

The Extent of Students' Responses in the Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify the extent of students' responses in the classroom using three classroom interaction techniques. One research question guided the study. One hypothesis was tested and analysed using chi square statistics. The population is made up of 10,983 students 496 teachers. The sample is made up of 1098 students and 12 teachers. SS1 and SS11 students in three public schools were used for the study. Six classrooms were used; three in SS1 and three in SS11 respectively. Six teachers taught SS1 and six teachers taught SS11 using a technique (Flanders, IRE, and Teaching Cycles). Twelve lessons were recorded on a cassette, transcribed, coded and analysed. Flanders category was the observational instrument. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument at 0.87 co-efficient. The result showed students' responses in the classroom are not contingent on classroom technique used. The extent of students' responses in the classroom is very minimal therefore teacher should go extra step to encourage voluntary verbal contribution by the students' in every classroom. This makes the students more critical in weighing life challenges.

Keywords

Responses, Students, Techniques, Schools, Tape Recorder, Observation.

Background to the Study

The high rate of failure among candidates who wrote 2011 West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Nigeria has buttressed the need to reappraise our teaching method. The extent of students' reaction to teacher's instruction will be investigated; their ways of asking and answering questions; and applying ideas to novel situations. The estimate population of students that sat for the examination was 1.5 million, but only 472,902 candidates obtained five credits and above in five subjects including English and Mathematics. This represents 31 per cent of the population (Uwadiae 2011) cited in Dike & Adebayo 2011). Last year they did not do well too. Based on this statistics, there is need to study the nature of classroom discussion because Gross (1993) believes that students enthusiasm, involvement and willingness to participate in the classroom should determine the quality of class discussion. Although there is no consensus among scholars on the best interaction pattern, there is a

strong consensus that students should not be seen as passive listeners; teachers themselves should not dominate instruction or see themselves as prime source of information in the classroom. Scholars also believe that learners are responsible for their own learning; they need tasks that are challenging, authentic and multidisciplinary. Students' interactive instruction is the most powerful method of instruction; learning occurs most in collaborative classroom where students are encouraged to ask questions, define problems, lead conversations and engage in entrepreneurial activities. Teachers are therefore challenged in this study to encourage students' responses. Their role should shift primarily from information giver to facilitator. Teachers should generate a high degree of students' interest in the classroom by taking extra step to engage them.

Statement of the Problem

Education is an interactive process which involves the teacher and the students. If there is positive relation and affection, it will correlate to positive experiences in the classroom; students' voices will be heard often, the classroom is warm and students feel fulfilled in their academic career. But in contemporary Nigerian classrooms there are a lot of stressor and anxiety situations just like in the larger society. Often times teachers dominate instruction; there is "quasi discussion in the classroom" where few students respond but fail to develop, reflect or criticize their positions and outcomes of the sessions. Most students face participation blues. Most teachers do not establish the expectations of participation; they do not facilitate meaningful discussion (Wermia 1993). Anorue (2004) opined that an affective classroom is one in which the teacher uses varied teaching styles for instruction. However in Nigeria according to the scholar, teachers tend to use methods that are convenient to them. Based on the above facts the researcher wants to examine the nature of students' responses; how they ask and answer questions, and how they generate and apply ideas to novel situation.

Objectives of the Study

To assess SS1 and SS11 students' responses in Government classrooms using classroom interaction techniques namely; Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC), Teacher Initiation, Students Response, Teacher Evaluation (IRE) and Teaching Cycles (T.C).

Research Questions

How are SS1 and SS11 students different in responses when taught using Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC), Teacher Initiation, Students Response, Teacher Evaluation (IRE) and Teaching Cycles (T.C).

Hypotheses

Lesson responses among SS1 and SS11 students is not contingent upon classroom interaction techniques, namely; Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories,(FIAC) Teacher Initiation, Students Response, Teacher Evaluation (IRE) and Teaching Cycles (T.C).

Significance of the Study

The application of the findings of this study will help classroom teachers to analyse classroom behaviour objectively; and expose teachers and students to a more objective mode of interaction in the classroom. When students voices are heard and teachers employ logical moves, students will come out with critical and analytical minds and face life challenges better.

Scope of Study

Twelve secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government, Rivers State, Nigeria were covered in this study.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is an experimental research. The present study was designed to collect data on interactions in Government classroom and use the data to observe the nature of the classroom. In this experimental study, the teachers and student in three (3) public schools in Port Harcourt Local Government were used and taught the rudiments of a classroom interaction technique. One School was taught the rudiments of Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC); the other was taught the Teacher Initiation, Students Response, and Teacher Evaluation (IRE) while the third school was taught Teaching Cycles (T.C).

AREA OF STUDY

This was conducted Port Harcourt Local Government in Rivers State of Nigeria. It included three (3) public senior secondary schools.

POPULATION

All SS1 and SSII Government students and teachers in senior secondary schools Port Harcourt Local Government in Rivers State constituted the population of this study. The population is 10,983 students and 496 teachers.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sample of the study consisted of twelve (12) teachers and one thousand and ninety- eight (1098) students of Government studies in three randomly selected SS1 and SSII secondary schools. Six teachers taught SS1 and six teachers taught SS11 each using a technique. Five hundred and forty- one (541) students participated in SS1 while five hundred and fifty seven (557) students participated in SS11. Six classrooms were involved in the study, three in SS1 and three in SS11. Three public schools were randomly selected, two teachers taught using Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) two teachers taught using Teacher Initiation, Students response and Teacher Evaluation (IRE), while two teachers taught using Teaching

Cycles (T.C) in SS1 and SS11 respectively, the teachers were experienced. The teachers taught each class once. Twelve lessons were recorded.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The instrument used in collecting the data was the Flanders interaction analysis categories (FIAC). It was used to code and analyse the interaction pattern during Government lessons in the selected schools. The Flanders interaction analysis categories were carefully designed specifically for coding teacher and student behaviour and are very useful in studying classroom events. The present researcher has decided to use Government for the study. An interaction system is an observational instrument which takes place in the classroom. The Flanders Interaction Analysis Category (FIAC) records what students and teachers say during classroom interaction, the emphasis being on what the teacher says. The categories in Flanders system are two, teacher verbal response and student verbal response. Any verbal communication event by the teacher or pupils can be classified into one of the first nine categories. There is only one non-verbal category, which is silence or confusion. Each observation is done at the end of a 3 – second period and there is room for modification, the present researcher is using a five second period. The researcher went to the three schools four times. Three formative tests were administered to monitor whether teacher adjustment had impact on student learning progress and to provide on-going feedback to the researcher on pupils and teachers. The students were given summative – test at the end of the second month, the grades of the summative test showed that there was mastery of the instructional objectives by the students and the teacher the new instructional strategy was therefore effective.

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENT

Copies of the modified Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories system (FIACS) were given to experts in the Faculty of Education for validation.

RELIABILITY

The researcher used test retest method to establish the reliability of the instrument. The modified Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories system was used among two teachers who did not take part in the substantive study. After two weeks the experiment was repeated in the same classrooms and the reliability co-efficient of 0.87 was obtained, showing that the instrument is reliable.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data for the study were collected during classroom lessons. Before the observation, the researcher made visitation to the selected schools, established rapport with the Government teachers. A tape recorder was used to record all the class events. The researcher concluded by observing each of the teachers once and had a number of twelve (12) lessons on the whole. The twelve (12) lessons were afterwards transcribed and coded at every five seconds

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected in this study were analysed as follows: the research questions were analysed using column chart expressed in relative gain and gain percentages. The hypothesis was tested using chi square.

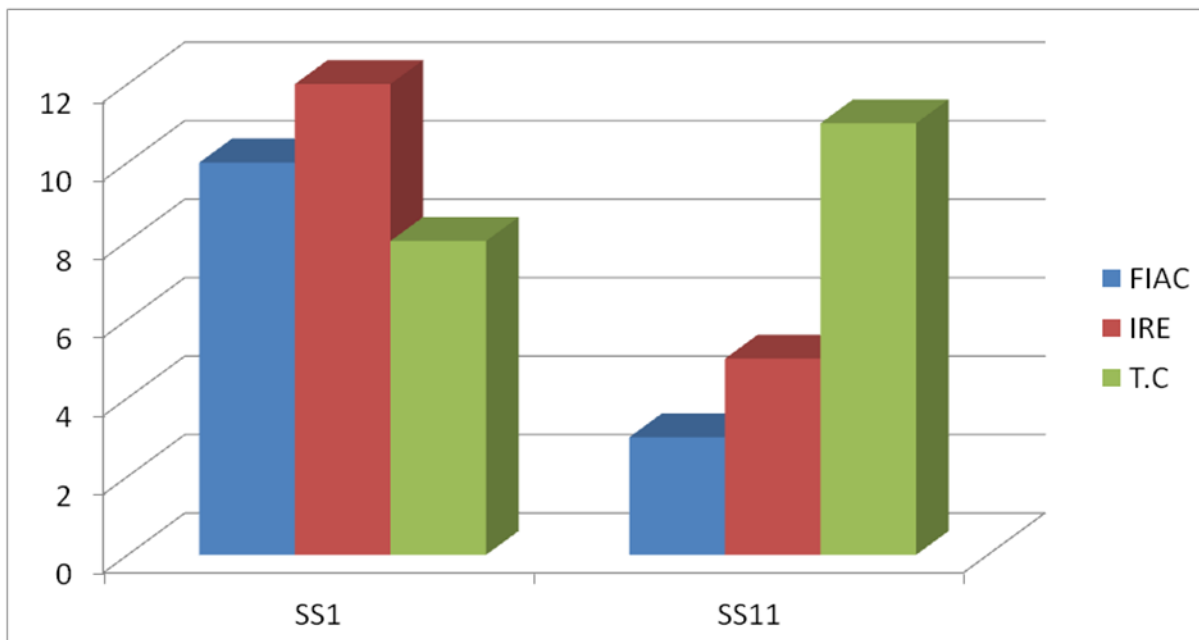
Research Question

How are SS1 and SS11 students’ different in responses when taught using; Flanders Interaction analysis Categories(FIAC), Teacher Initiation, Students Response, Teacher Evaluation (IRE) and Teaching Cycles (T.C)?

Hypothesis

Lesson responses among SS1 and SS11 students is not contingent upon classroom interaction techniques, namely; Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories,(FIAC) Teacher Initiation, Students

Gain percentage of Students’ responses in Government classrooms



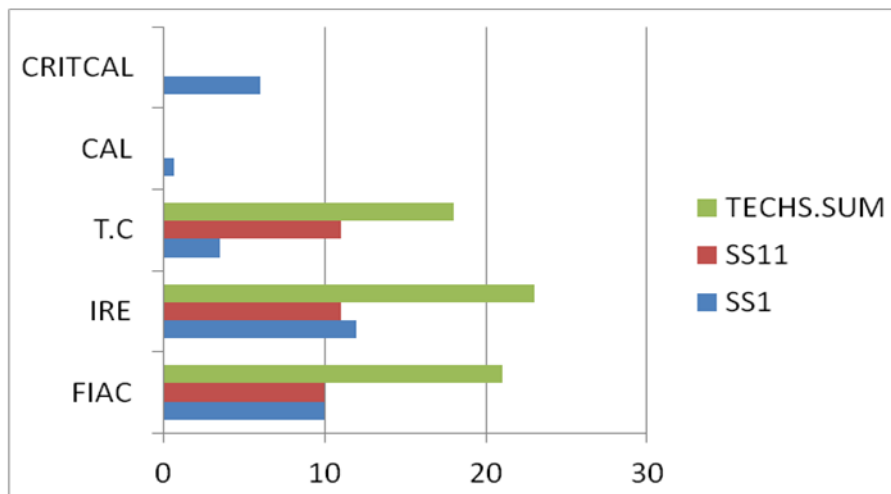
Response, Teacher Evaluation (IRE) and Teaching Cycles (T.C).

Table 1.1: 3X2 Contingency Table showing Students' responses in lesson and Classroom Interaction Techniques

Class level	Classroom Interaction Techniques				X ² Calculated	
	FIAC	IRE	T.C	Total		
SSI	Fo10 Fe(9.67)	12 (11.3)	8 (8.9)	30	0.686	
	SSII	Fo10 Fe(10.33)	11 (11)	11 (8.9)		32
		20	23	19		62

As shown in Table 1.1, the calculated value of χ^2 is less than the critical value (5.99) at the degree of freedom of 2. It is therefore concluded that students' responses in lesson is not contingent upon the classroom interaction techniques used.

Bar Chart Showing Chi Square Analysis of Students' Responses in SS1 & SS11.



Discussion

The extent of students' responses was investigated in this study. The result obtained after data analysis showed that students' responses are not contingent upon class interaction techniques used in SS1 and SS11. This is buttressed by the fact most teachers dominate the classroom as confirm by the research reports of Brown & Atkins, (2001), Gross, (1993), Banks & Thompson, (1995). Based on the facts above, students often shy away from active responses in the

classroom like asking and answering questions, generating and applying ideas to novel situations. This is better understood when one considers the fact that in a given class period only about four students contribute in a lesson (Cieniewics, 1993:2). The chi-square analysis of students' responses in SS1 and SS11 shows that teachers do not make effective use of higher order questions. Lathrop (1996) believes that inquiry based learning is nothing but an art of asking the "right" questions. Granted that motivating students' responses could be a daunting task but teachers are challenged to personally draw tips for encouraging students' responses. The essence being that teacher's enhanced design and expertise remains the best in managing any classroom in its uniqueness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers should encourage active students' responses by using right questions skills that would make the students more reflective and critical in thinking. Teachers should also use different techniques in teaching.

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