to elaborate on a given or previous utterance or to stimulate or develop a discussion. In this way, personal discussions appear to emerge into complex narratives (in 'cross language learning groups'), which in turn are used to address language barriers.

As discussed, the exchange of information is facilitated by culturally determined scripts. The information exchange and interactions often require the participants to socialise within a new social, cultural and / or linguistic reality (Nurmi and Kontiainen 1995:65). These interactions, according to Erdentug (date unknown:1), are influenced and controlled by rules that are agreed upon by the teacher and by the students. Additionally, the length of these interactions influences learning (Nurmi and Kontiainen 1995:65).

As the research progressed, it became evident that the differences in the constitution of the learning groups ('common language' or 'cross language') affected the focus and task relatedness of the talk of the learning group.

In 'common language groups', the students appeared to work out the answers to the task silently on their own. These periods of silence were then followed by dispersed comments. The dispersed comments were usually produced towards the end of the allotted exercise time. Instead of talking about the task, the students presented their

individually worked out answers, one at a time, to the other students. In this way, interaction was a method to check whether the other students in the group agreed with their answers. Thus 'common language learning groups' appeared to focus on completing a task as accurately as possible by comparing answers - viewing task completion and task discussion as separate activities, with the former being the primary objective of the language class. If the length of the interaction influences learning then the lack of interaction and socialisation could hamper the student's learning.

This concurs with language socialisation theory that argues that knowledge and the knowledge of language are created through interaction and participation and as such, cannot simply be transmitted (Kasper 2000:2-3). According to Kasper (2000:2), socialisation occurs through participation and not through "explicit instruction". Likewise, Nunan argues that learning can only occur through a process of doing - that "language is acquired as learners actively engage in attempting to communicate in the target language" (Nunan, date unknown:1). Therefore, according to Nunan (date unknown:2-3), aspects such as quantity of "input" and "intake", need to talk, uninhibited practice and participation will affect language acquisition and learning. This implies that lack (or low levels) of "input", "intake", need to talk, uninhibited practice, as well as participation (and through participation, socialisation) may hinder the students' language learning and acquisition.

Unlike 'common language learning groups', 'cross language groups' appeared to view task discussion (and interaction) as part of the process of task completion (and of learning). It became apparent that 'cross language learning groups' used the task to practise speaking English. As shown, the discussions in 'cross language learning groups' often focused on task discussions (which occurred around explanations, clarifications and personal discussions) and, as a result, most of the 'cross language groups' did not appear to complete the learning task. Instead, the students appeared to

focus on metalinguistic concerns. Thus 'cross language learning groups', unlike the 'common language learning groups', appeared to view interaction and information exchange as part of the learning experience and process.

The research has considered the interaction, information exchange and learning in 'common language' and 'cross language' adult learning groups. It has become apparent that there are a number of reasons for these differences. The differences appear to occur as a result of the use of mother tongue language (in 'common language groups'), the use of English as a common language for socialisation (in 'cross language groups'), the desire of students to practise speaking English (in 'cross language groups'), and created classroom cultural conventions and student expectations (regarding the classroom and cultural context).

Nurmi and Kontiainen (1995) argue that learning is a process used to allow people to adapt to different environments and that these processes of learning involve the integration of micro- and macrocultures, which meet within cultural encounters. Nurmi and Kontiainen further emphasise the importance of metacognitive and communicative skills development and learning encounters. They argue that social mobility and exchanges are the main reasons behind intercultural learning problems and that these intercultural exchanges require students to be aware of relevant rules and expectations (1995:66).

Additionally, Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Turner (1997) argue that a learning environment or Third Space which would allow for the potential for authentic learning to occur is possible where there is a context in which "two normative patterns of interaction" meet and where the Third Space is a representation of the possibility which could occur as a result of change of expectations.

Although the students were aware of the classroom conventions and expectations including only speaking English in the classroom, the students in 'common language learning groups' frequently used a common language besides English to converse. The students in 'common language groups' appeared to rely on that common language. However, it also became apparent that the students were in fact concerned about returning to that common language and that some of the students did not realise that they had done so until the teacher or a fellow student pointed out that the student had indeed spoken a language besides English.

During the triangulation process, the majority of students expressed the view that they did not want to work in 'common language learning groups' because they knew that they had a common language (other than English) on which they could rely. On the other hand, 'cross language learning groups' did not have the opportunity to rely on a common language besides English, and, for this reason, the participants could freely practise speaking English (which according to Long and Porter (2004:10-12) is one of the main pedagogical arguments for the use of group work). Further, 'cross language learning groups' had to rely on English as a language of expression and communication.

During the triangulation exercise the students presented the argument that they attended the classes to improve their English and to socialise. Therefore, the students were concerned with language learning and interaction, and through interaction - information exchange.

Nevertheless, according to the participants, 'common language group' members adhered to cultural conventions and norms of politeness (including waiting for turns). In comparison, 'cross language' group members appeared to adapt and shape individual cultural and social conventions into negotiated classroom conventions.

These adaptations seem to result from student expectations of what classroom conventions should be applied.

These conventions and expectations appear to be formed through interaction (which occurs to a greater extent in 'cross language groups' and to a lesser extent in 'common language groups'). However, in both the 'common language' and the 'cross language' groups, the students appear to be aware of the expectations.

I have shown in this case study that, although 'common language learning groups' focus on task completion (seeing task discussion as secondary to task completion), the concern about relying on the common language (besides English) can limit learning interaction and information exchange from occurring. Even though task completion is important in 'cross language learning groups', task discussion (interaction and information exchange) is seen as part of the task. The research has shown that learning, interaction and information exchange occur more readily in 'cross language groups' than in 'common language groups'.

This leaves me with the question: how can interaction and information exchange be encouraged in both 'common language' and 'cross language' groups, so as to improve a student's language learning?

6.2 Future research

Future research could be conducted through the examination of different language awareness methods which could be used to encourage 'common language' and 'cross language' learning groups to promote interaction within the English language.

APPENDIX A

I am a English learn.

Some years. I was a play of basketball, now I am a former good basketball player, by nationality BURUNDI, now residing in South Africa (Cape Town) as a refugee. That qualification does not make me happy any more, it is just to denied the human life. I still with stress because of that of my Ethical Conflict war; the reason to be here is South Africa as refugee; it is not happy; Burundi is a good Country for tourism, Agriculture, fresh air with natural resources of Forest; plain, Savannah; Park animals as chimpanzees, monkeys and so on.

Here in South Africa, I am always trying to react as a sportman but in vain. Because of xenophobia. Sometimes, I lose my control. It happens because you can understand how black people hurt black other Africans, for me it is only racism for to foreign and Xenophobia. in the future, they will regret because all Africa amongst had contribute for the abolition of the Apartheid but now, what we had hard apartheid but now, what it is now Xenophobia for black South Africa, the refugees. I am now without any facilities like money, food and accommodation.

me in my country (OUR COUNTRY) there is a war and
now it is even very hot that some years ago, and
the facilitator (mediator) is the former President
Nelson Mandela, what South Africa Black People
did for those, some amongst, the parents collect some
money their freedom, here as a *gulegule* (refugee)
you can ask any favour to the Black People as bus fee
for travelling in bus, Train, The Government as far
it didn't avoid any facilities for Black Refugees as
food, accommodation or medical care.

Sometimes we are victims of violence, as a example
myself on that in Gumbulele and at S.O.S. Thronon, a
friends, there are every in public places, as
night club, bar, streets, markets, offices, cities, a
towns. That situation is shanger history for him
right in this Millennium, it is a shame for the law
like South Africa, where the world wide there are
Two Peace Nobel Prize: One for former President
of South Africa and the Bp Bishop D Tutu.

After that, there is other event for the drugs, w
all the young people is contaminated by Aids and
the old people don't given basic education, for
disturbance and stability, where the churches
took like the politicians, even in the recent
Summit of the Bishops in Pretoria, the Bp Shop
had put in debate the using of the Condoms.

It means the religious and the Government don't
have the same plan. It is sad because the
of Africa don't find the strong roof from South
Africa

APPENDIX B

I was born in 1965 in the small town north of Senegal, called Borama. When I have finished a intermediate school in Senegal a language, after I went on a special secondary, it was a language secondary and I mainly study French and Arabic. I finished the secondary school in 1985 then I go course in France for about six years. when I came home in 1991, the war started. I have tried to stay home in Senegal in the hope that one day the war will stop. but my hope was a dream, the war never stop. So in 1998, I was to Saudi Arabia, I got a job as a teacher French teacher in a school. The Saudi police never gave me a permit to stay in their country.

I came in south Africa in December 1999. I left my wife and two children in Senegal. I try to contact them but the phone cost expensive.

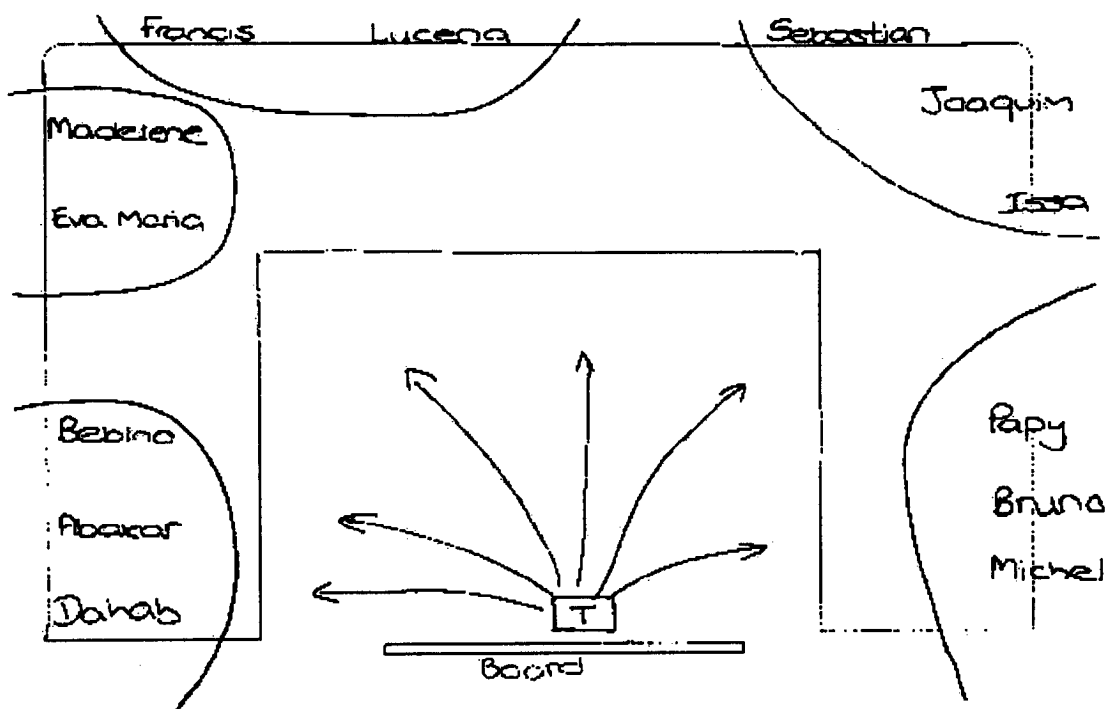
Now I enjoy studying English.

APPENDIX C

Classroom layout as recorded in field notes taken on 7 November 2002

date : 7/11/2002

activity: brainstorming / grammar practice
Students discuss activities they like doing.
Students (each group) have to write down their answers.
Students have to work in their groups.
each group has a coloured page (different colours)



APPENDIX D

Body language as recorded in field notes taken on 19 November 2002

date: 19/11/2002 14:21

activity: The world around us - question development

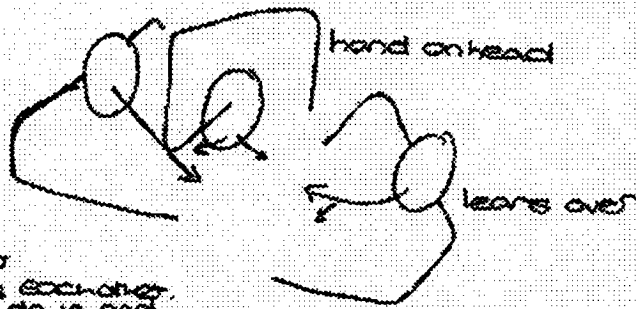
The students have been placed into groups. Each group has been given a piece of paper (one group is red, one is yellow, one is green). The students have been asked to collaboratively write ten questions.

key
arrows = eye direction.

Group one:

Student
1

2
3



Face each other
Turned towards each other.
Lucena places down and
rests her head on the other group members
head.

Group two:

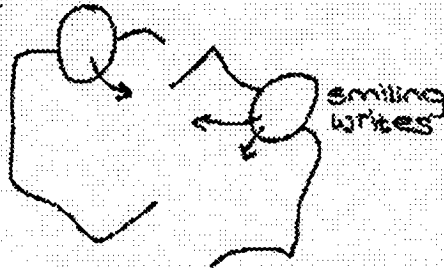
4

5

face each other.

Turn towards each other

Student 5 is smiling



smiling
writes

Group three:

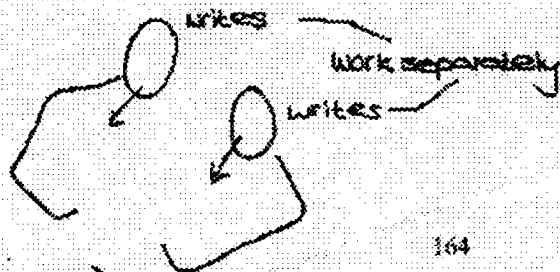
6

7

Face forward.

Do not look at each other.

(until the next drawing).



writes

work separately

writes

APPENDIX E

English language questionnaire

1. Why are you studying English?

2. Have you ever studied any course / subject in English (if yes, what)?

3. What language/s do you speak at home, or with your friend?
(for example: Kiswahili at home, French at work and Portuguese with friends)

4. Who do you speak English with? (for example: with neighbours, at the shops)

5. When do you read in English? (for example: letters, road signs, books)

6. When do you write in English? (for example: letters, job applications, forms)

7. Do you have someone who writes / speaks / reads English for you?
(for example: my cousin fills out (writes) the forms at Home Affairs)

8. Do you find it easier (or more difficult) to speak English in the classroom or out of the classroom? (please explain your answer)

9. Number the sentences from 1 to 3 (1. - most prefer, 3. - least prefer)

a. working on your own

b. working in groups with people who speak the same language as you

c. working in groups with people who speak different languages to you

Explain your choices...

(for example I prefer working with people speak the same language as I do because I find it easier to speak with them)

10. Number the sentences from 1 to 3 (1. - most enjoy, 3. - least enjoy)

a. working on your own

b. working in groups with people who speak the same language as you

c. working in groups with people who speak different languages to you

11. What part of the English Language do you find easy?

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