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Promoting critical-analytic thinking through teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles: The case of a rural South African secondary school

ABSTRACT

This article reports a case study in a rural South African school on promoting critical-analytic thinking through teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles. The study investigated the use of teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles as a component of the Quality Talk model. The Qualitative research methodology and a case study design that entailed the use of interviews, classroom observations and document analysis were used. Data was gathered from an English teacher and 52 Grade 8 students. The data was coded using Quality Talk model indicators and analysed thematically.

The findings revealed evidence that teacher training and support in the use of a range of teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles could enhance students' development of critical-analytic thinking. It is therefore recommended that teacher training in the use of pedagogical approaches that enhance the development of critical-analytic thinking should be incorporated in professional development programmes.

Keywords: Critical-analytic thinking, English language teaching, pedagogical principles, quality talk model, rural school, teacher discourse moves

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The development of critical-analytical thinking is instrumental in improving students' academic performance at secondary school level and can no longer be disregarded. Scholars and educationists have highlighted the need to infuse critical-analytic thinking as an integral component into the school curriculum, particularly in situations where the language of instruction differs from the home languages of the students (Clark, Dwyer, Hogan & Steward, 2011; Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2011; Rashid & Qaisar, 2016; UNESCO, 2016). To develop this kind of thinking in students, teachers have to focus on the development of reading and comprehension skills explicitly (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). In addition, teachers must be well-grounded in the use of specific discourse tools and signs, and pedagogic elements that best support students' high-level comprehension of texts. Wilkinson, Sorter and Murphy (2010) viewed specific teacher discourse moves as vital for the development of students' high-level understanding, critical analytic-thinking and reflection on texts. Critical-analytic thinking is defined as "effortful, cognitive processing through which an individual or group of individuals come to an examined understanding about a particular topic." (Murphy et al. 2014: 563).

In spite of the wide acknowledgement of the pivotal role of critical-analytic thinking as well as the use of effective teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles in students' learning and academic success, their application in South African schools is challenging (Davies & Meissel, 2016). Indications are that although this challenge is widespread, it is more pronounced in rural areas, where students experience difficulties in their attempt to learn English (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman, 2012). As an example, Pretorius (2008) and Nel (2011) indicate that although English teachers in South African rural schools supposedly offer students learning experience with regard to discourse tools and instructional strategies that promote critical thinking skills, students' academic performance and learning outcomes remain low. Spaull (2013) observed that teachers employed direct teaching or inductive approaches in teaching English in rural South African secondary schools. Inductive approaches are in line with the curriculum, which is alleged to be learner-centred (DBE, 2012). However, they may not encourage critical-analytic thinking, which is usually deductive in nature. In this regard, Classen (2010) questions whether South African students at school are exposed to instructional strategies that stimulate critical thinking skills.

Because English tests and examination results of rural secondary schools compare poorly with the results of urban schools and with those of their counterparts in other countries, parents, educators, the general public and the government are increasingly criticising and questioning the quality of instructional pedagogies and language teaching (Howie et al., 2012; National Centre for Education Statistics, 2009). The argument put forward based on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is that the teacher's use of discourse moves and pedagogical approaches aimed at the promotion of critical-analytic thinking might have an impact on students' ability to acquire critical-analytic thinking skills which would help them succeed in their language learning (Tsui, 2011).

THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER DISCOURSE MOVES AND PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Teacher discourse moves (TDM) and pedagogical principles (PP) have been identified as two important concepts that impact the development of critical-analytic thinking in students (Wilkinson et al., 2010). The concept of teacher discourse moves is not new in the field of education, and has been found to be important and useful in helping teachers provide some kind of specific support that could maximise their effort of developing their students' learning, reasoning and thinking skills. Teacher discourse moves refer to how teachers participate in discourses which promote high-level thinking and productive conversation (Jadallah et al., 2011). Pedagogical principles on the other hand, determine the ways in which teachers support the development of students' understanding of language, evoke interest in learning through productive discussions, depict clarity and content knowledge in teaching, and allow authentic questions for sustained productive talk (Murphy, Greene & Firreto, 2015.

Throughout the centuries, great thinkers, educators, and even sociologists such as Aristotle and Comenius have emphasised the value of teachers and the role discourse moves and pedagogy play in teaching and learning contexts (Sadler, 1966). Particular emphasis regarding the role of discourse moves and pedagogical approaches was placed on creating opportunities for teachers to be comfortable and skilled in adjusting their support for orchestrating a rich, productive lesson discourse among their students (Harris, Phillips & Penuel, 2010). The teacher discourse moves, and pedagogical principles referred to in this study are components of the Quality Talk (QT) Intervention Model (Wilkinson, et al. 2010). QT is an evidence-based, small-group discussion intervention model used in classroom discussions to promote critical-analytic thinking. The Quality Talk discussion model comprises teacher-mediated strategies, which Wilkinson, et al. (2010) called teacher discourse moves, and "core ideas about teaching and learning requisites for stimulating productive talk about text and context". They further referred to the model as pedagogical principles, suggesting that these promote productive classroom talk (Murphy et al., 2017:151). The teacher discourse moves framed in the Quality Talk model comprise five elements, namely, modelling, summarising, marking, prompting and challenging, that are empirically proven to evoke students' reasoning abilities, argumentative and reading comprehension skills. (Wilkinson et al., 2010). These will be dealt with in the section that follows.

Järvelä (1995) and Kaplowitz (2012) view modelling, in the context of a classroom, as central to the dialogic process. In their views, modelling is an instructional strategy in which the teacher demonstrates a new concept or approach and the students learn by observing. Summarising, on the other hand, is a feature of classroom discourse in which students, teachers or participants who engage in discussion about the text they read, identify the themes and condense information arising from it, using their own words, during and after reading, thus bringing clarity and meaning to the text (Palincsar & Brown, 1986). Prompting is another teacher discourse move aimed at encouraging students to use what they already know and can do while feedback/marking is a communication process through which students enter into dialogues related to performance and

standards (Beck & McKeown, 2006). To Falchikov (2001), Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Derrick and Ecclestone (2008), feedback and marking serve as mediating tools for facilitating students' ability continually to improve their communication practices, and to develop their interest in learning and their motivation to learn. Challenging is another teacher discourse move identified as essential in promoting learners' reading comprehension. Wilkinson et al. (2010) define challenging as a "conversational move where a teacher models and scaffolds productive talk through asking the learner to consider another point of view during class discussion" (Wilkinson et al., 2010, p. 34). The discussion on the above-stated teacher discourse moves reflect that they are teaching and learning support strategies that should be given adequate attention in developing students' critical-analytic skills.

Harris et al. (2012) explained that in using teacher discourse moves, the teacher allows students to share control of the classroom talk within their capacity. Teachers intervene only when they recognise that a student is experiencing difficulties and needs assistance. Similarly, Chen (2011), and Herbel-Eisenmann, Steele and Cirillo (2013) observed that teacher discourse moves aim to help transform students' ways and levels of thinking, and their ways of applying acquired knowledge in different and maybe challenging and complex learning contexts.

Harris, Phillips and Penuel (2012) also examined instructional teacher moves aimed at eliciting and developing students' ideas and questions as teachers orchestrated discourse with their Grade 5 learners during a learner-centred environmental Biology unit. The results of their study, which was a cross-case analysis, indicated that while teachers could readily elicit ideas and questions, they experienced challenges in helping students to develop a deeper understanding of a text. Based on this finding, they suggested providing some kind of specific support that could help teachers to develop students' learning and thinking skills.

Other studies have shown that the use of teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles in classrooms is difficult and requires a great deal of effort on the part of teachers. For example, Murphy and Wei (2017) found that teacher discourse moves provide important and useful temporary support to teachers during discussions. According to Murphy and Wei (2017), the strategy is particularly effective if it is employed in small-group discussions, with teachers and students understanding their respective roles, and teachers being conversant with teacher moves.

The studies by Murphy and Wei (2017) and Harris et al. (2012) indicate that the ability to facilitate conversational moves is a learned ability that requires training of some kind for teachers. For this reason, greater effort should be made to ensure that teachers acquire the necessary skills. This will ensure that teachers do not retain complete control over discussions, a situation which might give students the impressions that a teacher is the only source of knowledge. Teachers should also strive harder to achieve the objective of developing students' proficiency in language communication and reasoning ability in academic and social contexts. Such proficiency, once achieved, will enhance students' academic achievement, learning outcomes, personal growth and success.

EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS AS PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLE IN AN ENGLISH LESSON

Explicit instructional tools are teaching and learning mediated tools in which students are taken step by step through the learning process by the teacher until they all actively and successfully participate in the lesson, indicating that they have fully understood the content and text (Archer, & Hughes, 2011). These language instructional tools are regarded as another type of pedagogical principle situated in the Quality Talk (QT) model because they determine strategies and guidelines essential for teachers to create opportunities for or to scaffold students' productive classroom discussions. They do not promote a higher level of understanding of English texts but do contribute to achieving the goal. These language instructional tools are context, vocabulary, genre, participation and language. "Context" is a language instructional tool viewed as valuing students' sharing of their ideas and contributions for the construction of knowledge and understanding (Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur, & Prendergast, 1997). This tool incorporates the basic principles that support students' critical-reflective thinking and are "embedded within a culture of dialogic inquiry" (Wilkinson, 2010:158). "Vocabulary" is a language instructional tool describing teachers and students' ability to convey a particular meaning and express their own ideas through using a collection of words of a language during speaking, listening, reading and writing (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Vocabulary is linked to the teaching of concepts and is important for students as it helps them to develop knowledge of word meaning. "Participating" refers to a tool that enables students and teachers to display a willingness to think and talk about a text in pursuit of meaning making about the text and co-constructing new knowledge about it (Wilkinson et al., 2010). "Genre" is another language instructional tool used to refer to a specific type of text displayed in a particular textual organisation and layout. Genre could be a poem or short story, which is often recognised thus and for what it is by a group of people who share the same customs and norms (Harmer, 2007). By implication, these tools are important as they define the teacher's role as being that of scaffolding or supporting learning through raising students' awareness regarding the different genres and the correct choice and use of linguistic features (Vygotsky, 1978). These language instructional tools were observed to be present in excerpts extracted from the different texts discussed during the English lessons, but they were not as evident as one would have expected.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to investigate how teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles promote critical-analytic thinking in a rural classroom. The aim was to answer the following question specifically: "To what extent do teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles help promote critical-analytic thinking in English language lessons in a rural secondary school?" The study adopted a qualitative research approach as a methodological paradigm. The qualitative methodological paradigm is primarily used for the investigation of experiences, language and words rather than

numerical figures and scientific measurement (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Researchers who adopt a qualitative methodological research paradigm for their investigations subscribe to a holistic view of reality to understand and interpret human experiences. The qualitative methodological paradigm was fitting for this study because it allowed the researchers to study the experiences of the teacher and students in the use of teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles in the English classroom.

Research Design: A descriptive Case Study

This study employed the descriptive case study design from an interpretive meta-theoretical perspective. This design implies an intensive, rigorous, detailed, and in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between that phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Creswell, 2009). Through using the case study design, the researchers could investigate and describe the implementation of teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles in promoting critical-analytic thinking in students in Grade 8 English language lessons in a rural South African secondary school. Its use, furthermore, provided the researchers with the opportunity to obtain the views of one rural English teacher through semi-structured interviews and to use non-participant classroom observations and document analysis to establish which practices the teacher used and how she used them in her endeavour to promote the development of critical-analytic thinking in her English classroom.

Selection of the participants and research site

The participating rural secondary school was conveniently selected based on an ongoing collaborative partnership between the Centre for the Study of Resilience (CRS) at the University of Pretoria and schools in the Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga, in South Africa. One English language teacher and 52 students (males, n= 25 and females, n= 27) in her Grade 8 class participated. The main criteria for the selection of the participants were that they had to be aware of the ongoing collaborative partnership between the school and the CSR, and they had to be willing to participate in the research study. The teacher had to be conversant with instructional practices and pedagogical principles, should have received training in the teaching of English language lessons at secondary schools, and had to hold at least a diploma or higher qualification. Finally, the teacher should have worked as a teacher of English in the participating school for over two years to ensure that she understood her students' comprehension levels and academic performance.

Data collection methods

Given the purpose and extent of this study, the researchers used a semi-structured interview, non-participant classroom observations and document analysis techniques to source the data. The researchers also took detailed field notes and kept reflective

research journals to complement the data sources referred to above. Data was collected during site visits over a timeframe of 14 months. The researchers interviewed the participating English teacher to probe her thoughts and responses about critical issues relating to promoting critical-analytic thinking in a rural secondary school (Creswell, 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researchers developed an interview guide comprising open-ended questions starting with a general question to elicit flexibility on the side of the teacher participant. A total of three main interviews were conducted with the English teacher. The teacher was interviewed at other times, as directed by the gaps in the information obtained during classroom observations. This was also important for validating the information collected via field notes. Moreover, the process of member-checking was employed to enable the teacher to confirm the credibility of the collected and transcribed information. The researchers sought permission from the teacher to audio-record the interviews and video-record the classroom observations.

The documents analysed in this study were photographed exercise books of the students, prescribed English texts and the curriculum used to guide the teaching and learning process. These documents were selected purposively. The aim was to get detailed information concerning the students' teaching and learning activities. Hence, the documents assisted in exploring how critical-analytic thinking was developed through instructional and pedagogical practices. The researchers aimed at getting some information on issues such as students' reading and comprehension skills and their patterns of language use and meaning-making resulting from the type of questions and responses they initiate during classroom discourse.

Data analysis

The data collected from different sources were analysed using thematic analysis in line with Braun and Clarke's (2016) six steps to thematic analysis. This called for a bottom-up approach in which one starts by familiarising oneself with collected data and generating initial codes through identification of keywords and taking notes of points of interest that seem similar. This was then followed by the stage of searching for themes and then revising the themes. A review of themes further led to detecting patterns and regularities and merging of all the identified keywords or phrases to devise well-defined theme names. This was followed by a formulation of general conclusions where the researchers wrote up the data in a concise, meaningful and understandable manner (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

Ethical considerations

We took ethical considerations into account by obtaining ethics clearance from the University of Pretoria and the Mpumalanga Department of Education. The participants were also informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed and were assured of the confidentiality of the information they would provide. Permission and consent were obtained from the school management, the teacher, parents and the

students. In addition, the participants consented to be audio- and video-recorded during data collection.

FINDINGS

These findings are based on data gathered from three different data sources–interviews with one English language teacher, non-participant classroom observations and document analysis. The analysed documentary data included visually captured students' exercise books, curriculum specifications and texts from a prescribed textbook. The findings are reported in a thematic format and reveal evidence of teacher discourse moves known to develop higher-level thinking in English first additional language lessons. The following two categories were identified as dominant from the observed data set: (1) prompting students for further participation and elaborated responses; (2) summarising to guide students into applying their knowledge and using their original words to facilitate a deeper understanding of the text.

In addition, a thematic analysis of the interviews and non-participant classroom observations revealed evidence of discourse moves employed by the teacher. The teacher discourse moves were captured to indicate how she interacted, participated, managed and controlled the dialogic discourse patterns in her English lesson to improve students' speaking ability and comprehension of texts. Two categories namely, explicit instructional practices and teacher questioning techniques were considered dominant. Explicit instruction is a teaching and learning method in which students are taken step by step through the learning process by the teacher until they all participate actively and successfully in a lesson, indicating that they have fully understood the content and text (Fisher, Frey & Rothenberg, 2008).

Teacher discourse moves that promote critical thinking' in an English lesson

The findings of the study revealed evidence of teacher discourse moves in English lessons. The results, in Table 1, present the frequency of total utterances of teacher discourse moves made by the teacher during a lesson of 45 minutes, on four occasions during the lesson observations and across the different texts (stories) discussed.

Table 1: Teacher discourse moves evident in the English lessons observed

Lesson	Text type	Stance	Events	Modelling	Prompting	Summarising	Challenging	Marking
1	The Gift of Stories	Efferent	4	0	2	1	0	0
	Total		**4**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**
2	The Twins	Expressive	2	0	0	1	0	0
	Total		**2**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**
3	The Sacrifice	Efferent	1	0	2	0	0	0
	Total		**1**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**
4	HIV	Efferent	4	0	0	0	0	0
	Total		**4**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

The table captures the specific lesson observations, text types, the stance, the events and the identified teacher discourse moves. According to the findings presented in Table 1, prompting occurred twice, while summarising occurred only once in four class observations. Specifically, prompting was evident during the observed lessons about two of the stories namely, "*The Gift of Stories*" and "*The Sacrifice*" (See Table 2). Even though the teacher would prompt the students to elicit responses by asking if there were any questions, by implication, the teacher's limited capacity to employ prompting and summarising and all the other moves contributed to a lack of students' engagement with the content, hence the likelihood of limited higher-level comprehension of the texts.

The students made no utterances during the observations. Moreover, the students were not allowed to interact actively during the lesson, either by asking questions, commenting on content and discussing or sharing views with their peers in class. Furthermore, it was difficult to decide what their stance towards the text was as the teacher controlled the discussion. Moreover, her text events were predominantly tested questions where answers were fixed and provided in the text.

Stance towards a text determines the question events. Stance towards text in, this instance, refers to the position or attitude that the students or the teacher adopt as they express their own perspectives on issues arising from the text. A question event refers to questions asked to elicit a particular response. During data coding, stance towards a text was determined in terms of whether it encouraged students to focus on reading

to acquire and retrieve information from the text (an efferent stance) and on whether they were motivated to build emotive connections between their personal experiences and the text (an expressive stance). The intention was also to observe whether they were encouraged to interrogate or query a text in search of its underlying meaning or assumptions (a critical-analytic stance) (Li et al., 2016). There was no indication of a critical analytic stance towards the text during any of the observations.

Evidence of prompting in teacher discourse moves

Table 2 presents transcribed English Lesson observation excerpts indicating evidence of the teacher's use of prompting and providing students with the opportunity to question ideas as they appeared in the transcript during the third observation (The Sacrifice):

Table 2: Transcribed English lesson observations

OBSERVATION 3: THE SACRIFICE			
Control turn	**Speaker**	**Transcription**	**Teacher discourse moves**
1	Teacher	*Thank you. So, they are [indistinct] for the lamb. What is happening actually?* *They bought it, they are asking grass for the lamb and everything* **What is happening actually in the story?** *What is it that is happening in the story? Anyone tell us what is it that the happening in the story now from Solomon? Anyone, you tell us what is happening? Anyone? Mmhh!. anyone tell us. Anyone. Mmmmh! No? No? Ja, no 36 tell us. Tell us.*	Prompting
7	Student no 36	[No answer from student no 36.]	
8	Student	[Reads story]	
9	Teacher	*Alright, thanks.* **So what is happening there?** *Can you tell us what is happening? Can we talk? No 26 tell us. 26! The boy is trying to ask the mother to say that can you talk to father in such a way that he must not kill the lamb.* **So what is the answer? Does the mother agree?**	Prompting
10	Students	No! (Chorus answer)	

The transcript is one example of what the full study revealed (See Sefhedi, 2019). It suggests that critical-analytic thinking skills were not taught and encouraged, which could hinder the development of these skills. Moreover, from the analysis of the transcript, neither the teacher nor the students demonstrated the expected critical-analytic thinking during the discussion of the texts. Further to that, they seemed to be unfamiliar with the process of engaging at a critical-analytic level. As informed by the excerpts cited from the transcripts above, the students and the teacher did not attempt tasks that required sound reasoning skills during English lessons. Ultimately, the evidence suggests that the teacher's use of prompting did not seem to work effectively for the intended purpose. The main purpose of teacher discourse moves is to promote learning, interaction and a deeper understanding of the text.

Evidence of Summarising to guide students' application of knowledge

In some instances, the teacher's use of summarising was evident. Coding revealed that the teacher would summarise the discussion without allowing or giving the students space to make contributions to the lesson, as the following transcript of teacher utterances during the second observation shows. The lesson excerpt was taken from the teacher's comments during discussion of the texts entitled "*The Gift of Stories*".

As can be seen from the excerpt, the teacher went on to summarise the text instead of allowing students to reflect on and respond in accordance with her assignment to them.

The teacher commented:

> **Teacher**: *So, in summary the woman did not have any stories anymore. That is why she decided with her husband to say go out to the animals and look for stories, then you can come back with that because these kids are making noise at night. I cannot cope. Let's go to Scene 2* (Observation 2: 2016).

Evidence of Explicit instruction tools as pedagogical principles in an English Lesson

The excerpts presented below were extracted from the four different occasions that English lesson observations were conducted. The excerpts were from the different texts discussed on the different dates of data collection, as displayed in the table. They indicate that some language instruction moves were evident during these English lessons. Although there is a range of language instruction tools known to assist teachers in managing teaching and learning, this study focused, as indicated earlier, only on context, vocabulary, genre, participation and language.

Data from the observations indicate that the teacher employed explicit instruction tools as an approach to promoting students' English speaking, writing, reading, listening skills and understanding of the text. Thus, the teacher focused more on contextualising the text, explaining words and trying to explain the meaning of the vocabulary used in the text. For example, the teacher said:

> Let's go back again to the passage and start reading slowly, in such a way that I will explain some of the things. So far, the AIDS epidemic has left behind an estimated 14 million orphans; 80% of the AIDS orphans live in sub-Saharan Africa. What is an orphan actually? What is an orphan? No? No? (Teacher, during the fourth observation).

As a strategy to enhance classroom practice and improve student engagement in lesson discussion, the teacher participant made visible attempts to manage the lesson activities and discussions through the use of scaffolding techniques. For example, the teacher said: "*While you read the play, think about what makes it fantasy. Here is one idea to help you.*" (Teacher during the first observation).

In addition, there were instances where the teacher encouraged the students to participate in the lesson to establish the boundaries of when and when not to provide a scaffolding technique or examples that could evoke the students' thinking about the text. The teacher, to a certain extent, provided a step-by-step demonstration to the students always bearing in mind the purpose of reading a text by thinking aloud to achieve a certain level of understanding. The following excerpt illustrates this:

> All right. Scene 1. Let's talk about scene 1, before we go to scene 2. While reading, okay, one thing I forgot to say. This play is not real; it is fantasy. That means it is made-up narrators…People cannot travel down into the sea. In other words, this is not a real story. You can understand it. You cannot travel into the sea and come back. So, in your mind you will…you will see that it is fantasy. Let's go to our television; we've seen; we always look on cartoons (indistinct). (Teacher during the second observation).

Moreover, the teacher's level of proficiency in English is a matter that also needs mentioning. She tended to use incomplete sentences and interrupted herself often, as could be seen from the excerpt above. This would make it hard for the students to follow her.

As much as it is appreciated that the teacher was aware of the use of explicit instruction tools, the approach was minimally used. Table 3 presents a summary of the occurrences of all explicit language instructional tools used during the four lessons observed.

Table 3: Summary of the usage of explicit instructional tools

Text Type	Stance	Events	Context	Vocabulary	Genre	Participation	Language
The Gift of stories	Efferent	4		0	0	1	1
The Twins	Expressive	2	0	0	0	1	1
The Sacrifice	Efferent	1	1	0	0	0	0
HIV	Efferent	4	1	1	0	0	0
Total		**11**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**2**

Table 3 shows that the usage of explicit instructional practices was evident across the four lesson observed, for all the texts discussed. For four full observations of lessons, the total number of explicit instructional practices was extremely low. Furthermore, we see a total of 11 events or questions asked across the texts covered during the observed lessons.

Although the overall impression is that the use of an explicit instructional method was evident, there is a downside in the sense that the teacher was found not to have followed the recommended elements of explicit instruction properly. Whereas the teacher provided minimal instructional scaffolding, she failed to select and sequence content logically. In addition, she failed to break the techniques down so that they were user-friendly and accommodated the students' cognitive capabilities. The teacher, moreover, failed clearly to demonstrate the necessary skills pertinent to developing students into critical-analytical and independent thinkers (Rosenshine, 2012). It would have been better if the teacher had allowed the students to move toward independent performance. The following excerpt of language instructional moves indicating the teacher correcting students' pronunciation was evident in one English lesson:

> **Control turn 35, Teacher:** *"What is happening in the story of 'The Twin Brothers?' Learner No? Yes. no 36?"*

Control turn, student no 36: *"Is that the twin … eh Yorub … eh …Yor?"*

Control turn 37, teacher: *"Yoruba King [teacher correcting the student's pronunciation]"* (Observation 2).

The following observation, extracted from one of the researchers' journal, supports the findings of the analysed observation data.

> *My observation revealed that the teacher was challenged to encourage the students to feel comfortable, relaxed and spontaneous when reading. In using scaffolding as a technique, the teacher interrupted the students' utterances, pronunciation thereby denying them (students) opportunity to talk. (Research journal)*

Teacher questioning techniques

The use of questioning techniques was identified as one of the instructional moves employed by the teacher participant to promote classroom management. She clearly perceived the need to encourage student talk and teacher-student interaction by asking questions. According to the teacher, she employed the questioning technique as a strategy to overcome students' shyness and lack of confidence. She also mentioned that asking the students questions based on the text they are reading helps to boost their assertiveness and language proficiency:

> *I make sure that every student talks in class in such a way that … even those who have not raised their hands. I do not discourage them at all and always encourage them to respond, no matter right or wrong, but I let them respond. (Teacher, Field Note, line 98–105).*

The interview conversations below support the observation data.

> **Interviewer:** *"Okay, I noticed in the classroom that you always ask questions. So how do you choose who must answer the questions?"*

> **Teacher:** *"We use the old way, to say if ever you have the answer, can you raise a hand. … Usually, we ask the students to raise hands (Teacher, Interview 3, lines 538–544).*

> **Interviewer:** *"And if they don't raise the hand and they have the answers, what do you do?"*

The teacher responded:

Usually, I end up saying, what about you? What can you say? You end up maybe picking everyone. At the end, if ever all of them don't raise their hand, I usually start from the

first group and the first line, to say, what about you? So they will start talking. (Interview 3, lines 545–552)

Furthermore, the teacher mentioned that it was worth noting that many teaching techniques that she used focused on increasing academic achievement. Even though the teacher used questioning as an instructional move, it seemed not to yield any positive results as the students rarely responded to the question. Further to that, the questions were mostly test questions that presupposed one correct answer which, in most instances, were taken from the text. Moreover, the teacher participant did not allow the students to volunteer to respond to the questions. She called out their names even before she asked the question.

The teacher commented: "*I achieve classroom interaction by selecting which student could answer the question posed*" (Teacher, Field note, line 270–284).

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study revealed that some teacher discourse moves and language instructional tools were evident in the English First Additional Language lesson. However, such moves and practices appeared to be used at the convenience of the teacher to control the whole learning process and not to develop the students into critical-analytical thinkers. These findings validate the existing knowledge that some teachers use discourse moves and language instructional practices to control the learning process and promote classroom management, not necessarily to stimulate critical-analytic thinking in students (Corden, 2001; Kadir, Subki, Jamal, & Ismail, 2014; Kiemer, Gröschner, Pehmer & Seidel, 2015). As reported in the study, this approach inhibits, rather than facilitates, productive discourse as it denies students the opportunity of taking control of the discussion and having interpretive authority over a text.

In addition, and perhaps most significantly, the finding of the current study is consistent with the findings from many classroom studies by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Hargreaves (1984), and Francois (2016). A thorough examination of the total frequency of the teacher participant's use of supporting tools and signs to initiate productive talk did not reflect a complete scenario of discourse patterns. Therefore, it did not display how the teacher employed explicit instructional practices and how the students used language to sustain classroom discussion. The findings of studies by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Hargreaves (1984), and Francois (2016) revealed the dominance of teachers in classroom discourse, where teacher-student interaction is predominantly in the form of initiate-respond-evaluate (IRE). In such situations, the teacher *initiates* the discourse with a question, the student *responds* with an answer and the teacher provides *feedback* in the form of *evaluation*. According to the aforementioned scholars,

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the predominance of the IRE interaction structure makes classroom discourse very distinctive and impedes productive talk and the active engagement of students in classroom discourse.

Consistent with the findings of Li et al., (2016), the present study found that the quality of classroom talk depends on the teacher orchestrating many factors, including the length and pattern of interaction, the use of questioning and feedback, cognitive challenge, as well as the culture and organisation of the classroom. As explained by Du Plessis and Louw (2008), poor use of explicit instructional strategy could inhibit students' ability to gain reasoning, argumentative and analytic skills, which are assumed to help them develop a deeper understanding of English texts.

Although the findings of the present study have shown consistency with those of studies conducted by other scholars, it is silent about the existing knowledge posited by Murphy and Wei (2017) on the meaning and purpose of teacher discourse moves in the teaching and learning environment. The scholars indicate that the aim of teacher discourse moves (TDM) is to help transform students' ways and levels of thinking to enable them to apply this knowledge in different and complex learning contexts. In contrast to the above purpose, the evidence reported in this study indicates that the teacher used TDM as a strategy to control the learning process, not to encourage students to take charge of classroom talk. She also viewed TDM as a means of initiating answers to the questions she posed. In most instances, the teacher would not give the students time to think about a question or instructions, as evidence from the observation data confirms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is without doubt that the development of students' analytic skills appears to be a feasible way to improve the quality of education and students' academic achievements. The findings of this study provide some insight that certain teacher discourse moves and pedagogical principles vital for fostering critical-analytic thinking and developing students' deeper understanding of English texts are not utilised in rural South African schools. This emanates from the fact that the teacher education curriculum does not seem to provide training programmes that support the teaching of critical-analytic thinking. To improve the teaching of critical-analytic thinking, it is necessary for the government of South Africa through the Ministry of Education to review teachers' education curriculum and training plans to focus on productive teacher discourse tools and signs that are relevant to the 21st century teacher. In this regard, it suffices to create awareness of the apparent unpreparedness of South African English language teachers to support critical-thinking among students.

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