

**THE EFFECT OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDES ON THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN ESL CLASSROOMS**

by

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Summary

This study is an attempt to determine the impact of teachers' attitudes on their classroom behaviour and therefore on their implementation of the Communicative Approach.

A descriptive case study was conducted at six secondary schools in Harare, Zimbabwe (as ESL environment) to determine the effect of 38 O-level English teachers' attitudes on their classroom practice. Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, including a questionnaire, an observation instrument and a semistructured interview were used to gauge teachers' attitudes, assessing the extent to which attitudes are reflected in their classroom behaviour, and eliciting teachers' verbalisation of how they conceive of their professional task.

The findings show that the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach was critically dependent on teachers' positive attitudes towards this approach in the five categories covered by this study.

Declaration

Student number: **3394-531-4**

“I declare that THE EFFECT OF TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES ON THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN ESL CLASSROOMS is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references”.

(M A ABD AL- MAGID)

DATE

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the soul of my late father, who was confident that I would pursue my academic career, despite the difficult times we went through, and to my extended family. Without their support, love, enthusiasm, tolerance and advice this dissertation would never have come about.

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Key terms

Attitudes of teachers; The Communicative Approach; The Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods; Pair and group-work activities; Fluency and accuracy; Meaning-focused instruction; Form-focused instruction; Error correction; The role of the teacher; ESL teaching methods in Zimbabwe.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

Communicative competence is widely accepted as the best way to ensure successful language teaching (Brown 2000:266). For this reason, many countries have adopted the Communicative Approach to language teaching because it develops the competencies and abilities of ESL learners to be fluent, proficient and accurate in the target language. Many textbooks on teaching English as a second language (ESL) have been based on this approach to language instruction.

However, there are difficulties with the implementation of this approach in some ESL environments. Some scholars (Nunan 1987 and Kumaravadivelu 1993 in Thornbury 1997:279) claim that in spite of frequent opportunities for interaction, teachers who are committed to the Communicative Approach often fail to exploit such opportunities for genuine interaction in their respective classrooms.

Whitley doubts whether the Communicative Approach has actually become established in the classroom and whether a significant shift towards communicative teaching has actually taken place, noting that “despite its active promotion in journals, conferences, and teacher training, most teachers have only a vague notion of what it entails, and visits to their classrooms often reveal a continuing reliance on earlier or idiosyncratic approaches, and even a determined preference for them”(1993:137).

Rehorick (1990 in Rollmann 1994:222) confirms that the teaching profession has made the paradigm shift from merely mastering vocabulary and forms to use languages for communication; however, he doubts that classrooms have benefited from this change to the Communicative Approach. Kroes (1997:361) mentions that although the

Communicative Approach has been used for many years, some schools where speakers of African languages learn additional languages have yet to adopt it. Rather, teachers still depend on grammar lessons instead of incidental grammar instruction for the purpose of clear communication. Similarly, Karavas-Doukas (1996:193), Gupta (2004:266) and Liao (2004:270) cite the difficulties of implementing this approach in other environments such as Greece, India and China where ESL learning is reduced to only mastering the forms and vocabulary, rather than complete discourse. In Zimbabwe the Communicative Approach was introduced in 1992 to replace teaching methods like the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual Methods, which differ significantly from the Communicative Approach in terms of principles and methodology. As a result, an adjustment of teaching methods was required of teachers that would of necessity entail an attitudinal paradigm shift.

The introduction of any new approach to language teaching is usually problematic because it entails a paradigm shift for all the stakeholders involved, especially teachers (Defeng 1998:678). A paradigm shift by definition involves a change in attitude, which is why it is relevant to consider the attitudes of teachers. Richardson (1994 in Sato and Kleinsasser 1999: 496) recommends focusing on teachers' beliefs and practices in order to understand how they make sense of the teaching and learning process.

Careless (1998 in Hall and Hewings 2001:264) notes that when teachers are favourably disposed to an approach they are also likely to support its implementation, but when they are unfavourably disposed they may prove resistant to the change in attitude required to implement the approach. Teachers who are generally perceptive and sensitive to required adjustments in attitudes are better able to make the paradigm shift required to become facilitators of classroom discourse (Van der Walt 1990, Harmer 1995 and Holliday 1997). This is often a difficult transition for teachers who are accustomed to traditional methods that give them a commanding position from which they dictate. The Communicative Approach requires the teacher to direct and guide classroom discourse to ensure learners' interaction. Many teachers have difficulty in changing from being authoritarians to being facilitators.

Much research has been carried out in the field of second language learning and teaching. Most of these studies concentrate on the target language itself and on contrastive analysis, individual factors, discourse analysis, teachers' practices, the materials in classrooms, and so on (Schachter, Tyson and Diffley 1976 in Lightbown 1985:175, Sharwood-Smith 1996 and Sheen 1996 in Brown 2000:213). However, little research has been done on the impact of teachers' attitudes on the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL settings.

A descriptive case study is long overdue to determine the said impact, to profile teachers' behaviour in their classrooms and to review their opinions and beliefs concerning their profession and how they should behave in their classrooms.

The following questions will be addressed in this study:

- How conducive are teachers' attitudes to the implementation of the Communicative Approach?
- Is there a relationship between teachers' attitudes and the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach?

In order to address these questions this study will be used to

- assess whether a relationship exists between teachers' attitudes and the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach;
- determine the most appropriate method by which to measure teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach;
- determine how well teachers' professed attitudes are reflected in their actions; and
- measure the correlation between teachers' perceptions of the Communicative Approach and their behaviour in classrooms.

1.2 The purpose of the study

The main aim of this study is to describe ESL teachers' attitudes in Zimbabwe towards the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms and to determine to what extent this affects their classroom practices. Attitudes of 38 teachers in Zimbabwe will be gauged by means of an attitudinal questionnaire designed for this study (cf. Appendix A).

Freeman (1990 in Clemente 2001:47) maintains that teacher education should integrate four basic constituents: knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. Hargreaves (1994 in Clemente 2001:47) argues that we have much to learn about teachers' feelings, emotions and desires when they actually teach in classrooms. It stands to reason that teachers' attitudes in the classroom play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of the Communicative Approach and the learning process.

The success or failure of language learning is largely dependent upon interaction (e.g. the discourse constructed and the activities, which provide a realistic context for communication). The choice and use of activities in the ESL classroom are an invaluable aid to assessing teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach. The aim of this study is to determine to what extent teachers' attitudes and classroom praxis articulate with the principles of the Communicative Approach. The general aim of this study is to determine the degree of correlation between effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classroom and teachers' attitudes.

This aim is addressed by pursuing a number of specific, short-term objectives to

- isolate the salient communicative principles and features observed in ESL classrooms in O-level secondary schools in Zimbabwe;
- draw up an attitudinal questionnaire to evaluate teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach on a 5-point Likert scale;
- devise an instrument for the observation of communicative ESL classrooms in order to document actual practices taking place in them and to judge whether

teachers' utterances correspond with their practice (do what they say) using also a 5-point scale; and

- conduct interviews with some teachers about their opinions regarding the Communicative Approach and their teaching environment.

These objectives are addressed by means of deductive research in which a hypothesis is formulated and tested by means of descriptive statistics. The hypothesis, on which this study is based, is stated below.

1.3 Research hypothesis

This study is based on a general hypothesis.

***H** If teachers are positively disposed to the Communicative Approach, there will be a higher frequency of communicative activities in ESL classrooms.*

This hypothesis will be tested by measuring teachers' attitudes on a Likert scale to determine the extent to which the favourable attitudes of teachers are evident in their behaviour in ESL classrooms and thus whether effective implementation of the Communicative Approach depends on teachers' attitudes.

This hypothesis also postulates a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes and the number of communicative activities that take place in classrooms, that is, the incidence of such exercises is high if teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach are positive and low if attitudes are negative.

The hypothesis will be set off against a null hypothesis to determine its validity for the specific purpose of analysing the findings of this study. Teachers' attitudes serve as the independent variable, while implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms (teachers' behaviour) is the dependent variable.

1.4 Method of research

An extensive survey was done of the literature on the principles and features of the Communicative Approach and the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods of teaching and teachers' attitudes. An attitudinal questionnaire was drawn up and administered in order to measure teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach on a 5-point Likert scale. An observation instrument was devised to measure teachers' behaviour in their communicative classrooms. A semistructured interview was used to gain insights into the views of 20 teachers about their teaching approach and practices.

The focus of this study is entirely descriptive. 38 Zimbabwean teachers who teach O-level ESL were asked to respond to an attitudinal questionnaire comprising 22 statements. Each teacher was observed twice in at least three lessons, rated on 15 Statements on a 5-point scale. 20 Zimbabwean teachers of O-level ESL were interviewed. The questionnaire and the observation instrument were subjected to statistical analysis. Statements about their teaching practice were derived from transcripts of the interviews and were endorsed by the teachers themselves.

1.5 Structure of the study

This chapter identifies the problems that will be addressed in this study and provides a rationale for the research. The purpose, assumptions, and hypothesis of the study are outlined and a brief explanation of the procedures is provided.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature on the dependent variable. The status of English language teaching in ESL classrooms in Zimbabwe and the prevailing teaching methods are outlined. The features of the Communicative Approach are explained in contrast with those of the Grammar-Translation and the Audiolingual methods which were both entrenched in Zimbabwean schools. The shift to the Communicative Approach is not without its challenges. Chapter 2 will attempt to outline the potential challenges posed to the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach.

Chapter 3 continues the literature review and is devoted to the independent variable: teachers' attitudes in ESL teaching settings. Attitudes are defined and conceptualised, and the different dimensions of attitudes are explained. The relationship between beliefs, feelings and behaviours is explored. The role of teachers' attitudes in the success or failure of the traditional methods, and in the implementation of the Communicative Approach is examined. The use of Likert scale as an instrument to measure attitudes is described.

Chapter 4 deals with the research method used in this study with specific reference to subjects, materials and procedures. The three instruments of data collection used in this study are discussed and explained in detail and the statistical procedures used to analyse this data are outlined.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the presentation and discussion of the analysed data. The chapter aims at answering the questions posed in Chapter 1. It also presents the results of the study and interprets these results in the light of previous research.

Chapter 6 contains a summary of the major findings and an outline of the implications for further research. It also includes an analysis of the limitations of the study.

1.6 Abbreviations used in the study

ESL: English as a second language (as opposed to a home language) is used as a medium of instruction, a general communication medium and a medium of official government, business and industry as in India, Nigeria and Zimbabwe (Richards et al. 1992:124). It is sometimes referred to as second language (L2) and the target language (TL), when learnt in classrooms.

L2: A second language is the language that is not native to a country but is widely used as a medium of communication in education or in government with another or several other native languages (Richards et al. 1992:143). English is mainly taught as a second language in Zimbabwe.

TL: A target language is a second or foreign language that a learner is in process of learning. In Zimbabwe, the target language (TL) is English (ESL).

L1: A first language is the native language (NL), the mother tongue (MT) or primary language (PL) which is acquired first and used by people for their daily communication. In Zimbabwe, Shona and Ndebele are the two native or primary languages for the Shona and Ndebele people.

Chapter 2

ESL teaching methods: literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the dependent variable of the research study, namely the use in Zimbabwean schools of two traditional methods of ESL teaching (the Grammar-Translation Method and the Audiolingual Method) compared to the Communicative Approach. These approaches are fundamentally different but can complement each other in ESL classrooms. The main principles of the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods of L2 teaching are outlined and contrasted with the theoretical principles of the Communicative Approach, and the features of the Communicative Approach are described as a basis for conceptualising the statements of the questionnaire and the Statements of the observation instrument.

2.2 The status of ESL in Zimbabwe

In pre-independence Zimbabwe English was used as the primary medium to teach Africans to read and write in order to serve as employees in the government and boost white supremacist interests in Zimbabwe. Accordingly, an educational ordinance was passed in 1903 to the effect that Zimbabweans should be taught to understand and speak English (Nyawaranda 1998:24). The curriculum for schools that teach learners whose mother tongue is English and those whose mother tongue is not English was modelled on the British system, and teachers in pre-independence Zimbabwe relied mainly on books to meet the need for graduates who could read and write English competently (Atkinson 1972 in Nyawaranda 1998:25). Secondary education started in Form 1 (Grade 8). It consisted of a four-year O-level cycle where the official entry age was 13 years.

This system continued for sometime after independence in 1980 before it was replaced by modern methods (Nyawaranda 1998:31). English has remained the medium of

instruction from grade 4, however, since 1987 (Zimbabwe's Ministry of Education Act, 1987, which was amended in 1996, 1996:628) English shares the official status of the two primary languages, Shona and Ndebele. English is the language used in the media (television, radio, press) and in government. The Zimbabwean educational policy dictates that in English classrooms, learners have to be provided with the communicative skills required to cope with the roles and situations in life (Chinodya 1994:iv). The four language skills have to be integrated in order to focus on communicative tasks and activities, the textbooks have remedial exercises for errors and to enhance effective communication and interaction in the teaching and learning process.

The *New Secondary English, Step Ahead* for O-level (Ordinary Level) series consists of four books (for learners and teachers) approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture in May 1992 (Chinodya 1992). For O-level learners, the teaching method is based on the Communicative Approach. Chinodya (1994:iv-vii) in Teachers' Book 4, states unequivocally that the main principles of the approach to be used in Zimbabwe are that of the Communicative Approach. This course endeavours to teach systematically and methodically skills in all four language areas without merely testing learners as the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods used to do since they mainly focused on summative assessment of writing skills and a grasp of grammatical forms (i.e. exam-driven).

By contrast, the communicative integrated approach to assessment includes formative and summative assessment of all four skills with the focus on communication but without neglecting grammar, that provides a sound basis for development of communicative competence. Recent research has shown that the forms of the L2 are best learnt when learners' attention is focused on message conveyance or fluency (Harley 1993, Lightbown and Spada 1993, Long 1991, 1996, and Pica 1994 in Pica 2000:8).

In this context it should be noted that "in addition to language practice in key areas, the course seeks to get rid of common language errors by providing remedial exercises based directly on recurrent errors collected from the writing of O-level learners" (Chinodya

1994:iv), and to establish links with other subjects in the curriculum. The overall object, as indicated, is to equip learners to cope with the roles and situations they are likely to encounter on leaving school, hence the language taught is taken from real-life situations.

It is also intended that language learning should be authenticated by incorporating Zimbabwean culture and social, economic, political, scientific and technological experiences that reflect national needs in these areas. For this purpose, there are topics related to learners' needs. In Learners' Book 2 there are topics like: 'The rape'; 'The boyfriend' (Chinodya 1992:59-75); in Learners' Book 4: 'Crime crisis in Southern Africa'; 'The out-of-shape generation'; 'The migrants' and so on (Chinodya 1994:47-92).

This course looks beyond the classroom, by concentrating on teaching life-skills, such as how to prepare for and behave during interviews, write reports, conserve the environment and choose the right professions or careers. For example, Learners' Book 1 includes life-skills topics such as: 'Saving water'; 'Beware of food poisoning'; 'Raising trees' (Chinodya 1996:75-101). Learners' Book 2 includes topics such as: 'Workday: Interview with a social welfare officer' (Chinodya 1992:55), whereas Learners' Book 4 includes 'Deforestation' (Chinodya 1994:235).

One of the guiding beliefs in the Zimbabwean O-level course is that interest and enjoyment are crucial to language learning and consequently no efforts have been spared in assembling interesting materials and devising the most exciting activities possible. Where possible, learners' experiences are exploited to enhance language acquisition.

ESL learners in Zimbabwe are taught culturally acceptable ways of interacting orally with appropriate levels of language for different situations, relationships and registers so that they can use English outside their classrooms (Pfende 1997:5-139).

2.2.1 The training of teachers in Zimbabwe

Since independence, the government has designed training programmes to meet the demand created by the expansion of educational provision. One such is the Zimbabwe Integrated National Teachers Education Course (ZINTEC), a four-year conventional teacher training programme. For ZINTEC, started in 1981, student teachers undertake two long periods of study in one of the education colleges, at the beginning and end of the programme, and shorter periods each year in between. This training programme is mainly a mode of training preservice, non-graduate teachers, which is cost-effective. The other programme follows the conventional education colleges over four years. However, despite the governments' efforts to increase training methods for preservice teachers, the result has been a proliferation of poorly trained and ill-equipped preservice teachers graduating from teachers' training colleges (Nyawaranda 1998: 275-76).

Teachers, whether pre- or in-service trained, are introduced to demonstration lessons and prescriptive lectures on many methods of teaching ESL including the Communicative Approach (Nyawaranda 1998: 277). In-service training refers to the training programmes provided for teachers who "are already teaching and formed part of their continued professional development" (Richards et al. 1992:287). These in-service programmes are carried out to achieve certain objectives such as providing teachers with the means to assess the syllabus, methods of presentation and learning experiences, lesson plans, materials evaluation and so on. Preservice training refers to the basic teaching strategies taught during preparatory professional training to provide teachers with "a broad general background in teaching and in their subject matter" (Richards et al. 1992:287).

Teacher educators' role is confined to providing lectures and seminars on ESL teaching methods and L2 learning theory. The assumption is that teachers' exposure to the approaches, methods and techniques of ESL teaching will equip them with sufficient competence to teach their classes effectively. These seminars and in-service workshops are interspersed with brief periods during which the teachers concerned will go out to schools on teaching practice where teacher educators will visit them in the field to assess

their teaching skills (Nyawaranda 1998: 282). It is important to mention that not all the teachers working in Zimbabwe's secondary schools today come from the teachers' education colleges, or have graduated from English departments at the universities. Those teachers periodically receive in-service training.

The training colleges aim to equip trainee teachers to teach ESL. For example, Speciss College offers a certificate in English Language Teaching (ACE) which was developed in collaboration with the Department of Language and Literary Studies in Education at Manchester University (Pitman Qualifications, 1999: 5-16). These training colleges provide teacher trainees with textbooks and guidelines that inform them about the theoretical underpinnings of the teaching approaches including the Communicative Approach (Willis and Willis 1996:1-169). The structure of the English language is taught by means of task-based activities to develop teachers' awareness of the underlying system of the TL (Thornbury 1997:3-163, Muponde 1998:15-23 and Dube 2004:1-139).

The next section will elaborate on some of the methods used in ESL classrooms with particular reference to the Grammar-Translation Method and Audiolingual Method.

2.3 ESL teaching methods

As noted above, traditional methods like the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods, which were dominant until the 1970s, are still used in ESL classrooms today. These methods depend heavily on the principles of the behaviourist/structuralist approach to learning which treats L2 learning primarily as a process of habit-formation; and whereas the Communicative Approach depends on the social constructivist approach, the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods proceed from an essentially deductive approach in that the teacher presents a linguistic statement which learners practise and reproduce in a more open-ended way (Ancker 2001:9).

It is important to mention that these traditional methods are not presented in contrast to the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms. In fact, all these methods have similarities and differences in principles, according to Larsen-Freeman (2000:181).

2.3.1 The Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method was one of the earliest methods used to teach classical languages such as Greek and Latin. In the early 19th century, it was used to teach some modern languages like English and French, and it is still used in many countries (Richards et al. 1992:161).

The Grammar-Translation Method was developed mainly to improve learners' ability to read and understand L2 literature. It was believed that learners would benefit from learning L2 literature by means of memorising vocabulary (Richards and Rodgers 1986:3). The main aim was to consolidate native language learning through an understanding of L2 literature (Larsen-Freeman 2000:11).

The Grammar-Translation Method analyses the language rather than uses it. In other words, it isolates the grammatical rules to be taught to the learners to achieve accuracy, as opposed to using the language for comprehension and speaking (Celce-Murcia 1991:3). Elaborate explanations of grammar are always provided. Grammar instruction provides the rules for putting words together in sentences; instruction always focuses on the forms of the L2. Reading of difficult texts begins early in the course of study. Little attention is paid to the contexts in which grammatical rules are presented.

Error correction plays a very important role in the Grammar-Translation Method (Larsen-Freeman 2000:16). Errors are corrected immediately to prevent learners from internalising them because it is based on the belief that these errors become entrenched and are difficult to eradicate later on. The entire system does not take into account whether or not the learner makes his/her meaning clear but focuses primarily on whether or not the grammatical rules have been observed and used correctly.

It is questionable whether the Grammar-Translation Method is appropriate for ESL instruction because it emphasises the structural aspects of language learning while neglecting the communicative role of language. In the past, language learning was achieved by means of rote learning which was believed to enhance the learner's ability to learn the L2. Although memorisation is pedagogically important for L2 learners, it does not help learners to internalise vocabulary or grammar to be retrieved when needed. Practice alone does not result in successful communication, and some learners may find it tiresome and debilitating (Lightbown 1985:174).

The Grammar-Translation Method has been valuable in the sense that it stresses the value of practice to attain automaticity and the integration of L2 skills (Schmidt and Frota 1986 and McLaughlin 1987 in Pica 1994:59); the importance of reducing the TL into manageable chunks (Ellis 1985:21); and the importance of immediately correcting a particular error when it occurs (Lightbown 1992 in Pica 1994:70).

The Grammar-Translation Method is probably easier to teach than some other methods, as it makes fewer demands on the teacher than other methods. It requires little involvement and skills from teachers who concentrate on teaching grammatical forms. The Grammar-Translation Method also has its shortcomings. Its emphasis on deduction of rules and studying lists of vocabulary and translation exercises, results in failure to develop learners' abilities to communicate in the L2 (Celce-Murcia 1991:6). It neglects learners' cognitive ability to hypothesise and formulate their own rules of the L2, and discounts the suitability and appropriateness of the language used and learnt to contexts and situations in society. It also discounts socio-cultural factors, such as different cultures and attitudes of learners. These shortcomings have led language teachers to seek other methods of teaching to develop learners' speaking abilities.

2.3.2 The Audiolingual Method

The Audiolingual Method was dominant in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in the United States of America where it originated and spread to other countries (Richards et al. 1992:25).

Unlike the Grammar-Translation Method that focuses on grammatical forms in isolation, the Audiolingual Method presents classroom materials in dialogue form. The Audiolingual Method depends on using repetitive drills to teach structural patterns, memorisation of phrases and sentences, and contrastive analysis to speculate about areas of possible difficulties. Forms are sequenced and taught one at a time. The use of the mother tongue is rarely allowed in the classroom, to avoid possible L1 interference and to allow learners maximum opportunity to practise the TL in the classroom.

Grammar is taught inductively, as opposed to the essentially deductive approach of the Grammar-Translation Method (Richards and Rodgers 1986:1). Culture is regarded as an integral part of L2 learning to provide learners with information and cultural background, which are intrinsic to communicating in the L2. It also emphasises speaking and listening as the most basic language learning skills before reading and writing.

In spite of the partial success of the Audiolingual Method in the development of L2 oral learning by means of oral-aural aids and traditional dialogues, it fails to provide naturalistic contextualised input, as it provides contrived inputs (i.e. not related to learners' real-life situations) to present the L2 grammar and vocabulary. It does not begin to approximate natural interaction in real-life settings and does not equip the learner with the strategic communicative competence to cope with language use outside the contrived contexts of the classrooms.

Both the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods contributed positively to the teaching of ESL. Focusing on grammar, which is characteristic of these traditional methods, is necessary for drawing learners' attention to the linguistic forms in L2 input, thus using a conscious process of learning by deduction (Ellis et al. 2003:151). Both

methods established useful teaching practices, which include the role of drills and practice, the teaching of L2 forms and explicit error correction. The Audiolingual Method attempted to develop writing, reading, speaking and listening skills, though they were developed in a discrete way. However, these methods used the grammatical rules of the language merely for constructing correct sentences, that is, they focus on the sentence level of the TL.

The notion of linguistic accuracy as the primary goal of language learning, rules out the most important purpose of language, namely effective communication. Recognition of the inadequacy of the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual Methods with their emphasis on meaningless drills and repetition, led to a change in teaching methods with a view to developing L2 learners who can communicate effectively in the L2. Learners need to learn grammatical rules *inductively* and therefore classroom practices should provide them with opportunities to induce or discover such rules from their experience of using the language in social situations. The goal is not mere mastery of the L2, but to use it to communicate different messages in different situations for different purposes in meaningful contexts. Using the L2 to communicate appropriately, functionally and purposefully is the principle that differentiates the Communicative Approach from the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual Methods.

2.3.3 The Communicative Approach

The theory of communicative competence attempts to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences in a natural setting. “This competence ... is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct” (Hymes 1972:277-78). Hymes’s view requires developing the components of communicative competence into a teaching approach and method. Communicative competence enables learners to convey and interpret meaningful messages within specific contexts. Hymes makes a distinction between the use of ‘linguistic competence’, that is, knowledge of the language forms and

rules to form grammatically correct sentences, and ‘communicative competence’, that is, knowledge that enables learners to form grammatically correct sentences and to use the rules of speaking in different situations appropriately (Brown 2000:246 and Richards et al. 1992:65).

Hymes rejects structuralism based on behaviourism, which measures learners’ competence by testing their knowledge of underlying grammatical rules. The Communicative Approach is also a rejection of Chomsky's generativism based on mentalism which measures learners’ competence in the TL by their cognitive abilities to generate utterances which are governed by grammatical rules of the TL (Brown 2000:10). Hymes’s notion of competence is more extensive than Chomsky’s linguistic competence (grammatical knowledge). Chomsky (1965 in Hymes 1972:283) admits, “Grammaticalness is only one of the many factors that interact to determine acceptability”.

Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983 in Brown 2000:247) developed a model that further refined communicative competence into other components:

- 1) Grammatical competence, which comprises the lexicon, morphology, syntax, sentence-structure, semantics, and phonology.
- 2) Discourse competence, which is needed to connect sentences in order to establish and maintain logical coherence in expository prose (written or spoken). This competence focuses on the use of intersentential relationships to produce coherent conversations and written texts (Brown 2000:247).
- 3) Sociolinguistic competence, which is exemplified in observing sociocultural rules in conversation, requiring clear awareness and correct interpretation of social situations and relationships between parties connected (Savignon 1983 in Brown 2000:247).
- 4) Strategic competence subsists in a repertoire of verbal and nonverbal communication mechanisms or techniques to which a speaker can resort to resolve or repair a breakdown in communication that may be attributable to a lack of conversational skill (Canale and Swain 1980 in Brown 2000:247). Among these techniques or strategies

are paraphrasing, repeating, and avoiding utterances. Swain (1984 in Brown 2000:248) identified strategic competence as a repertoire of techniques used to account for the communication strategies that may be called to enhance the effectiveness of communication (i.e. besides repairing breakdowns).

Bachman (1991:683) further refined Canale and Swain's model of language competence to include what he describes as, "a much wider range of elements and provides a more comprehensive view of language ability than have earlier models". Bachman (1991:683-86) speaks of different features of language use. His model defines language ability as "the knowledge of language in conjunction with the features of language use in context to create and interpret meaning". Bachman configures two main components of language ability. The first component is language knowledge (competence) that includes two other broad areas: organisational and pragmatic knowledge. Organisational competence includes grammatical (linguistic) and textual (discourse) knowledge. Organisational competence includes our knowledge of all the rules and systems that dictate what we can do with the grammatical forms, and the rules governing the coherent stringing together of sentences.

The second component, according to Bachman, is sociolinguistic knowledge that deals with the functional (illocutionary) aspects of language such as receiving, sending, requesting, apologising, and greeting. Functional knowledge includes sociolinguistic aspects of the language such as politeness, formality, metaphor, register and culturally related aspects of language.

Bachman (1991:686) also maintains that what he has called 'strategic competence' accounts for the metacognitive strategies of the assessment of goal setting and planning of utterances. "Such strategies work with all areas of language knowledge and function interactively". Bachman (1991 in Brown 2000:248) also separates strategies from the other language competencies. He maintains that strategic competence "almost serves as an 'executive' function of making the final 'decision', among many possible options, on wording, phrasing, and other productive and receptive means for negotiating meaning".

The above-mentioned contributions suggest that language proficiency is not just a collection of its parts (phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon), but a mastery of linguistic forms for use in real situations. What is important is to provide learners with meaningful (comprehensible) input and opportunities to interact with each other in a language they understand so that they can use the TL in various situations (Krashen 1983 in Brown 2000:277-80).

2.4 The features of the Communicative Approach

The features of the Communicative Approach represent a departure from the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods both in terms of its theoretical paradigm and its approach. Pica (2000:5) maintains that the Communicative Approach “can be much more effective than grammar-translation, audiolingualism, or other earlier methods in promoting learners’ confidence and their fluency in speech and writing, and in accelerating the early stages of their language development”.

Richards and Rodgers (1986:69) state that the Communicative Approach started from a theory of language as communication and its goal has been to develop learners’ communicative competence. The Communicative Approach focuses on the meanings of the TL with a view to develop communication as the primary goal of learning and teaching a language.

This section sets out a systematic discussion of the features of the Communicative Approach derived from Canale and Swain (1980 in Brown 2000:247) and Bachman (1991:683–86). These features will be operationalised into statements to capture teachers’ attitudes and behaviours in ESL classrooms.

2.4.1 Pair and group-work activities

This subsection discusses pair and group work as one of the principles of the Communicative Approach. How pair and group-work activities further classroom interaction between learners and their teacher will be explained. A thorough survey will

be given of the research done with pair and group-work activities. This subsection concludes with the benefits of pair and group-work activities as a means of developing L2 learners' communicative competencies.

Classroom interaction is done in pairs and groups to give learners the opportunity to negotiate meaning. Pair and group-work activities are carried out through providing information, paying attention to the social relationships, and providing suitable tasks for pairs and groups of L2 learners. Language learning is facilitated and enhanced by sustained interaction between learners and the teacher as a means of negotiating meaning: to understand and be understood in the L2 (Allwright and Bailey 1994:123-33, Gass and Varonis 1994:285 and Brown 2000: 251, 287).

Interaction, including meaningful negotiation, has been shown to increase the development of the L2 by raising learners' awareness of the learning processes (Pica 1987, Gass and Varonis 1989, Ellis 1991, Long 1992 and Schmidt 1992 in Gass and Varonis 1994:285). Interaction occurs naturally in pair and group-work activities. Long, Adam, McLean and Castonos (1976) in Pica (1994:61) have shown that group work has helped learners, more than traditional teacher-led classes, to use the TL for social and interpersonal purposes. There are mixed results from studies carried out in the field of L2 learners' accurate productions due to different contexts. Lightbown and Spada (1990), White (1991) and Fillmore (1992) in Pica (1994:61) at school level, found that group work limited learners' accurate output when they interacted with and picked up their peers' incorrect production – “steady diet of interlanguage” – where these ESL learners had no sufficient opportunity to interact outside the classroom situation with ESL speakers and interact only with their ESL learners who are non-native speakers and with their teachers. Other studies at the university level found that ESL learners did not pick up their peers' errors into their own output as they embarked on modifying, manipulating and adjusting their utterances in collaboration with their peers and were able to use the correct output in their utterances (Pica, Licoln-Porter, Panions and Linnell 1993, Gass and Varonis 1989 and Bruton and Samuda 1980 in Pica 1994:62). Chesterfield, Chesterfield, Hayes-Latimer and Chaves (1983 in Pica 1994:61-62) focused on the effect

of teachers and peers on ESL learners, where those ESL learners who studied with English-speaking peers achieved higher L2 proficiency due to their peers' interaction, but those who studied with peers who did not speak English picked up their peers' errors as they depended mainly on their teachers' interaction.

In communicative tasks such as role plays, learners are able to practise both linguistic and communicative competencies in meaning-focused activities to prepare them for situations they will encounter in real life. Teachers ask questions for clarification, and to help learners to comprehend texts or produce appropriate output (Ellis 1997:83). In pair and group-work activities, learners are encouraged to ask for clarification, verification or correction from peers or their teacher. This process leads to meaningful interaction that sustains and modifies learners' output, which is required for successful learning of an additional language, according to research by Swain (1985).

Many researchers have convincingly supported group work. Nation (1989:20-24) focuses on the goals, types and different configurations in which features are arranged in classrooms for pair and group work. Likewise, Long and Porter (1985:213), McGreal (1989:17-19) and Pica (1994:61) have shown that group work is more suitable to large classes in ESL environments as a compensatory technique to provide learners with opportunities to negotiate meaning of L2 input.

Grouping is used to reduce the limiting effects of large classes, which is crucial for maximum results in teaching ESL according to the Communicative Approach. Long and Porter (1985) concentrate on the effect of group work together with interlanguage talk on L2 acquisition. They provide comprehensive pedagogical arguments in supporting group work in the field of L2 acquisition, especially between non-native speakers in their interlanguage talk. They recommend more language practice opportunities in order to improve the quality of learner talk, promote a positive affective climate and to motivate learners (1985:207-212). Activities such as problem solving, role plays and games are recommended for effective interaction in pair and group-work activities (Richards and Rodgers 1986:76-80, Larsen-Freeman 2000:125-134 and Pica 2000:11).

Learners are not closely monitored in pairs or groups. In pair and group-work activities, teachers have to provide their learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction with the spoken or written text. A text is read in order to support oral discussion in ESL classrooms. The teacher may instruct the class to read the passage and discuss the questions with other group members. Pair and group work in L2 classrooms is a crucial factor for the development of L2 learners' linguistic and discoursal competencies as it provides opportunities to discuss the linguistic forms and the coherence and cohesion of the taught texts. It develops sociolinguistic competence, as it requires learners to negotiate meaning in various socially demanding situations. It also develops strategic competence since it provides different strategies such as role plays, problem-solving activities, discussions and games to ensure effective classroom interactions.

2.4.2 Fluency and accuracy

This subsection covers two main features of the communicative approach: fluency and accuracy of L2. Meaning-focused instruction that aims to develop the fluency of the L2 will be explained first, followed by a discussion of form-focused instruction that aims to develop L2 accuracy, as proposed by some researchers (Harmer 1982, Doughty and Williams 1998 in Ellis et al. 2003:150). These two kinds of instruction are presented not as opposites but as complementary.

2.4.2.1 Meaning-focused instruction

In the early days of the Communicative Approach, its supporters argued that teaching meaning in order to communicate was of primary importance in L2 classrooms (Burgess and Etherington 2002: 434 and Ellis et al. 2003:150). The emphasis was on communication of real messages rather than on the forms of L2, because the traditional methods failed to produce L2 learners with communicative competence. The shift meant the accent in teaching was now on doing something and "not just language form for its own sake" (Lightbown 2000:434). The main concern was authenticity – teaching real

language rather than decontextualised contrived examples to illustrate a grammatical rule. Burgess and Etherington (2002:445) concur that to be authentic, texts must not be specifically prepared for language teaching, but must be living examples of texts occurring naturally in everyday contexts.

With this in mind, various communicative syllabuses were designed to develop learners' communicative competence as defined by Canale and Swain (1980). These communicative syllabuses suggest various activities and tasks that “involve the learner in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” (Nunan 1989 in Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1993: 203). The focus is on meaning; there is a goal to be accomplished which addresses a relationship between the task and real life situations (e.g. shopping, travelling, etc.).

The Interaction Hypothesis (Long 1983 in Nobuyoshi and Ellis 1993:203) states that learners can acquire the new linguistic form by negotiating for meaning with a teacher or a peer to make the input comprehensible. For example, a learner who does not understand the lexical form *wear* may ask one of his peers about it, who in turn may provide him with the phrase *put on clothes* to explain an aspect of the meaning in a specific context.

Meaning-focused instruction aims to engage learners in communicative interactions in the L2 with a view to comprehending and communicating meaningful messages (Ellis et al. 2003:151). However, they argue that meaning-focused instruction, though effective in developing “fluent oral communication skills, does not result in a high level of linguistic or sociolinguistic competence” (Ellis et al. 2003:151), and that some kind of form-focused instruction should therefore be incorporated in communicative classroom contexts. This led to the development of syllabuses that pay attention to the L2 form in meaningful contexts.

2.4.2.2 Form-focused instruction

This subsection addresses the need to develop L2 accuracy to be integral to communicative interaction in classrooms. Spada (1997:73) defines form-focused instruction as “pedagogical events which occur within meaning-based approaches to L2 instruction but in which a focus on language is provided in either spontaneous or predetermined ways”. In other words, attention has to be paid to L2 accuracy in spoken and written production of L2 learners to increase their “quality of communicative engagement” (Holliday 1997:227).

Long (1991 in Ellis et al. 2003:150) defines focus-on-form as instruction that draws learners’ attention “to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication”. In other words, the attention paid to form arises from a communicative need in response to which learners discover for themselves what the correct form is to make their meaning clear by using requests for clarification and confirmation (Burgess and Etherington 2002:434 and Ellis et al. 2002:420). The relevant linguistic elements “include phonological, lexical, grammatical, and pragmalinguistic aspects of language” (Ellis 2001:2). By cultivating these linguistic elements, the teacher will attend to different forms in a lesson (Ellis et al. 2001:283-84).

Focus-on-forms differs from focus-on-form. Focus-on-forms refers to focusing on or teaching discrete grammar points out of context and isolated from meaning as in structural syllabi (Long 1991 in Ellis et al. 2003:149-150). In focus-on-forms instruction, most of the lesson is devoted to teaching L2 forms of which both teacher and learners are aware. This is evident in the Grammar-Translation Method, which aims solely to develop L2 grammar through a set of grammatical rules in contrived sentences to illustrate and analyse these rules.

Longman (1983, 1988 in Willis and Willis 1996:19) has shown convincingly that formal instruction does indeed contribute to L2 acquisition. This conclusion indicates that the focus on meaning in ESL classrooms does not in any sense exclude focus-on-form

instruction; as a matter of fact, it is essential for L2 acquisition. Higgs and Clifford (1982), Harley (1989), Day and Shampson (1991), and Lyster (1994) in Ellis et al. (2003:151) indicate that meaning-focused instruction alone cannot account for improved levels of accuracy and that teaching forms of the L2 in meaningful contexts has been successful. Those researchers investigated French immersion learners, and found that they were unable to acquire some forms such as the past perfect and the imperfect tenses (Harley 1989). They were also unable to acquire the conditional forms (Day and Shampson 1991), and failed to acquire the different sociolinguistic rules, such as the difference between *tu* and *vous* (Lyster 1994). These learners may have been engaged in tasks that mainly develop the meaning of the TL, rather than tasks that develop both meaning and accuracy.

According to Long (1991) and Doughty (2001) in Ellis et al. (2002:422) form-focused instruction combined with meaning-focused instruction works better than meaning-focused instruction on its own, as it develops learners' ability to use the linguistic form in a communicative task. Form-focused instruction helps L2 learners 'notice the gap' between their own output and input and those of others. This enables them to restructure their linguistic system in a correct and appropriate way (Schmidt 1990, 1995 in Ellis et al. 2003:150). When L2 learners need to express themselves and struggle to find suitable linguistic forms, form-focused instruction acts as a 'push' to achieve their goals accurately and appropriately (Swain 1985 and 1995 in Shehadeh 1999:2). Ellis et al. (2003:150) argue for the use of form-focused instruction because it contributes to the development of learners' linguistic and sociolinguistic competence and ultimately develops crucial communicative skills. Form-focused instruction develops learners' fluency and accuracy as it creates conditions for interlanguage restructuring. It gives learners the opportunity to take 'time out' (Basturkmen et al. 2004:243) from meaning-focused instruction to attend to certain linguistic features together with their meanings. Form-focused instruction is pedagogically effective since it can be used as an immediate remedy to process certain L2 forms, which may be difficult for L2 learners (Ellis et al. 2003:152).

In view of the above considerations, it is clear that both form- and meaning-focused instruction must be included in L2 classrooms to achieve eventual communicative competence in the L2.

2.4.2.2.1 Incidental focus-on-form

Incidental focus-on-form refers to drawing learners' attention to the linguistic features that arise occasionally during task-based activities in lessons that focus mainly on communication or meaning conveyance. Incidental attention to form does not predetermine what kinds of form should be taught. Instead, the forms emerge from the communicative tasks performed in L2 classrooms. Incidental focus-on-form is characterised by extensive use of a variety of forms in the lesson as they arise from a communicative need (Ellis et al. 2001:412).

In pre-emptive incidental focus-on-form, the teacher, or learners, choose specific forms to be the incidents of classroom discourse during meaning-focused classroom activities. Pre-emptive incidental focus-on-form is exemplified in some words that are synonymous with different uses that confuse L2 learners, such as *stay* and *live* (Chinodya 1992:34). Some grammatical rules can be singled out, such as the difference between *transitive* and *intransitive* verbs (Chinodya 1992:121). The communicative activities in ESL classrooms also lend themselves to the incidental instruction of sociolinguistic conventions, such as how to make polite requests: 'Do you mind...', 'May I borrow...' etc. (Chinodya 1992:20).

2.4.2.2.2 Planned focus-on-form

Planned focus-on-form refers to teaching specific L2 forms that hamper L2 learners' speaking or writing in a structured fashion. It is characterised by drawing learners' attention to specific forms in a single lesson (Ellis et al. 2003:154). Certain forms have been identified in the prescribed syllabus in Zimbabwe. These forms are highlighted in communicative textbooks, which are used throughout the country (Chinodya 1992, 1994

and 1997). For example, the syllabus centres on planned practising of specific linguistic features of the target language to help learners convey messages, as when to use comparatives such as *very, extremely, so ... that, too ... for, etc.*, in different situations (Chinodya 1992:82). These forms are integrated throughout the learning units in the textbooks and aim to develop the correct and appropriate use of the L2. Research has shown the benefit of teaching specific linguistic features in a communicative context (Carroll, Swain and Roberge 1992, Carroll and Swain 1993, Doughty and Varela 1998 and Williams and Evans 1998 in Ellis et al. 2003:154). Rao's study (2002:85) also suggests that both communicative and non-communicative activities in ESL are beneficial to ESL classrooms.

In conclusion, form-focused instruction is vital to enable learners to develop fluency and accuracy in ESL. It also helps to produce coherent spoken and written texts. Further, it helps ESL learners to learn the forms of ESL through incidental and planned ways of teaching. It facilitates the development of a high level of ESL linguistic, discoursal and strategic competencies.

2.4.3 Error correction

This subsection discusses the concept of 'error correction'. Errors are unavoidable when learning a language and developing communicative competence. Brown (2000:217) defines an error as "a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker [that] reflects the competence of the learner". Error reflects the level of L2 learners' proficiency. How these errors are to be handled in ESL classrooms has generated numerous viewpoints, which will be outlined in this subsection.

Learners' errors may be caused by many factors: L1 interference, inadequate L2 knowledge, complexity of the L2, fossilisation, overgeneralisation, and various psycholinguistic, cognitive and affective variables (Ancker 2000:21 and Brown 2000:218). Learners' attention is usually drawn to their errors by teachers or peers during interaction otherwise, their intended messages will not be conveyed (Pica 1994:70).

Corrective feedback has been considered helpful in achieving successful communicative competence in L2 (Edge 1989 in Ancker 2000:20).

The proponents of Proficiency Oriented Instruction maintain that if errors are neglected this will be at the expense of L2 accuracy (Whitley 1993:140). Studies by Lightbown and Spada (1990) and Spada and Lightbown (1993) suggest that immediate feedback during classroom interaction can lead to improved accuracy. Lightbown (1992) in Pica (1994:69-70) concluded that immediate correction created longer and lasting awareness of errors and correct use of the forms concerned.

Practitioners of the Communicative Approach regard errors as part of the L2 natural learning process, so they are allowed as a positive sign of hypothesis-formation (Richards and Rodgers 1986:68, Brown 2000:138, Larsen-Freeman 2000:127 and Pica 2000:9-10). Error correction has to be kept to a minimum and priority should be given to errors that hamper communication, as the aim is to develop learners' communicative fluency. Incidental and planned focus-on-form instruction aim to help L2 learners correct their errors in a feedback process during communicative activities and tasks.

Lyster and Ranta (1997:37-66) specify certain types of error correction, as they are concerned with error correction as an analytic teaching strategy (i.e. by leading to overgeneralise and then correcting). In an immersion study at some primary schools in Canada, they examined the effect of various types of error correction on learners' self-repair with regard to grammatical accuracy and vocabulary precision in a meaningful communicative context. The types of error correction, as identified by Lyster and Ranta (1997:46-48), are as follows:

- *Explicit correction.* The teacher clearly states that learner's error is incorrect and then provides the correct form. The teacher may use expressions such as 'You should say', 'Use this word', or 'You mean'.
- *Recast.* Here the teacher implicitly reformulates (paraphrases) all or part of the learner's error or provides the correction.

- *Clarification requests.* The teacher uses phrases such as ‘Excuse me?’ or ‘I do not understand’, to indicate that the utterance of the learner was misunderstood by the teacher and hence a repetition or reformulation by the learner is necessary. For instance, when a learner asks: ‘Can I made a card...’, the teacher will say: ‘Pardon?’ This indicates to the learner that there is something amiss with the sentence and it needs to be rephrased.
- *Metalinguistic clues.* Here the teacher provides information, comments or questions related to the learner’s incorrect utterance indicating the occurrence of an error, such as ‘Do we say it like that in English?’
- *Elicitation.* The teacher asks questions to elicit the correct form from the learner (pushing the learner to use the correct form) such as ‘Say that again’, for the learner to reformulate his/her utterance. A teacher may also start the correct form and pause for the learners to complete it.
- *Repetition.* The teacher repeats the learner’s error and adjusts intonation to draw the learner’s attention to it, such as ‘le giraffe?’ when the learner makes an error ‘Le ... le giraffe’, as an incorrect use of gender in French.

The first two types of error correction (explicit correction and recast) are characterised by the teacher’s intervention to provide learners with the correct form or to reformulate correctly, thus eliminating self-repair by the learner. These two types least ensured successful error correction (50% and 31% respectively, according to Lyster and Ranta 1997:56). Clarification requests, metalinguistic clues, elicitation and repetition are more helpful because they force learners to correct themselves. As learners are pushed by teachers to repair incorrect forms, they try to reformulate their initial utterances in response to their teacher’s feedback. This feedback-reformulation process ensures that learners are actively engaged in learning L2 forms by discussing the form in some way before reformulating it (Lyster and Ranta 1997:37). The success rate of elicitation (100%), clarification requests (88%), metalinguistic clues (86%) and repetition (78%) indicates that these are the most effective types of error correction (Lyster and Ranta 1997:56). The findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997) in favour of inducing self-repair,

indicates that teachers should draw learners' attention to their errors by providing cues, thus forcing them to draw on their own linguistic resources to correct themselves.

In conclusion, error correction helps L2 learners to develop their linguistic, discorsal and strategic competencies as it aims to ensure correct communication of messages.

2.4.4 The role of the teacher

Adopting a new approach to language teaching, not only involves a change in classroom practices but often implies a change in the type of role that the teacher is expected to fulfill. This is especially true when one compares the Communicative Approach to the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods of L2 teaching.

The Communicative Approach pays attention to the needs of learners and the objective is to engage learners' interests and enjoyment in the language learning process. Learners must be made to feel secure, unthreatened and non-defensive in a communicative classroom (Defeng 1998:679). Successful L2 acquisition supposedly occurs when teaching contexts and environments are supportive and anxiety-free. Learners' own experiences are used to enhance their language learning process (Brown 2000:267). Teachers, therefore, have to avoid the traditional authoritarian role so that learners can have opportunities to manage their own learning (Larsen-Freeman 2000:129).

Where the Communicative Approach is concerned, the teacher is seen as a facilitator, a manager of classroom activities, a guide, an adviser, a monitor and a co-communicator for the benefit of his/her learners (Richards and Rodgers 1986:77, Larsen-Freeman 2000:127,128 and Pica 2000:4). Littlewood (1981) and Candlin (1985) in Van der Walt (1990:29) add new roles to the teacher's role in the Communicative Approach. The teacher is seen as an overseer, a consultant, a co-learner, an informant, a resource, a coordinator, a curriculum designer, classroom researcher, and a sharer of responsibility in the classroom.

Oxford (1998:1) provides a comprehensive summary of the role of the teacher who adopts the Communicative Approach. The role of the teacher changes from the source of all wisdom to facilitator of learning and guide toward greater autonomy for the learners, which means that the teacher must not dominate all the activities in the classroom as in the traditional way. Altan and Trombly (2001:29) have this to say: “The teacher-dominated classroom is characterised by the teacher’s speaking most of the time, directing all the activities, and constantly passing judgment on learners’ performance, whereas in a highly learner-centered classroom, learners will be observed working individually or in pairs and small groups”. Teacher-led instruction is not recommended as it gives fewer opportunities for learners to interact than in learner-centred instruction (Taylor 1983 in Defeng 1998:679). The Communicative Approach requires the teacher to be both instructor and facilitator in the sense that he/she should guide and direct classroom activities to expedite the communicative discourse of the classroom. Classroom discourse should not be dominated by teacher talk with few contributions from learners.

According to Van der Walt (1990:30-36) the teacher should plan the materials in the syllabus in a way that will reflect his/her own theories about language learning and teaching (i.e. his sense of plausibility). According to him, the teacher is both instructor and manager in the sense that he/she enables and facilitates the language learning process and creates “conditions under which language can be acquired” (1990:30). The teacher is seen as an educator and has to pay attention to the whole educational development of L2 learners, including their communicative competence. The Communicative Approach, unlike traditional methods, requires a high level of L2 proficiency of teachers to meet the demands of this approach. However, most English language teachers in ESL settings are non-native speakers who are not proficient, so they rely on textbooks and classroom management patterns such as orders, requests, etc. (Dubin and Olshtain 1986 in Van der Walt 1990:34). A lack of proficiency in the L2 may result in teachers adopting easy activities such as repetitive drills and exercises, i.e. they do not really talk to learners and there is no real conversation going on in a collective discourse.

The teacher's role in the Communicative Approach is more demanding than in the traditional methods. The teacher has to be an instructor and manager to monitor and supervise classroom activities and situations with a view to enabling learners to acquire the TL effectively (Van der Walt 1990:34). As a manager, the teacher plans, organises and guides the learners' progress and raises their awareness of the forms of the L2 as in formal instruction, which has proved useful in meaningful contexts. For teachers to cope with the Communicative Approach, it has been suggested that they have to "make considerable adjustments in their attitudes, language teaching philosophy and actual teaching practice" (Van der Walt 1990:37).

Holliday (1997:228-30) argues that the teacher should be the authority in the classroom in the sense that he/she manages and directs classroom situations to develop learners' communicative competence. In other words, what matters is whether the teacher controls, directs and guides classroom activities in a way that draws learners' attention to the communicative purposes of the spoken and written texts. Holliday (1997:229-30) maintains that this strong authority helps the teacher to ensure the equal distribution of classroom opportunities to the learners without dominating classroom activities.

Harmer (1995:337-345) follows the change in teachers' roles from teacher-fronted to learner-centred learning and teaching. He also discusses the teachers' resistance to lessening their controlling role, that is, the 'ego' behaviour. Harmer elicits teachers' responses about their roles by means of an interview, to determine whether such roles are appropriate to learner-centred classrooms. Harmer asserts that "there is considerable evidence that learners respond well to prominent, attention-attracting professionals" (1995:340). Such teachers are flexible and favourably disposed to adopting and adapting to new strategies that suit their new roles in communicative classrooms. This indicates that teachers' roles are crucial in shaping their attitudes to the teaching methods, particularly the Communicative Approach. Prodromou (1991:7) provides a practical list of observable behaviours to help raise teachers' awareness of the different perspectives on teaching.

2.4.5 Content of materials

This subsection discusses the features of the materials provided in the Communicative Approach syllabuses. In Zimbabwe, the method of teaching ESL O-level learners is based on the Communicative Approach. The materials have been designed to develop L2 learners' communicative competence. This subsection explores various aspects of the authenticity of materials; the importance of including linguistic, discoursal, pragmatic (sociolinguistic), and strategic competence to ensure fully rounded communicative competence as conceptualised by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983 in Brown 2000:247). Linguistic competence was thoroughly discussed under the 'fluency and accuracy' category (cf. 2.4.2).

Authentic texts (materials) are used to give learners opportunities to respond to genuine communicative needs in real-life situations so that they can develop strategies for understanding language as it is actually used by native speakers (Defeng 1998:679). Activities should draw learners' attention to the sociolinguistic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes (Brown 2000:266). It is important to provide realistic materials to develop learners' comprehension and production skills in the L2. O-level English textbooks in Zimbabwe provide various authentic topics. For instance, Learners' Book 1 includes authentic materials on topical issues such as: 'Saving water', 'The strange forest', 'Beware of food poisoning', 'Raising trees', 'The Lion and Cheetah Park', and 'Shopping wisely' (Chinodya 1996:47-159).

Discourse competence refers to the ability to understand and construct different genres of spoken and written texts such as narratives, description and argumentative texts (Chinodya 1997: xiii). Each genre has its own conventions and features. For instance, a text that starts with 'Once upon a time' indicates that the text belongs to the narrative genre and the reader or hearer will expect that the past tense will be used throughout the text. In each genre, there are lexical devices which make the text cohesive.

Cohesive devices are crucial elements that connect sentences into a logically structured text. This is vital as it serves to provide logical connections for readers and listeners. For example, ‘ellipsis’ takes place when a verb is replaced by another as in: ‘My friend *remained* at college for the weekend. I *did* too’. These logical connectors mark the relationship between and within sentences to show reason (*since, because, as*), concession (*although, though, even, if*), purpose (*so that, in order to, so as*), and time (*as, when, while, since*). An example marking reason is: ‘English learners in Zimbabwe are not affected by the lack of immersion in English, *because* they are widely exposed to it’. Learners have to learn how to show awareness of discourse markers, such as *however, moreover, on the other hand, firstly* and *thus*, to mention only a few (Chinodya 1991: vi).

Coherent texts are unified and meaningful in their structure. The interaction of the sender and the receiver of the text creates coherence (Cook 1989:75). Learners, then, can “organise their work satisfactorily into paragraphs and show a sense of cohesion/coherence within paragraphs” (Chinodya 1991:vi).

Sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence includes knowledge of sociolinguistic rules and functional (illocutionary) abilities. Pragmatic competence refers to the rules determining what variety of language can be used, by whom and in what situations. Conventions governing the use of language in different situations include speaking in a courtroom, at a restaurant or in a cordial situation. The learner has to understand the social situations and the forms of language to be used in different situations. Pragmatic competence is the ability to interpret the social meaning of the linguistic varieties or registers and to use language with the appropriate social meaning.

Communicative textbooks have to provide different topics that include a variety of linguistic registers for different kinds of social interactions (Chinodya 1994:8-189 and Pfende 1997:5-139), so that learners can “distinguish between formal and informal language and determine the appropriateness of a particular style used in a piece of writing; form an opinion about what they read, such as whether they like it or not, or why” (Chinodya 1997:xi).

Strategic competence refers to the ability to make the most effective use of available skills to carry out a given task. It is perceived “as a set of metacognitive components, or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function for language use, as well as in other cognitive activities” (Bachman and Palmer 1996 in Verhoeven and Vermeer 2002:363). Learners need to be made aware of the various communicative strategies such as summarising, generalising, checking, clarifying, modifying, repetition, adjusting their L2 knowledge or using requests for clarification and comprehension checks. It is argued that these strategies promote negotiation of meaning and consequently enhance L2 acquisition as they make the input comprehensible and result in providing further opportunities for communicating thoughts in a meaningful context (Swain 1985 in Pica 2000:5).

Communicative strategies help learners create genuine communicative discourse in their classrooms and prepare them to use these strategies in situations outside the classrooms. These strategies enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall and use of new information. Inferring the meanings of new words from the contexts, summarising, paraphrasing, skimming, taking cues from the texts, memorising and retrieving to create a mental link are part of the strategies that help learners to use language communicatively. Teachers have to encourage their learners to recognise and internalise the strategies available to them as partners in the learning process.

2.5 Conclusion

It is clear that the Communicative Approach represents a significant departure from the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods of teaching in terms of its theoretical paradigm and principles. It has been shown that the Communicative Approach “can be much more effective than grammar-translation, audiolingualism, or other earlier methods in promoting students’ confidence and their fluency in speech and writing, and in accelerating the early stages of their language development” (Pica 2000:5).

Chapter 3

Teachers' attitudes: literature review

3.1 Introduction

Since this study explores teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach, it is important to explain the definitions and dimensions of the attitudes that determine the evaluative reaction towards a person, a thing or a phenomenon: beliefs, feelings and behaviours. The relationship between attitudes, beliefs and behaviours is examined. The situational factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of ESL teaching methods are explored. Finally, the scale for measuring attitudes is discussed.

According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:178-79), teachers' attitudes are decisive for L2 learning. Considerable research has been conducted on the role of attitudes and motivation in ESL learning from the point of view of the learner. Prominent in this regard are the works of Lambert (1955), Lambert (1985), Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972), Gardner and Smythe (1981) in Gardner and MacIntyre (1993:2).

3.2 Definitions of attitudes

There is no common definition of attitudes. The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English (1995:66) defines attitudes as "... the way that you think and feel about somebody or something; the way that you behave towards somebody or something that shows how you think and feel". This definition centres mainly on how a person believes, feels and then behaves in a certain way that reflects his established belief and feeling. Webster's New Collegial Dictionary (1975:73), asserts the importance of belief as an integral component of attitude, and adds the "organism state of readiness to respond in a characteristic way to a stimulus such as an object, concept, or situation". This definition indicates that individuals' feelings are activated by a certain stimulus towards something, which in turn determines the behaviours of the individual.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1990:70) defines attitude as “a settled opinion”. This settled opinion includes the individual’s behaviour, which displays his/her attitudes towards the thing or the person concerned. Attitude is, then, seen as a settled “behaviour or manner of acting” reflecting individuals’ feelings or opinions. This definition suggests that individuals’ beliefs are crucial in determining their behaviours.

The International Dictionary of Education (1977:32) provides a comprehensive definition, which is adopted in this study. Attitude is defined as a “predisposition to perceive, feel or behave towards specific objects or certain people in a particular manner. Attitudes are thought to be derived from experience, rather than innate characteristics which suggest that they can be modified”. This definition includes beliefs, feelings and behaviours as dimensions of attitudes. It is through experience and maturation in the teaching process that teachers consolidate their feelings and beliefs consciously and unconsciously about a person, object or event (Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg 1988:26).

The basic concern of the aim, research questions and hypothesis of this study is to discover whether or not teachers’ behaviours in their ESL classrooms are congruent with their attitudes, comprising their beliefs and feelings (cf. 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

3.3 Dimensions of attitudes

There are three main interrelated dimensions: beliefs, feelings, and behaviours (the International Dictionary of Education 1977:32).

3.3.1 The dimension of beliefs

In a fairly recent study, Pajares (1992:325) did a thorough survey of teachers’ beliefs in education and came to the conclusion that beliefs “play a critical role in defining behaviour and organising knowledge and information”. Pajares (1992:313-316) sees

beliefs as an essential component of attitudes that include knowledge, affect and behaviour. They are mental concepts, which are interrelated.

Beliefs are mental constructs emanating from teachers' experience, for example of the Communicative Approach. Basturkmen et al. (2004:245) review some conclusions drawn by researchers about the influence of teachers' beliefs on their behaviours. For example: beliefs "motivate instructional practices in the classroom" (Burns 1992); "beliefs tend to shape teachers' instructional practices" (Johnson 1992); beliefs "guide teachers' thought and behaviour" (Borg 2001).

The dimension of beliefs establishes the teacher's 'sense of plausibility' concerning the relevant teaching approach, and that, in turn, controls behaviour in the classroom (Prabhu 1992 in Clemente 2001:50). This indicates that beliefs are instrumental in shaping teachers' roles in their classrooms. To my mind, beliefs help teachers to apply their knowledge in a certain way in line with the principles of the teaching approach they practise (i.e. the Communicative Approach).

3.3.2 The dimension of feelings

The affective component has to do with the emotions (Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg 1988:26). The International Dictionary of Education (1977:14) defines feelings as "those aspects that emerge from experience and behaviour such as the teaching experience of teachers that will develop emotionally in them". It is important to establish rapport between the teacher and the method he/she is applying. Clemente (2001:48) explored teachers' attitudes (as counsellors) towards one of the self-directed language learning schemes in Mexico and came to the conclusion that teachers' feelings play an important role in any language teaching approach.

3.3.3 The dimension of behaviours

The behavioural dimension of attitude is the teacher's response or action tendencies, that is, the tendencies shaping his/her behaviour towards the approach. Behaviour will be more, or less, accepting according to the attitudinal affect and belief (Eiser 1984:66). According to Eiser, in language teaching, the adoption of specific methods of teaching depends on teachers' feelings and beliefs about language teaching and learning.

The teacher's established beliefs and feelings concerning a teaching approach determine the teacher's behaviour. The dimensions of attitude interact to establish an attitude that produces certain observable behaviour.

Teachers' attitudes are not observable, and hence could be ascertained by eliciting statements, for example of their beliefs about the Communicative Approach (cf. Appendix A). An analysis of the statements will reveal to what extent teachers actually practise the principles of the Communicative Approach in their classrooms.

3.4 Beliefs and behaviours of teachers

Teachers' attitudes will be ascertained by analysis of their statements and behaviour in order to see how they influence teachers' decision-making and general performance. Research shows that teachers start the teaching profession with preconceived thoughts and attitudes, gained experience as learners and teachers that shape their performance in the classroom (Prabhu 1990:172-75, Freeman 1990, Wallace 1991, and Hargreaves 1992 in Clemente 2001:48; Johnson 1994, Almarza 1996, Numrich 1996, Woods 1996 and Golombek 1998 in Borg 2003: 88).

3.5 Feelings and behaviours of teachers

The relationship between feelings and behaviour is complex. Attitudes are said to determine behaviour, yet social psychologists have doubts about the validity of the links

between attitudes and behaviours, since attitudes and behaviours are often divergent. According to Krebs and Schmidt (1993:13), very little progress has been made in solving the longstanding problem of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour.

Concerning the complexity of the relationship between attitudes and behaviours, Fishbein (1970) carried out three experiments to predict overt behaviour from attitudinal variables. He shows the importance of the individual's intention to perform a given action in a given situation. Teachers' feelings towards the performance of a given teaching approach (in this case the implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms in Zimbabwe) may be an indicator of their attitudes. It has been assessed that the attitude/behaviour relationship is a cause-effect relationship (Young and Lee 1984 and Hargreaves and Fullan 1992 in Kennedy and Kennedy 1996:353), which would mean that attitudinal change could be an important facilitator in the effective implementation of any teaching approach. It is not enough for teachers to merely understand the underlying theories and principles of any approach; they have to change their feelings and behaviours in order to implement an approach successfully.

3.6 The situational factors in ESL teaching environments

Situational factors in teaching environment can lead to differences in teachers' implementation of the Communicative Approach.

According to Prabhu (1990:162-63) some situational factors arise from the teaching environment (e.g. the language policy, linguistic and cultural attitudes towards the language, ideological and economic factors that influence the teaching processes itself, educational policy concerning teaching approaches and instructional objectives, time and resource constraints, administrative inefficiency, and class-size). Some factors are related to the teacher (e.g. training, beliefs and skills). Learner-related factors include age, prior learning experience, attitudes to learning, personality, psychological processes, and different learning styles. All of the above factors may have "an effect of limiting or extending opportunities for desired forms of pedagogic action" (Prabhu 1990:166).

The following conclusions can be drawn: Attitudes are tendencies to react favourably or unfavourably to something (therefore also to a teaching approach). Attitudes comprise various components: beliefs, feelings and behaviours, which influence a person to act in a certain way. Attitudes can be learnt and modified from experience of a teaching approach, with the possible result that teachers' classroom practice may improve.

3.7 Measurement of attitudes

Kiesler et al. (1969:9-10) identify five types of attitude measurement including self-reported beliefs and behaviours from which inferences can be drawn and measurement premised on inferences of the performance of objective tasks.

The Likert scale is used in this study as part of a summated ratings method and a means of self-report measurement (Appendix A). The Likert technique presents a set of attitude statements, according to which subjects are asked to express agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale. Each degree of agreement is given a number value from one to five. For example:

Pair and group-work activities help to provide opportunities for developing genuine interaction among learners.

5. 'Strongly agree' 4. 'Agree' 3. 'Undecided' 2. 'Disagree' 1. 'Strongly disagree'

Likewise, the observation instrument is designed to validate the stated attitudinal responses by comparing whether what teachers say is consistent with what they do in their classrooms with regard to Communicative Approach activities (Appendix B). This observation instrument also comprises a five-point scale according to which ratings have to be awarded as shown in the following example:

The teacher provides learners with various activities to carry out in pair and groups.

5. 'Always' 4. 'Usually' 3. 'Sometimes' 2. 'Rarely' 1. 'Never'

The attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument operationalise the constructs of this study into statements to be tested and quantified in numerical values awarded to each response.

3.8 Conclusion

Teachers' attitudes are evident from their evaluative reaction to a teaching approach. Attitudes comprise three dimensions: beliefs, feelings, and behaviours which are the integrated mental constructs that interactively produce an attitude that is manifest in observable behaviour. Teachers' feelings and beliefs about the Communicative Approach are ascertained from their statements in response to an attitudinal questionnaire reflecting the principles of this approach (Appendix A). Teachers' behaviour is observed and described (Appendix B) to compare with what they reported to be the effective implementation of the principles of the approach. Effectiveness of implementation may be inhibited by extraneous factors such as lack of time, training, etc.

Chapter 4

Research method

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the method of research used in this study. The subjects of the study and the methods of data collection, namely a questionnaire, an observation instrument and a semistructured interview are explained. Finally, the method of data analysis of the descriptive statistics is spelled out.

4.2 The method

This study is essentially descriptive in its approach and employs features of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The descriptive method was chosen in order to establish the existence of phenomena through explicit description (Seliger and Shohamy 1989:125). The questionnaire, based on a five-point Likert attitude scale, is essentially quantitative while the piloting of the questionnaire, the observation instrument and the semistructured interview form the body of the qualitative data. A profile of the teachers participating in the study consists of the background information of their qualifications, experience, and age.

The approach is deductive in that it departs from preconceived hypothesis and a narrower scope of investigation about the phenomenon it describes, that is, the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms. It is also inductive, however, in that it includes observation of the natural field of communicative ESL teaching in classrooms. It also draws conclusions from some of the subjects' views expressed in interviews of 45 to 60 minutes per teacher about their practices in applying the Communicative Approach.

This research project is based on a case study method, which was used to investigate a group of 38 Zimbabwean O-level English teachers' attitudes towards the implementation

of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms. It explores the nature of the relationship between teachers' attitudes and implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms in Zimbabwe. In this regard, the study aims to develop an understanding of the Communicative Approach from teachers' points of view. The teacher's perspective is a crucial factor, which determines the success of the implementation of any approach because teachers are the individuals who implement an approach (cf. 1.1). The case study has been valued as a method for its principal advantages above other research methods (Merriam 1988, Yin 1983 and Adelman et al. 1976 in Nunan 1992:76-77, and Seliger and Shohamy 1989:125).

The case study utilises a range of methods for collecting and analysing data, rather than being confined to a single procedure. It provides an in-depth and detailed description of how a phenomenon, in this case the Communicative Approach, is conceptualised and developed by these teachers. The case study also provides intensive, holistic description and analysis of a phenomenon. It is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. It is also easy to generalise from it, and it provides database materials to be interpreted by future researchers. Findings could in future perhaps play a role in teachers' development (Nunan 1992:76-77, and Seliger and Shohamy 1989:125).

The case study method was chosen for the above-mentioned advantages, in particular providing an overall picture of what happens in ESL classrooms as a social setting by mixing qualitative and quantitative methods of research. This study looks at ESL teaching in Zimbabwe within its real-life contexts, has no control over the contexts, but seeks to understand the process through teachers' attitudes and behaviours.

4.3 The subjects

The subjects, who responded to the attitudinal questionnaire and were observed, were 38 Zimbabwean O-level English teachers who all teach according to the Communicative Approach which is implemented in compliance with the educational policy (Chinodya 1992).

Initially, 60 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. The 38 returned replies represent a 63.3 % response rate, which exceeds the 30-sample size described as “the minimum for useful statistical analysis” (Cohen and Manion 1994 in Burgess and Etherington 2002:438). The teachers who sent in replies had 3 to 20 years experience in teaching English. Their ages ranged from 21 to 40, the majority being in their 30s. All the teachers have either a Bachelor’s degree (Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Education) or a Certificate of Education from the universities and colleges in Zimbabwe. 25 (65.8%) of the subjects who responded to the questionnaire and were observed, were learners who had been taught according to the Communicative Approach since its inception in 1992. 13 (34.2%) had been taught and trained according to the traditional methods of L2 teaching and later trained according to the Communicative Approach. As for the interviewed teachers, 13 (65%) had been taught and trained according to the Communicative Approach, while 7 (35%) had been taught and trained according to the traditional methods of L2 teaching and later trained according to the Communicative Approach. The teachers who had been taught and trained according to the Communicative Approach were expected to display more amenability to its implementation and its principles than the rest who had been exposed to the traditional methods of Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual ESL teaching.

4.4 Methods of data collection

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the three methods of data collection used for this research were a questionnaire, an observation instrument and a semistructured interview.

The literature survey was followed by a pilot study, conducted from 2 to 15 December 2004 in which both the questionnaire and the observation instrument were developed and refined. The statements of the questionnaire cover the main principles of the Communicative Approach (cf. 2.3.3 and 2.4). The initial statements comprise 40 statements (20 favourable and 20 unfavourable). Each statement has 5 possible responses: ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘undecided’, ‘disagree’, and ‘strongly disagree’. Each response is rated on a scale of values ranging from 5 to 1 in that order. The highest score on the

scale (5) indicates a favourable attitude, which means that the relevant statement is compatible with the principles of the Communicative Approach. The lowest possible score (1) indicates an unfavourable attitude, which signifies incompatibility with the principles of the Communicative Approach.

The unfavourable statements of the questionnaire have been calculated differently from the favourable statements because they reflect the principles of the traditional methods. The highest score on the scale (5) is for 'strongly disagree' which indicates a favourable attitude; 4 for 'disagree', 3 for 'undecided', 2 for 'agree' and 1 for 'strongly agree'.

The initial 40 statements were distributed to a sample of 20 ESL teachers in Zimbabwean secondary schools and teaching staff of the Open University of Zimbabwe. 11 favourable and 11 unfavourable statements from the total 40 statements recorded in the initial pilot questionnaire were selected.

These statements were selected following the procedure discussed by Karavas-Doukas (1996:191), i.e. each of the 22 selected statements contained more than the average 3 'Undecided' responses as these statements had the highest correlations.

4.4.1 The attitudinal questionnaire

A questionnaire was used for reliability (Seliger and Shohamy 1989:172-73, Nunan 1992:143-49 and Leedy 1993:187), and because it is a flexible tool that ensures objectivity. It elicits data that lies deep within the minds or within the attitudes, feelings or reactions beyond the observer's reach (e.g. attitudes, motivation and self-concepts) of the subjects under investigation (Leedy 1993:187). These characteristics have made it a popular means of data collection in many fields. The questionnaire enables the researcher to collect data in field settings where the data can be quantified to produce the responses required for analysis (Nunan 1992:143). The questionnaire is also a cheap tool and can be administered easily. Finally, the data is more accurate as it is given to all the research

subjects at the same time, avoiding bias that may affect the reliability and validity of the study (Seliger and Shohamy 1989:172).

4.4.1.1 Motivation for the statements of the attitudinal questionnaire

The statements of the questionnaire fall into five categories: pair and group-work activities (4 statements), fluency and accuracy (6 statements), error correction (4 statements), the role of the teacher (2 statements), and content of materials (6 statements). The positive and negative statements were selected to compare teachers' perceptions of and disposition towards the principles of the Communicative Approach with perceptions and dispositions pertaining to the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods.

4.4.1.1.1 Pair and group-work activities

The pair and group-work category stems from the theories and practices of the Communicative Approach. Interaction in the classroom between teacher and learners and among learners is a prominent feature of the Communicative Approach (cf. 2.3.3 and 2.4). The pattern of pair and group-work participation gives learners the opportunity to engage in meaning-focused activities as an aid to the comprehension and production of coherent utterances in the L2. Pair and group-work activities help maximise their command of the L2, that is why they have been recommended as the basis for syllabus organisation (cf. 2.4.1).

Statement 1 in the questionnaire (Appendix A) determines whether teachers' think that pair and group work provide opportunities to develop genuine interaction among learners, while statement 2 investigates whether pair and group work waste learners' and teachers' time. Statements 3 and 4 focus on whether teachers believe that pair and group work are useful in assisting learners to focus purposefully on understanding written (and spoken) texts in an interactive and cooperative way. This study follows Holliday's definition (1997:223-26) of 'focus on text' as engaging L2 learners' communicative competence interactively in a new and complex text in order to use their experience cooperatively to

answer the questions, resolve problems set out in the tasks and reach consensus on the newly introduced rules and meaning of words. Focus on spoken and written texts encourages L2 learners to go beyond the sentence level in order to use their organisational, discursual and strategic abilities. Where the Communicative Approach prevails, the classroom is a setting in which practices and experiences are organised for the benefit of the learners.

4.4.1.1.2 Fluency and accuracy

It is maintained that focus on meaning will help learners to approximate favourable conditions for L1 acquisition and may even lead to similar success in the L2 (Richards and Rodgers 1986:67-8, Brown 2000:266-67, Larsen-Freeman 2000:127-130 and Pica 2000:4-6). The literature review revealed that fluency and accuracy of the L2 should be developed. Statements 5 and 6 of the questionnaire address opposite propositions: whether teachers are disposed towards focusing on L2 meanings when requesting, apologising etc., as encouraged by the Communicative Approach (statement 6), or towards focusing on contrived forms of L2, as encouraged by the traditional methods (statement 5).

The operating premise here is that conveying messages purposefully has priority, and attention should be paid to forms of L2 that are used to that end with a view to rendering conveyance of a message. Both incidental and planned focus on a form that needs addressing are recommended in communicative textbooks (cf. 2.4.2.2).

Statements 7 and 8 of the questionnaire address incidental and planned use of form. They determine whether teaching selected form promotes learners' communicative competence or whether teaching the forms of English as separate Statements promotes learners' fluency.

Statement 9 of the questionnaire is calculated to determine whether teachers believe that materials presented to L2 learners have to be authentic in the sense of being related to

learners' real-life situations so that they can be prepared to communicate effectively in such situations. Authentic materials refer to the selected texts to simulate the real world in the classroom in order to develop L2 learners' skills in the current communicative event and the long-term as well (Guariento and Morley 2001:348). Authentic texts are presented to help learners to learn the L2 effectively and encourage them to use the relevant forms in requesting or giving information (Burgess and Etherington 2002:445-46). Contrived texts consist of separate sentences, which are not related to any context and mainly serve to illustrate and memorise L2 forms. Statement 10 investigates whether materials are related to learners' real-life situations, which was not the case with the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods.

4.4.1.1.3 Error correction

Errors are natural in learners' output, and selected types of errors should be addressed in a positive way to support learning (cf. 2.4.3). The object of statement 11 is to determine whether teachers focus on fluency and accuracy of the L2 rather than mainly accuracy in learners' feedback (statement 12). Statement 13 explores whether teachers consider errors as a natural part of L2 acquisition, and therefore have to let some errors slip by uncorrected to prevent disruption of the flow of communication (cf. 2.4.3). Traditionally, no allowance was made for learners' errors on grounds that errors need to be corrected immediately so that they can not be fossilised (cf. 2.4.3). The purpose of statement 14 is to discover whether teachers correct all errors, though they are encouraged by education policy to refrain from this, except when teaching English grammar (Chinodya 1994: viii), because constant error correction is harmful as it distracts learners' attention from content and the form of the L2 (cf. 2.4.3). It is therefore considered helpful to focus only on selected errors that hamper communication.

4.4.1.1.4 The role of the teacher

The Communicative ESL classroom is a learner-centred environment where learners have the opportunity to use the L2 and carry out related activities. Such activities are not offered in the traditional classrooms. The teacher manages, directs, instructs and initiates

classroom activities and situations to facilitate the L2 learning process (Van der Walt 1990:30). The strong authority of the teacher is considered helpful in directing, managing and guiding classroom discourse so that L2 learners benefit equally from his/her facilitation (Holliday 1997:228-30). The accent must remain on facilitation, however, so that the teacher does not end up talking most of the time. Statements 15 and 16 are intended to determine whether teachers' perceptions and predispositions were towards an authoritarian or a facilitative preference or bias in performing their task as teachers.

4.4.1.1.5 Content of materials

This category investigates the various components of communicative competence, namely: the discursual, the sociolinguistic and the strategic components in the textbooks used in ESL classrooms (cf. 2.4.5). These components of communicative competence have been proposed by the models inspired by communicative competence theory (Canale and Swain 1980 and Bachman 1991). Linguistic competence was discussed under the 'fluency and accuracy' category (cf. 4.4.1.1.2). This category follows Brown's (2000:266-67) conceptualisation of the Communicative Approach, which comprises the following: (1) Classroom goals are focused on all the components of communicative competence. (2) Language activities are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic and functional use of language to convey meaningful messages. (3) Fluency and accuracy are considered to be indispensably complementary principles underlying communicative activities. (4) Learners have to use the target language (English) productively and receptively.

Statements 17 and 18 test teachers' perceptions of how to develop cohesion and coherence in a text. Discourse competence represents the logical flow and connections made between different parts of a text to make it more coherent (Statement 17). Statement 18, on the other hand, is intended to discover whether attention is given to discursual competence.

Statements 19 and 20 test teachers' understanding of the importance of including various registers or varieties of English. Sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence includes knowledge of sociolinguistic rules as well as functional (illocutionary) abilities. Pragmatic competence refers to the rules determining the appropriateness of language used and by whom the rules are applied in what situations (cf. 2.4.5). Statement 19 examines whether or not teachers believe in providing their learners with various registers or varieties of English, such as formal and informal registers for different social situations and purposes. Statement 20 asks whether teachers concentrate mainly on one register (e.g. formal) as sufficient for all English language situations and purposes.

Strategic competence refers to the ability to make the most effective use of available skills to carry out a given task (cf. 2.4.5). Strategies here refer to the strategies that cover all the communicative skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The object of statements 21 and 22 is to discover whether teachers believe that providing various communicative strategies helps learners to acquire the L2 effectively. Statement 21 concerns the use of strategies such as retrieving, recalling, paraphrasing, skimming, and summarising to help learners take responsibility for their learning, while the object of statement 22 is to discover whether teachers use only traditional strategies such as presentation, drills and repetition as ways to enhance the L2 learning process.

4.4.2 The observation instrument

The purpose of the observation instrument in this study was to collect data to help document the behaviours of Zimbabwean teachers who teach ESL in a communicative context in compliance with education policy.

Teachers' responses to the attitudinal questionnaire were validated against their observed behaviours in their classrooms. Each of the 15 statements, in the observation instrument was presented on a 5-point scale, with five fixed alternatives to choose from by the two observers: 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'usually' and 'always' (Appendix B).

The observation tool for this study included the use of some previous observation instruments in the field. These instruments are the subjects of next section.

4.4.2.1 Previous observation instruments

The L2 teaching process is a complex one, and therefore it is crucial to follow a structured approach when attempting to describe observable behaviour in the classrooms. Classroom observations provide operationalised statements that enable researchers to conceptualise the process of teaching in different classrooms in which they will carry out their research studies (Fanselow 1977 in Allen et al. 1984:231-32). Allen et al. (1984:232) mention that most of the numerous observational instruments for describing and analysing classrooms activities have the object of recording general classroom interaction such as Dunkin and Biddle (1974) and Simon and Boyer (1974).

Recent observation instruments provide detailed descriptions of what goes on in ESL classrooms. Hicks (1995 in Zuengler and Mori 2002:283) reviewed research that collects and analyses data on genres, classroom discourse and intertextuality. Luke (1995 in Zuengler and Mori 2002:283) also reviewed research studies that address the connection between discourse and macrolevel social forms. These research studies were carried out in classrooms in which English is the L1.

Ralenala (1997:265-271) conducted a small-scale ethnographic study that described the type of classroom interaction between the teacher and learners in two different ESL lessons. His aim was also to determine learners' orientation to the activity concerned, as well as the level of coherence of classroom interaction. He found that, in the two lessons, the interaction between the teacher and learners developed coherently in negotiations around the topic concerned and where learners were given opportunities to take turns by themselves to initiate new topics. He also found that the teachers' role was to serve as a guide and facilitator in classroom interaction. Statements 12 and 13 are couched to determine whether teachers guide and facilitate ESL learning in communicative contexts, or whether they dominate activities in such contexts.

In the following paragraphs, three of the observation instruments will be reviewed, focusing on the objective of the scheme, the categories, and the findings emanating from the use of each instrument. These three observation instruments have been selected because they have been used to document various classroom interaction involved in teaching English (L2 and FL) in environments that are different, yet relevant to the environment of this study. The view adopted is that interaction is integral to both L2 and FL classrooms.

The Foreign Language Interaction System (FLInt) was developed by Moskowitz (1966 in Moskowitz 1976:140-41) to collect data from four foreign-language teachers who taught four different lessons, to analyse learner-teacher interaction in these classes. The categories of FLInt are: the amount of talk engaged in by all participants (teachers and learners) in the foreign classrooms, direct and indirect relationships between classroom participants, the non-verbal dimension, and behaviours of teachers and learners (direct or indirect, i.e. teachers' instructions, writing on the board, their smiles etc.). This system comprises two main parts: teacher and learner talk. Teacher talk is applied in two ways: indirectly by encouraging learners and opening the way for them (for example by dealing with learners' feelings: awarding praise, sharing jokes, using learners' ideas, asking questions, personalising, etc). Direct influence is exerted by relying on actions that limit learners' participation (e.g. teacher-dominated classes), in that the teacher does most of the talking: giving information, correcting, discussing, orienting, criticising, directing and talking most of the time.

In applying the observation instrument chosen for this study, teacher's talk featured because it is important to document whether there are enough opportunities for interaction between teachers and learners. As far as learner talk is concerned, the issues considered are whether learner talk constitutes specific, choral responses by the whole class, or leads to disorder in the classroom. The third part centres on the use of L2, the non-verbal behaviours of the learners and teachers and silence of learners while doing their tasks.

The findings of FLInt reveal that the target language dominates the classroom interaction, learners use the L2 more than the L1 (e.g. to raise questions), there is less learner than

teacher talk, teachers move around the classroom a great deal, teachers praise, and reinforce learners in both the FL and the L1. They also personalise the content, and seldom criticise learners. Less time is devoted to reading and writing and more to developing the speaking skills; teachers initiate fewer routine tasks and classroom activities are more varied. Teachers also accept errors by doing some correction implicitly.

In applying the observation instrument chosen for this study some findings were used to document the type of interaction between teacher and learners (statements 1 and 2, cf. Appendix B).

An observation instrument developed by Allen, et al. (1984) is referred to as the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT). This instrument was used to describe as precisely as possible some of the features of communication which occurred in L2 classrooms. The observational categories of COLT are designed (1) to capture significant features of verbal interaction in L2 classrooms, and (2) to provide a means of comparing some aspects of classroom discourse with natural language as it is used outside the classroom (Allen et al. 1984:233). The COLT is applied to describe two distinct classes representing two different approaches (i.e. communicative and traditional) to L2 instruction and to differentiate between various methodological approaches.

The COLT instrument includes categories that are reflected in classroom activities and the communicative features of the L2 in the classroom. Classroom activities consist of the following parameters: activity type, participant organisation, content, and learner modality. L2 communicative features consist of these parameters: use of the TL, information gap (predictability of requested information), reaction to code or message, incorporation of preceding utterance, discourse initiation and relative restriction of linguistic form. The COLT has been used in a number of instructional contexts, including ESL for children, core immersion and extended French, and intensive ESL for adults to capture various aspects of communicative language use in the classroom (Nunan 1992:106).

Some recent studies on the relationship between corrective feedback and L2 acquisition made use of the COLT to develop their coding model (Lyster 1998 and Lyster and Ranta 1997). The observation instrument used in this study made use of the feature of providing various activities in groups to L2 learners to use in a meaningful interaction (statement 1). It also made use of the components of the contents category and the focus on code or message conveyance, that is focus on forms or meanings of the L2 (statements 6, 13, 14 and 15, cf. Appendix B).

Another observation instrument that needs to be discussed was developed by Holliday (1997). He observed six university lessons given in China and India in which the language of instruction was English, used in a communicative context. Non-native speakers in classes of 25 to 45 learners taught these lessons. The aim of his observation was to explore what makes 'good' communicative English teaching. The present study also has the aim to explore whether teachers in Zimbabwe teach English communicatively as their education policy requires.

Holliday's categories are: (1) learners, (2) teacher and (3) environment. The learners' category covers practising language in pair and group work with a focus on text; communicating creatively with a focus text as well as classroom discourse and answering individual teacher questions. The teacher category engages in documenting whether teachers are experienced and trained, whether they organise complex and simple exchanges, remain in front of the class, dominate or direct classroom discourse, and whether teachers are concerned with L2 accuracy. The category of environment describes in classroom size and layout in formal rows or other configurations, of desks, chairs and tables.

Holliday concluded that it was important to focus more on texts than on oral practice, and that the authoritarian position of the teacher did not in itself conflict with 'communicative'; the initiative in classroom discourse should be with learners, and not with the teacher (Holliday 1997:235-36).

The statement of communicating creatively with and focusing on text was used in applying the observation instrument chosen for this study. Other features were the use of pair and group-work activities, and the degree of teachers' domination of ESL classrooms (statements, 1, 2, 11 and 12, cf. Appendix B).

The reasons for selecting Statements included in the observation instrument are discussed in the next section.

4.4.2.2 Motivation for the statements of the observation instrument

The objective of the observation instrument used in this study is to examine whether teachers implement the Communicative Approach effectively and whether their actions are congruent with their expressed attitudes. The objective of the Communicative Approach is to teach communicative competence. Learners are given various communicative tasks as an aid to acquiring these skills.

The observation instrument used in this study made use of some of the categories and statements discussed in connection with the above-mentioned observation instruments to operationalise communicative competence components into categories and statements that could be measured and quantified in the study conducted in O-level ESL classes in Zimbabwe. As mentioned above (cf. 4.4.1), the statements of the observation instrument were piloted like the statements of the questionnaire. The 15 statements of the observation instrument aim to determine to what extent the beliefs of the teachers articulate with their classroom praxis. The statements are also in line with categories of the questionnaire. For instance, statements 8, 9 and 10 of the observation instrument (cf. Appendix B) validate statements 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the error correction category of the questionnaire (cf. Appendix A).

The observation instrument used for this study comprises the teacher as the only one main category (15 statements) because the focus of the study is on how teachers' attitudes inform their classroom praxis rather on how interaction facilitates or inhibits learners' acquisition of language.

Two statements are designed to validate the *pair and group-work activities* category of the questionnaire. Statement 1 (cf. Appendix B) is designed to discover whether varied activities are used and whether the teacher and learners interact when they use various activities in pair and group work. Teachers share learners' turns and check their writing and comprehension by eliciting answers from them to questions about the difficult statements. This is done to extend learners' participation and focus on texts (statement 2 in Appendix B). Interaction helps learners to develop their ability to expand and elaborate their command of the L2. For instance, a question about 'Life in different parts in Africa', may lead the teacher to ask the learner to relate it to his/her society which will elicit a wider discussion from the whole class so that learners can share different experiences pertaining to different areas. Various pair and group-work activities help learners to negotiate meaning and cooperate in a team to analyse, reach consensus and play various roles (cf. 2.4.1).

Five statements were designed to validate the *fluency and accuracy* category of the questionnaire. Statement 3 addresses whether the activities provided in the classroom are based on meanings rather than forms of L2. Statements 4 and 5 address the incidental and planned use of the forms of English. Both incidental and planned teaching of forms are recommended in the context of developing communicative uses of English, as the focus will be on the fluency and accuracy of the target language (cf. 2.4.2).

The planned teaching of forms is also recommended only if it is selected to develop the meanings of the text being taught in the unit (Chinodya 1992 and 1997). In other words, communicative textbooks have to teach English forms (i.e. grammar, vocabulary, phonology and other aspects of the L2) explicitly in the context of communicative activities. Such communicative textbooks present short lessons of the relevant form of English, which are followed by communicative input containing many instances of the instructed form. For instance, the focus may be explicitly on the 'stative verbs' which are not used in an active way in the present progressive form such as 'want', 'have', and 'recognise'. Examples are provided (e.g. 'I want a new book' instead of 'I *am* wanting a

new book', Chinodya 1992:57). Such particular linguistic Statements are then related to the text provided in the unit to develop the fluency of L2 learners.

Statements 6 and 7 in the observation study were designed to document whether teachers encourage authentic activities in their classrooms. Authentic activities prepare learners by involving them in activities through classroom interaction (e.g. pair and group work, playing games and roles, initiation and feedback, discussions and reporting). Authentic activities also help to prepare L2 learners for situations they could encounter in real life, that is, to apply what they have been taught to practical instances in their lives. For example, in Unit 5 (Chinodya 1992:36-46) the topic is 'The chanting widows', which is an article taken from *Time Magazine*, in which the misery of the chanting widows is discussed in India. An authentic activity in this case would be to ask learners to write a paragraph about 'The plight of Zimbabwean widows' as homework. It is assumed that what teachers do in communicative classes must have a purpose and be useful in learners' daily lives (Breen et al. 2001:481).

Statements 8, 9 and 10 were designed to validate the *error correction* category of the questionnaire. Statement 8 of the observation instrument (Appendix B), seeks to determine whether teachers correct only selected errors. Statements 9 and 10 document whether teachers tolerate learners' errors and allow them to correct each other's errors (cf. 2.4.3).

To validate *the role of the teacher* category of the questionnaire, statement 11 of the observation instrument tests whether the teacher's approach is authoritarian (i.e. dominates classroom situations by doing most of the talking). Statement 12 is intended to determine whether the teacher facilitates interaction by directing, monitoring and supervising classroom situations and activities (cf. 2.4.4).

Statements 13, 14 and 15 are designed to validate the *content of materials* category and to see whether learners in Zimbabwe are given activities that develop their L2 competencies and skills. Statement 13 seeks to determine whether activities promote the construction of

coherent texts. Cohesive links help learners to comprehend the texts. For instance, lexical links such as ‘however’ and ‘yet’ show that there is an opposite argument to be introduced next in the text (cf. 2.4.5).

Statement 14 of content of materials documents whether learners are provided with a variety of registers of English (e.g. formal and informal) that are suitable for the social situations they will encounter in their lives. Finally, statement 15 examines whether teachers provide sufficient communicative strategies to achieve the skills of ESL (writing, reading, listening and speaking) communicatively (cf. 2.4.5).

4.4.3 The semistructured interview

This interview garnered opinions from 20 of the observed teachers about their practices towards implementing the Communicative Approach. Interviews lasted for 45 to 60 minutes each. Appendix C provides the background of the subjects who participated in the semistructured interview held from 10 May to 30 June 2005.

4.5 Methods of data analysis

The analysis of data gathered during this study does not only depend merely on a description of the data collected, but it follows a process that will help the researcher to interpret the data (Defeng 1998:685). The themes and coding categories of this study emerged from the results of the pilot study that was conducted from 2 to 15 December 2004.

An analytic deductive strategy was adopted to analyse the data, that is, it entailed reading and looking closely, and critically through the questionnaire responses and the checks assigned in the observation instrument. This was done to identify and compare the responses and behaviours of participating teachers for further statistical analysis, as suggested by Leedy (1993:150).

The data analysis was carried out by means of descriptive statistics. In descriptive statistics, the Likert technique provides a testing approach to infer the differences in order to be analysed statistically in relation to the attitude expressed by the respondents, and recorded on the attitude continuum as suggested by Torgerson (1958:47). This, in turn, helps correlation of the frequencies and percentages between the different categories. In this regard, descriptive statistics of the data collected are tabulated and presented in graphs.

4.6 Conclusion

The eclectic nature of the research design was decided upon because it articulated with the different perspectives of the study. The research problem focused on the effect of teachers' attitudes on the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms. The research design was customised to meet the needs expressed in the questions raised by the hypothesis. The study essentially embodied an analytic approach to a descriptive case study, which was then analysed deductively. The subjects were 38 Zimbabwean teachers of O-level intermediate and secondary schools. The data were collected by means of a closed attitudinal questionnaire, which was designed to capture teachers' perceptions about the Communicative Approach. A five-point Likert scale was used to rate teachers' attitudes.

The observation instrument was designed to document teachers' actual performance in their classrooms. A five-point scale was also used as the rating to document teachers' actual behaviours in ESL classrooms. A comparison was drawn between the questionnaire and the observation instrument to establish whether teachers' attitudes to the Communicative Approach corresponded with what they actually did in their ESL classrooms. Descriptive and statistical analyses were used to describe and infer quantitatively the responses and the differences between them. Finally, a semistructured interview was conducted to get an in-depth understanding of teachers' attitudes as expressed in their classroom practices. Various tables and graphs will be used in Chapter

5, to present the descriptive (functional) statistics of the main study as recommended by Leedy (1993:252-89).

Chapter 5

The findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the findings of the study. First, the findings resulting from processing of data gained from the attitudinal questionnaire and application of the observation instrument are presented comparatively under the five categories provided for this study. A description of the data analysis is provided. In addition, bar charts and frequency tables are offered for all the statements of the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument and the categories. The correlation between the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument is indicated. The reliability and validity of the research tools are estimated. The hypothesis of the study is tested with reference to the statistical data and resultant findings of the study.

5.2 The criteria for data collection

In Chapter 4, the rationale for the statements of the questionnaire and the observation instrument was provided from the literature review (cf. 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.2.2). Teachers were asked to tick the statements of the attitudinal questionnaire that came closest to expressing their feelings and beliefs concerning the principles and features of the Communicative Approach on a 5-point scale. Two observations were conducted to enhance rater reliability. One observation was carried out by the researcher; the other by a Zimbabwean English teacher (Mr Sydney Chiswa) who has 13 years' experience of communicative ESL teaching.

In this section, the criteria used by the two observers in grading teachers' behaviours to the statements of the observation instrument largely conformed to those of FLInt (Moskowitz 1966), COLT (Allen et al. 1984) and Holliday (1997) as mentioned in Chapter 4. The criteria are explained here.

Statements were specially formulated for each of the categories to validate the statements of the attitudinal questionnaire. Two statements were assigned for *pair and group-work activities*. Statement 1 (cf. Appendix B) is directed to determine whether the teacher organises classroom discourse as activities carried out in pairs and groups, interacts with the whole class when working on the same task, and whether learners' productive abilities are given free rein in classroom activities initiated and overseen by the teacher. For statement 2, the observers examine whether the teacher helps learners to engage interactively with writers of respective texts about the substance of the materials provided (e.g. to observe what his/her ideas, intentions and style are).

Five statements were formulated to determine whether the materials provided to learners promote ESL *fluency and accuracy* when used as a basis for a whole spectrum of activities ranging from learners' rehearsal of contrived forms to purely meaning-based activities. Statement 3 determines whether the activities in the classroom are developing learners' fluency (e.g. discussing shopping – “Did you go shopping last week?”), from which an unpredictable conversation ensues in which learners are engaged in dialogue sustained over a number of exchanges. Statement 4 concerns the rote learning of contrived forms in that specific form contained in one single sentence or clause are taught by repetition and substitution drills. Statement 5 focuses on selected contextual forms as in textbooks in Zimbabwe, to prepare learners to use these forms in similar situations outside the classrooms. Statement 6 concerns authentic activities that are similar to the discourse outside the classrooms (e.g. social topics: holidays, hobbies and movies – describing a holiday, etc.). Statement 7 examines whether teachers help learners relate topics to their own lives in unpredictable information-gap activities (e.g. when teaching ‘the rights of the child’, the teacher asks if rights of children in Harare have been observed).

Three statements examine how *error correction* is addressed in ESL classrooms. Statement 8 determines if teachers correct selected errors that impede appropriate communication and violate meaning. For example, the use of the ‘*hear*’ instead of ‘*detect*’ as in: ‘*I heard a funny smell*’ instead of ‘*I detected a funny smell*’. (Chinodya

1992:84). This may be attributable to L1 interference. Statements 9 and 10, examine whether teachers provide sufficient opportunities for their learners to correct their own or each other's errors.

Two statements (11 and 12) address *the role of the teacher* in the ESL classroom: monitoring or dominating classroom discourse. The teacher who dominates the classroom is the only active party and the sole authority, provides the information, requires of learners to answer and gives his/her feedback in one-way communication (i.e. IRF model of teaching). The teacher requires of learners to read a passage and to provide predictable right answers. This teacher-centred classroom discourse leaves learners with very little room for interactive participation. Conversely, the teacher as facilitator guides learners towards developing their abilities by asking questions and allowing them to initiate discourse, to disagree with him/her, and to negotiate with each other in two-way communication.

Statement 13 examines whether the teacher encourages combining ESL sentences into meaningful and logical sequences (i.e. use of connectors: *as a result of, hence, yet, etc.*). Statement 14 determines if the teacher encourages learners to vary registers according to situations (e.g. a friendly discussion, in a court of law, etc.). The final statement addresses whether various strategies are provided such as paraphrasing, reformulating, elaborating and asking for further information to expand learners' utterances, rather than only mimicing grammatical patterns and substitution drills.

The two observations were carried out from 15 May to 30 June 2005. For each of the 38 observed teachers a rating tick on a 5-point scale was made under the scale descriptors for each of the 15 statements of the observation instrument. The scale descriptors are: 5 for 'always', 4 for 'usually', 3 for 'sometimes', 2 for 'rarely' and 1 for 'never'. Each teacher was observed for 3 lessons (a whole unit) by each observer. Each lesson lasted for 35 minutes. Each teacher was therefore observed (by the two observers) for 2 ½ hours. Of the 38 teachers, 20 were observed by the two observers together during the three lessons per teacher. The rest (18) were observed separately by the two observers.

Teachers were rated according to how many times a particular feature was observed. If the statement featured in three lessons, the observers would tick 'always' (5), if it featured in 2 lessons, 'usually' (4) would be ticked, 'sometimes' (3) would be ticked for the statement that featured in 1 lesson, 'rarely' (2) for the statement that featured occasionally, and 'never' (1) for the statement that did not feature in all the lessons observed. For instance, if the teacher used pairs and groups in the three lessons observed (e.g. advising his/her learners to regroup themselves into two or four groups to read, comprehend the related passage and reach a consensus on answers to the questions; each group will have a leader), then he/she would be assigned 'always' (5), in two lessons would be assigned 'usually' (4), and so on.

5.3 Analysis of data obtained with the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument

The statistical data were analysed by using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) computer programme. SAS is an integrated application software system that provides tools for processing simple and advanced statistics. According to SAS, bar charts and frequency tables were generated for the statements of the questionnaire and observation instrument according to their respective categories. Correlations between processed data gained from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observations were indicated as *correlation coefficients*, which ranged from -1.00 (indicating a perfect negative correlation) to +1.00 (indicating a perfect positive correlation). *Pearson's nonparametric correlation* was used to test the null hypotheses. *Cronbach's Alpha correlation* was used to determine the internal consistency of the statements of the attitudinal questionnaire.

The statistical findings resulting from administering the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument will be presented separately for each of the five categories compared in the following subsections. The relevant information from the in-depth interviews will be presented after the findings relating to each category in a serial numbering according to the various categories (e.g. 1-1, 2-1, 3-1 etc.). A conclusion will be drawn for each category.

5.3.1 Pair and group-work activities

In the following three subsections (5.3.1.1 – 5.3.1.3), the findings relating to this category are given as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire (statements 1– 4 in Appendix A) and the observation instrument (statements 1 – 2 in Appendix B), together with views of some interviewees.

5.3.1.1 The findings relating to pair and group-work activities as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire

The first category of the questionnaire consists of four statements. Statement 1 determines whether pair and group-work activities provide adequate opportunities for developing genuine interaction among learners. Statement 2 is introduced to determine whether pair and group-work activities are perceived to be a waste of teachers’ and learners’ time. The results as shown in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below indicate that all the respondents believed that pair and group-work activities were useful and served their purpose. More particularly, 55.26% of respondents strongly agreed, and 44.74% agreed that pair and group-work activities provided opportunities to develop constructive interaction among L2 learners (i.e. a total of 100%). Moreover, the respondents either strongly disagreed (44.74%) or disagreed (55.26%) with the statement that pair and group-work activities wasted learners’ and teachers’ time (i.e. a total of 100%).

Figure 5.1: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 1

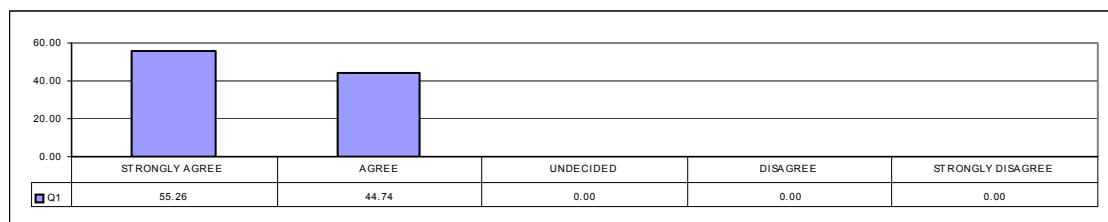
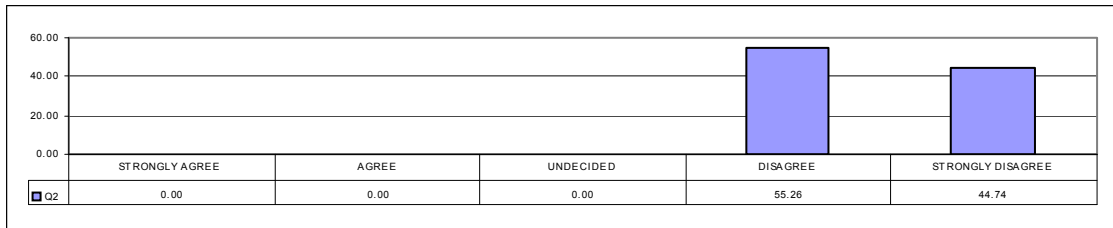
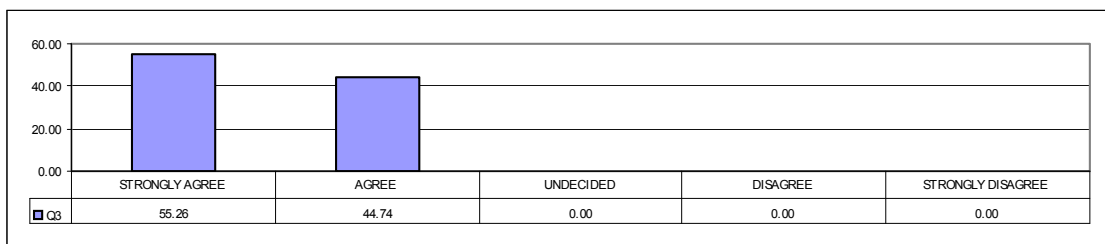


Figure 5.2: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 2



Statement 3 examines whether or not pair and group-work activities help learners to focus cooperatively on understanding written and spoken texts. 44.74% of respondents agreed and 55.26% strongly agreed with statement 3 (i.e. a total of 100%, cf. Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 3



Statement 4 is intended to determine whether or not pair and group-work activities help learners to deal constructively with spoken and written texts. The findings as reflected in Figure 5.4 below show that the respondents disagreed with the statement. 68.42% disagreed and 28.95% strongly disagreed that pair and group-work activities distract learners from concentrating purposefully on written and spoken texts (i.e. a total of 97.37%), and 2.63% were undecided.

Figure 5.4: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 4

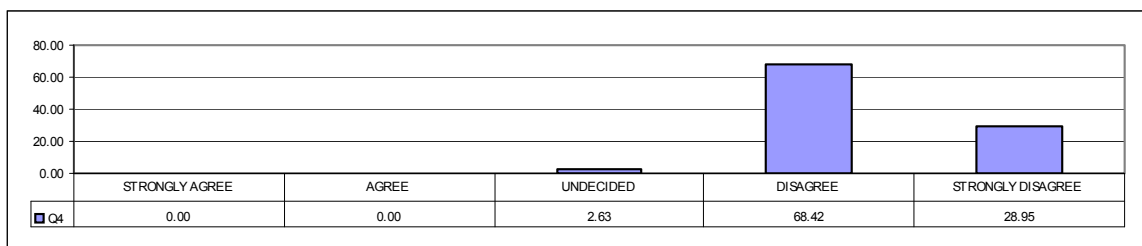
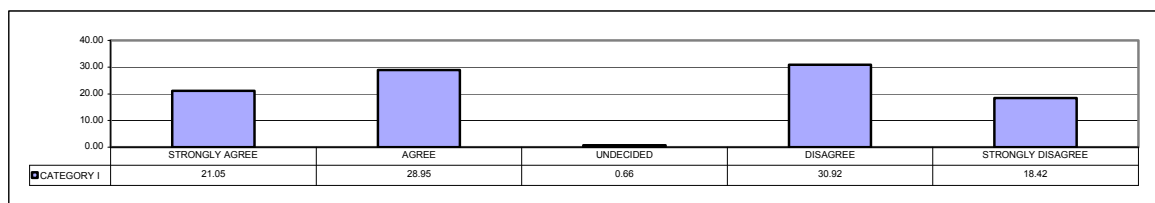


Figure 5.5 below summarises the findings relating to pair and group-work activities as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire. The overall response to the attitudinal questionnaire for the first category was positive in that there was full agreement, where the majority of the observed teachers either agreed or disagreed (i.e. a total of 99.34%) according to the two positive (1 and 3) and the two negative statements (2 and 4). Fewer than 1% of the teachers were ‘undecided’.

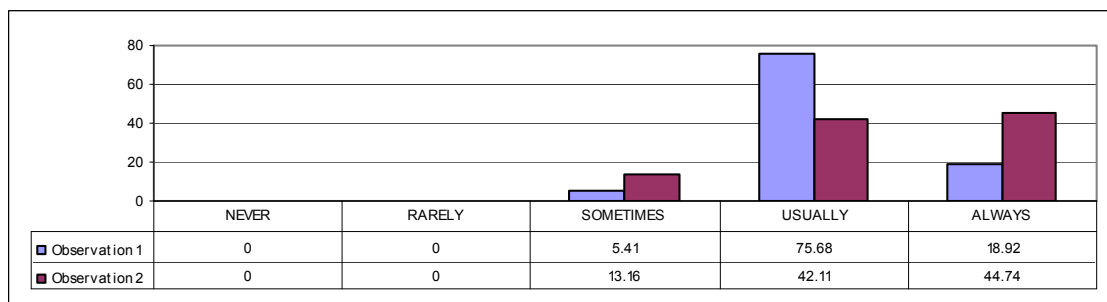
Figure 5.5: Bar chart and frequency table for pair and group-work activities



5.3.1.2 The findings relating to pair and group-work activities as derived from the observation instrument

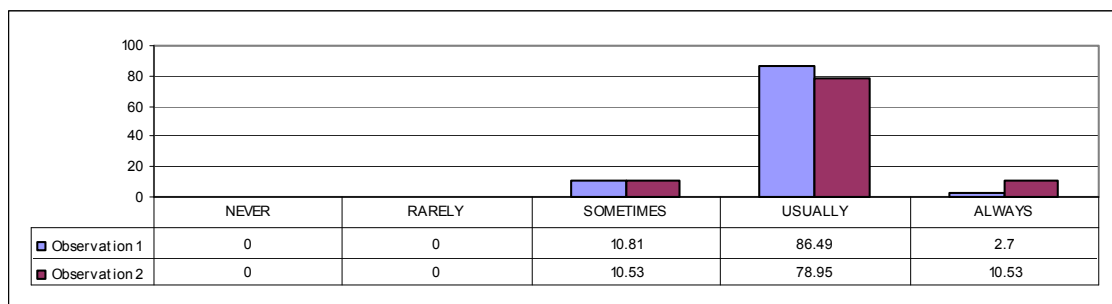
The first two statements relate to pair and group-work activities. Statement 1 is intended to determine whether teachers provide learners with sufficient pair and group-work activities. The two observers respectively recorded that 75.68% and 42.11% of the teachers were ‘usually’ provided sufficient activities; that 18.92% and 44.74% ‘always’ provided sufficient activities; and that 5.41% and 13.18% ‘sometimes’ provided sufficient activities (Figure 5.6 below). The relatively big differences between the recordings of the two observers may be attributable to the fact that they observed different classes that taught different lessons: literature, grammar, writing a composition, etc.

Figure 5.6: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 1



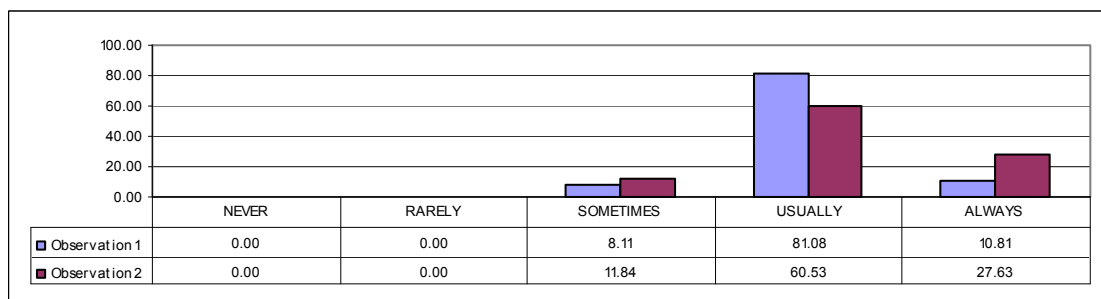
Statement 2 determines whether teachers insist that focus on text is interactive. According to Figure 5.7, the observers respectively recorded that 86.49% and 78.95% of teachers ‘usually’ followed this practice; 2.7% and 10.53% ‘always’ did so; 10.81% and 10.5% ‘sometimes’ did so. The observed teachers displayed a behaviour that showed they favoured interaction with focus on text. The difference between the recordings of the two observers may be due to observing different classes.

Figure 5.7: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 2



The overall response for pair and group-work activities was positive, as no recordings were indicated for ‘never’ or ‘rarely’; instead the vast majority of recordings (91.89% and 88.16% respectively, cf. Figure 5.8 below) were recorded as ‘usually’ and ‘always’. Fewer than 15% of responses were recorded as ‘sometimes’. These findings indicate that teachers were fairly effective at implementing pair and group-work activities in their classrooms. Observing different lessons accounted for the differences between percentages recorded by the two observers.

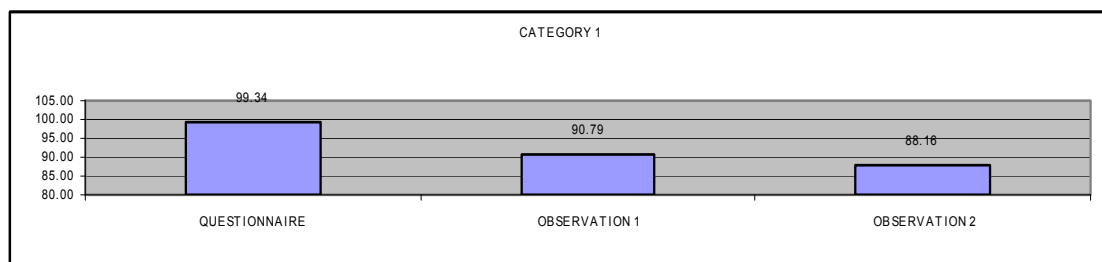
Figure 5.8: Bar chart and frequency table for pair and group-work activities



5.3.1.3 Comparison of the findings relating to pair and group-work activities as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument

It is evident from the above discussion that teachers regard pair and group-work activities as an ample means of providing opportunities for constructive interaction among learners; that they help learners to focus cooperatively on understanding written and spoken texts without losing concentration. Figure 5.9 below provides a comparison between the findings relating to pair and group-work activities as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and recorded by the two observers. 99.34% of the teachers expressed positive feelings about pair and group-work activities; and the observers respectively recorded that 90.79% and 85.16% of teachers initiated pair and group-work activities. This may indicate that the principle of ‘pair and group-work activities’ is entrenched in the beliefs of the teachers concerned and therefore accounts for their positive attitudes towards it.

Figure 5.9: Bar chart of percentages derived for pair and group-work activities according to data gained from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument



The above conclusion has been endorsed by some of the interviewees, who indicated that although pair and group-work activities were productive, their effect was inhibited by the short periods allotted for them (35 minutes).

Five (25%) of the interviewees believed in using pair and group-work activities in both small and large classes, and four of them expressed concern about the said time constraint

as a situational factor that makes it difficult to maximise the potential benefit of pair and group-work activities. The interviewees' statements follow:

- 1-1** I use pair and group work for both small and large classes. It is useful since learners deliberate on their own and come up with answers and new concepts. Since the lesson time is only 35 minutes, I do not have enough time to use group work effectively (Mr Chideme, 27 May 2005).
- 1-2** It is important as it helps learners to share their ideas in their attempts to understand contexts and solve problems (Mr Chikoti, 25 May 2005).
- 1-3** It is effective; it encourages interactive learning and independent thinking, but I have no time to use it effectively (Mrs Musisinyani, 24 May 2005).
- 1-4** Learners learn better from peers; however, time and materials are limited (Mr Mutunzo 23 May 2005).
- 1-5** Group work is effective because everyone has a chance to participate and improve oral language. Time is the only problem (Mr Nyaundi, 30 May 2005).

Five (25%) of the interviewees did not apply pair and group work as an effective strategy to teach large classes as discussed by Long and Porter (1985:213) and McGreal (1989:70). Two of the interviewees studied and were initially trained in the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods before the introduction of the Communicative Approach in 1992. They were then also exposed to the Communicative Approach for 13 years, mostly in seminars and workshops. They were not fully committed to a particular approach but borrowed elements from the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods as well as the Communicative Approach. The following statements from interviewees indicated their difficulties with pair and group-work activities:

- 1-6** It is difficult to conduct pair and group work in large classes and so it is less effective [than in small classes] (Mr Macheke 21 June 2005).
- 1-7** Classes are too big to allow effective group work (Mrs Tapera, 16 May 2005).
- 1-8** It is useful if groups are small and learners are motivated (Mrs Chauke, 26 May 2005).

- 1-9** I use pair and group work for smaller classes quite effectively. However, time is scarce and hence it is impossible to use the technique as often as I would like (Mr Mudawariwa 20 May 2005).
- 1-10** I use pair and group work for smaller groups because it takes less time [than bigger classes] to instruct, guide and supervise (Mr Magweba 3 June 2005).

The statistical data collected in pair and group-work category as well as views of interviewees, match those derived from similar studies with the same objective (Long and Porter 1985, McGreal 1989 and Nation 1989). Four (20%) of the interviewees said that time constraint inhibited effective implementation, particularly in large classes. This indicates that the principle of pair and group-work activities is not entrenched in some of the concerned teachers' beliefs, perhaps because they are not trained in the field of pair and group-work activities used in teaching large classes. Teachers who had studied and were trained in the Communicative Approach had developed 'a sense of plausibility' (Prabhu 1990:172-75), based on the belief that the Communicative Approach stimulates and supports ESL learning. They had experience of this approach as learners, student teachers, teachers, trainees, and also as parents and caregivers.

5.3.2 Fluency and accuracy

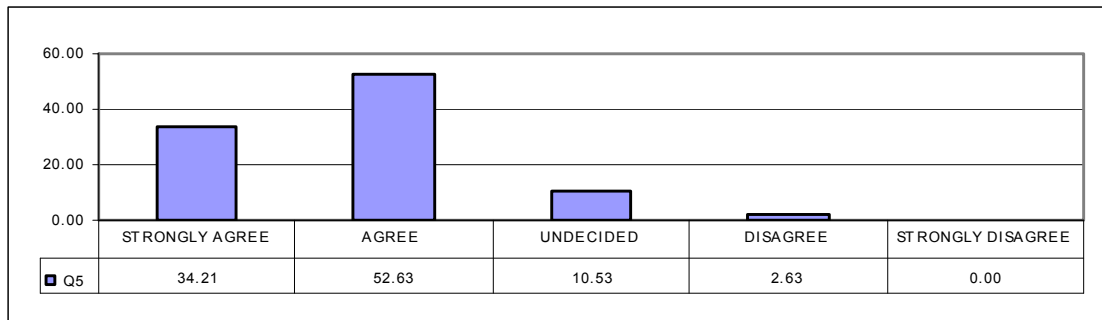
Subsections 5.3.2.1 to 5.3.2.3 contain the findings for fluency and accuracy as derived from responses to the attitudinal questionnaire (statements 5 – 10 in Appendix A), and the observation instrument (statements 3 – 8 in Appendix B), as well as some ideas from the interviewed teachers about their profession.

5.3.2.1 The findings relating to fluency and accuracy as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire

The second category of the questionnaire relates to L2 fluency and accuracy. Statement 5 focuses on whether English is learnt effectively when used as a vehicle for teaching forms of the target language, while statement 6 determines whether English is learnt effectively when used as a vehicle for doing something. Figure 5.10 below shows that most respondents (52.63%) agreed and 34.21% strongly agreed that English was learnt

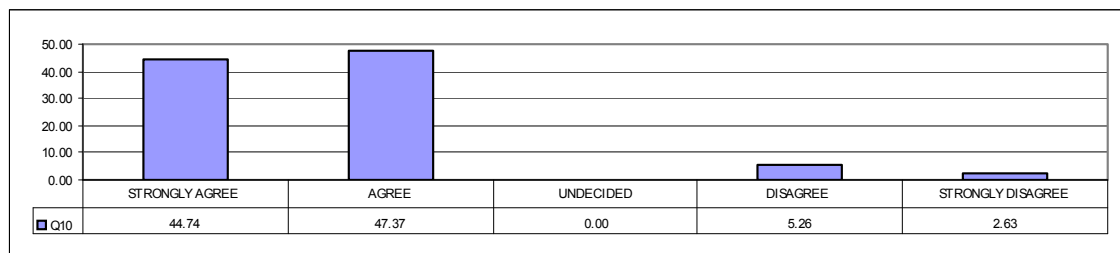
effectively when taught by means of contrived ESL forms (i.e. a total of 86.84%). 10.53% were undecided and only 26.3% disagreed. These findings show a tendency to teach ESL forms as a priority over L2 fluency.

Figure 5.10: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 5



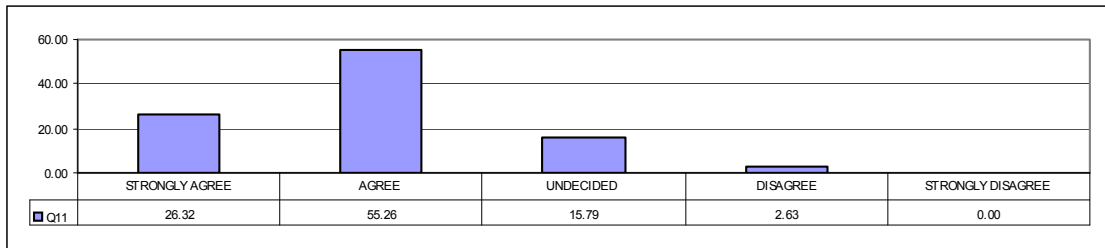
Statement 6 draws a strongly affirmative response from the vast majority (92.11%), consisting of 47.37% who agreed and 44.74% who strongly agreed that English is learnt effectively as a vehicle for doing something (cf. Figure 5.11). Only 5.26% disagreed and 2.63% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.11: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 6



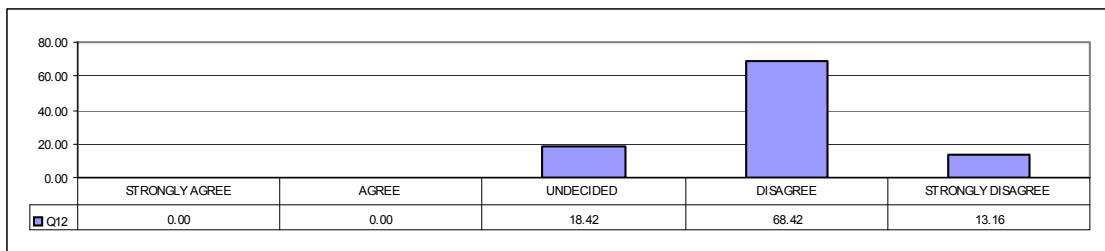
Statement 7 determines whether focusing on selected English forms helps to develop learners' communicative competence (cf. Figure 5.12). This was confirmed by 26.32% who strongly agreed and 56.26% who agreed (i.e. a total of 82.58%); 15.79% were undecided and 2.63% disagreed.

Figure 5.12: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 7



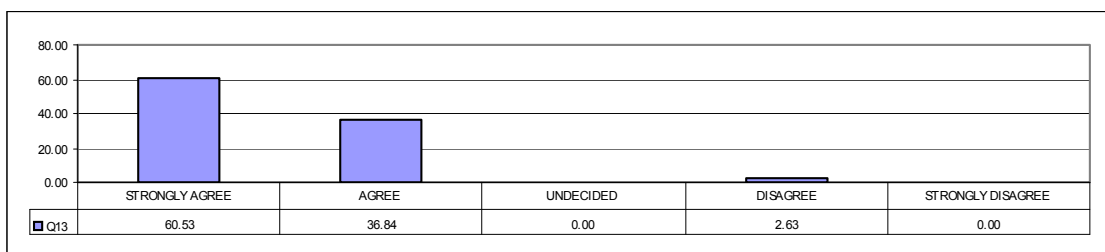
Statement 8 examines whether learners' fluency can be developed by teaching English forms as separate items (cf. Figure 5.13). 68.42% disagreed and 13.16% strongly disagreed (i.e. a total of 81.58%); 18.42% were undecided.

Figure 5.13: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 8



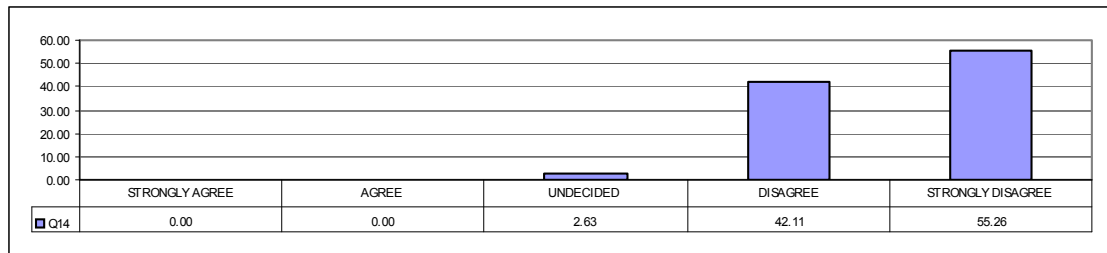
Statement 9 focuses on whether learners can communicate fluently if the topics taught are realistic or authentic (cf. Figure 5.14). 60.53% strongly agreed and 36.84% agreed (i.e. a total of 97.37%); only 2.63% disagreed.

Figure 5.14: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 9



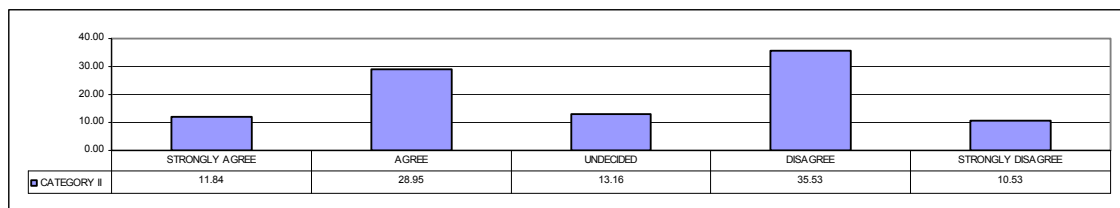
Statement 10 examines whether contrived topics are conducive to achieving fluency (cf. Figure 5.15 below). 55.26% strongly disagreed and 42.11% disagreed (i.e. a total of 94.37%); 2.63% were undecided.

Figure 5.15: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 10



The following Figure 5.16 below summarises the findings for the fluency and accuracy category as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire.

Figure 5.16: Bar chart and frequency table for fluency and accuracy



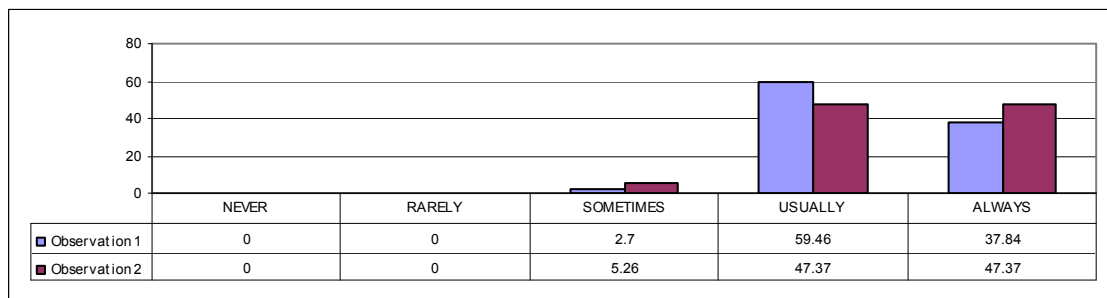
All in all, the findings for fluency and accuracy as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire were positive. Specifically: agreement with the positive statements (5, 8 and 10) and disagreement with the negative statements (6, 7 and 9) amounted to 86.85%, and 13.16% were undecided. This indicates that teachers believe in teaching both fluency and accuracy in their ESL classrooms.

5.3.2.2 The findings relating to fluency and accuracy as derived from the observation instrument

Statements 3 to 7 relate to fluency and accuracy. Statement 3 is intended to determine whether teachers provide meaning-based activities (cf. Figure 5.17 below). The two

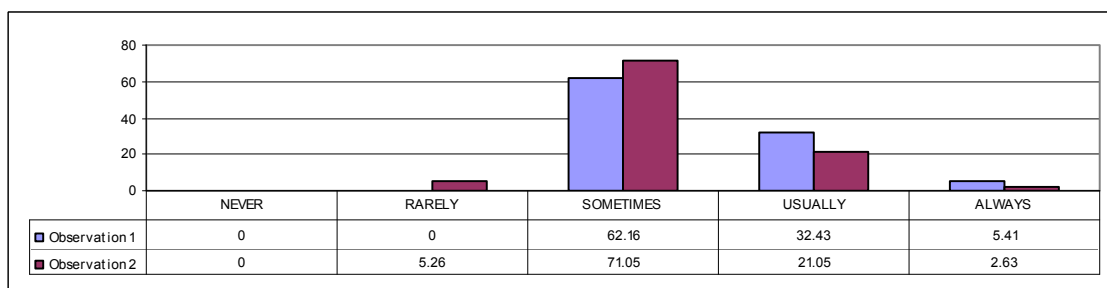
observers recorded that 59.46% and 47.37% ‘usually’ provided such activities; 37.84% and 47.37% ‘always’ did so; and only 2.7% and 5.26% ‘sometimes’ followed this practice. The majority of the observed teachers provided activities premised on both meaning and form.

Figure 5.17: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 3



The object of statement 4 is to determine whether teachers provide contrived forms. The two observers respectively noted that very few teachers (5.41% and 2.63%) ‘always’ taught uncontextualised forms; 32.43% and 21.05% ‘usually’ taught such forms; 62.16% and 71.05% ‘sometimes’ used contextualised forms and 5.26% ‘rarely’ used them as noted by one observer (cf. Figure 5.18 below). The difference in the two observers’ recordings is attributable to observing different classes.

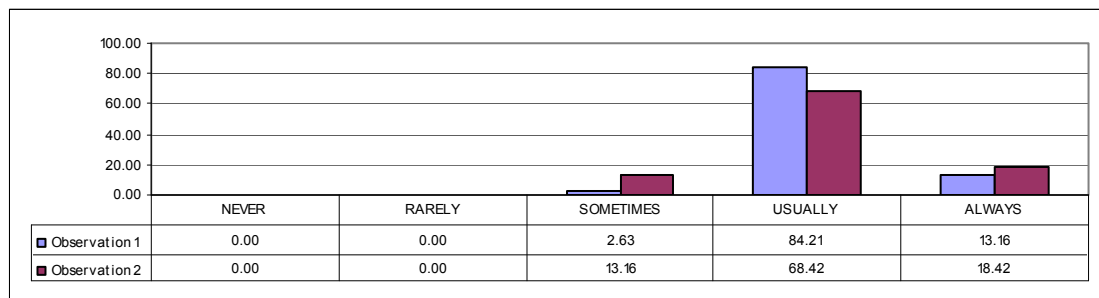
Figure 5.18: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 4



Statement 5 is set to determine whether teachers provided selected forms in context. The two observers noted that 84.21% and 68.42% ‘usually’ engaged in this practice; that 13.16% and 18.42% ‘always’ did so; while the practice was followed ‘sometimes’ by 2.63% and 13.16% (cf. Figure 5.19 below). The difference in the recordings of the two

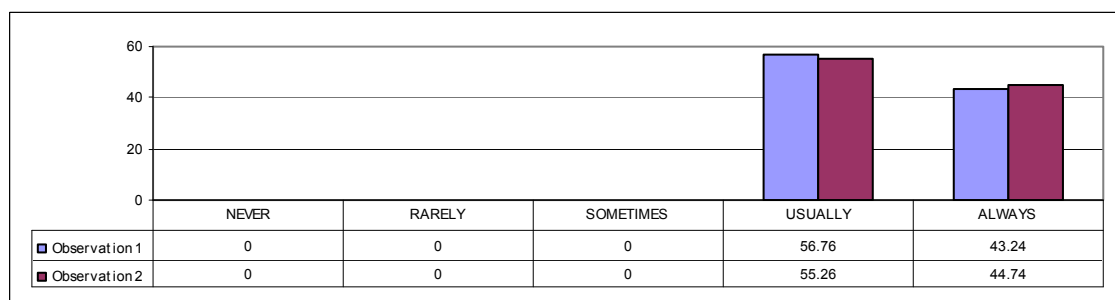
observers is due to observing different classes (literature: writing a book review, discussion points, story-telling techniques, writing a letter, writing a short story, poetry, role-play, etc.).

Figure 5.19: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 5



Statement 6 examines whether teachers encourage authentic activities when they teach English in their classrooms (cf. Figure 5.20 below). The two observers recorded that 56.76% and 55.26% of teachers ‘usually’ resorted to authentic activities; while 43.24% and 44.74% ‘always’ did so. It seems, then, that the majority of the observed teachers displayed behaviour that encouraged authentic activities in their ESL classrooms.

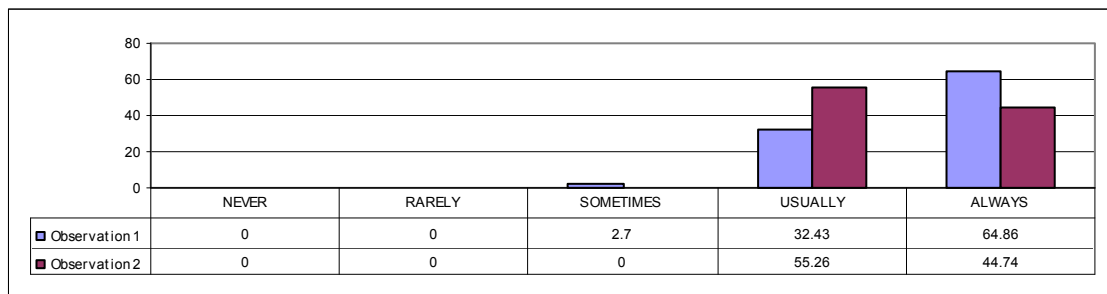
Figure 5.20: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 6



The object of statement 7 is to establish whether teachers help learners to relate contexts to their own lives. 32.43% and 55.26% of teachers’ responses were recorded as ‘usually’; 64.86 % and 44.74% as ‘always; and 2.7%, according to one observer as ‘sometimes’ (cf. Figure 5.21 below). These findings show that most teachers displayed behaviour that

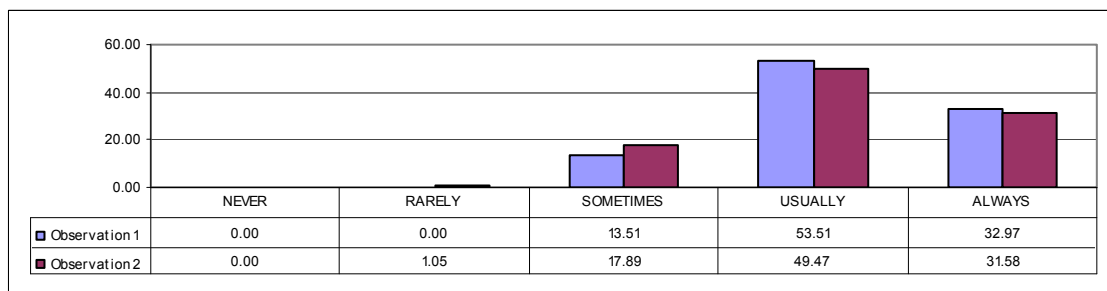
helped learners to relate texts to their own lives. The difference in the percentages recorded by the two observers may be attributable to their observation of different classes, e.g. when literature was taught relating texts to learners’ own lives might not be possible.

Figure 5.21: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 7



It is clear from Figure 5.22 below that most teachers displayed behaviour that was intended to promote ESL fluency and accuracy in their classrooms. 86.48% and 81.05% of the teachers’ responses were recorded as ‘always’ and ‘usually’; 1.05% as ‘rarely’ by one observer; none were recorded as ‘never’.

Figure 5.22: Bar chart and frequency table for fluency and accuracy

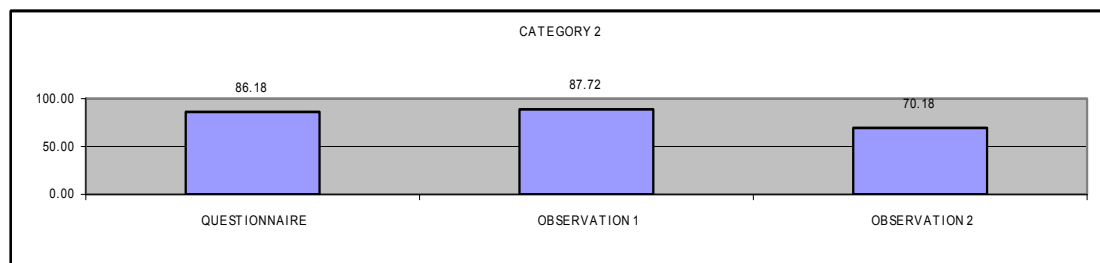


5.3.2.3 Comparison of the findings relating to fluency and accuracy as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument

The analysis of data in this category shows that most respondents were unsure whether ESL learning was sufficiently provided for by teaching contextualized forms. The uncertainty may stem from some teachers’ preference for the relatively undemanding task

of teaching forms alone. The statistics given above indicate that English is learnt effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something, but that focusing on selected forms helps to develop communicative competence. Topics taught in the classroom must be realistic and not contrived. These findings show that teachers are predisposed towards teaching L2 accuracy and fluency in tandem. Figure 5.23 below shows that there was consistency between teachers' attitudes (86.18%) and their behaviours in their ESL classrooms (87.72% and 70.18% in the two observations respectively).

Figure 5.23: Bar chart of percentages recorded for fluency and accuracy as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument



The effectiveness of ESL instruction premised on both meaning and form-focused (cf. 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.2) was confirmed by some of the interviewees, though they had divergent views about what needs to be addressed first: fluency or accuracy.

Six (30%) of the interviewees believed that accuracy and fluency should be addressed together. Opinions vary, though, as shown by the following statements, which tend to emphasise both fluency and accuracy:

- 2-1** We teach our learners to be fluent and accurate in English to facilitate effective communication. We as teachers see that it is prudent to overcome inaccuracy first before developing fluency (Mr Chideme, 27 May 2005).
- 2-2** It is useful to build fluency first and deal with the problem of inaccuracy later (Mr Phiri, 17 May 2005).
- 2-3** Learners should know to do things the right way and practice accuracy and fluency every time (Mr Lyton, 17 June 2005).

- 2-4 It is useful to concentrate on both fluency and accuracy, as the purpose is to have a language product that is both fluent and accurate at the end of the course as well as in society at large (Mrs Tapera, 16 May 2005).
- 2-5 We as teachers should make sure that learners speak fluently and follow grammatical rules (Mr Chikoti, 25 May 2005).
- 2-6 Fluency and accuracy are paramount to the learning of ESL to produce a total learner who can communicate effectively, orally, and in written form (Mr Magweba, 3 June 2005).

The above responses, which came from interviewees who studied and were trained in both the traditional and the Communicative Approach, show the effect of the examination system which rewards accuracy more than fluency. For example, ‘it is prudent to overcome inaccuracy first before developing fluency’ (2-1) and ‘accuracy’ and ‘fluency’ are regarded separable, rather than inherently inseparable aspects of language usage (2-7).

One of the interviewees, who studied and was trained in the Communicative Approach, believed that accuracy was more important with a view to meeting the demands of examinations:

- 2-7 While fluency is important a learner should be taught grammar to pass examinations (Mrs Chauke, 26 May 2005).

This shows that Mrs Chauke’s approach supports a product-oriented approach. This illustrates the backwash effect of the Zimbabwean examination system, which is largely based on rewarding the correct forms of ESL rather than the integrative assessment of learners’ overall skills (Zimbabwe School Examinations Council, 1999:1-136).

From the above statistical findings, the responses of teachers to the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument show essential agreement about the approach that should be adopted towards accuracy and fluency in their classrooms. However, two of the interviewees (10%) see fluency and accuracy as separate issues. This shows that these two teachers were not adequately trained in the Communicative Approach.

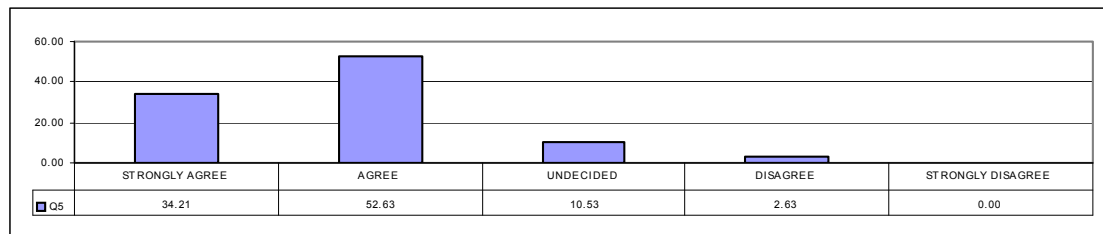
5.3.5 Error correction

The findings derived from the attitudinal questionnaire (statements 11 – 14 in Appendix A), and the observation instrument (statements 9 – 11 in Appendix B), as well as the ideas expressed by some interviewees will be discussed in the next subsections: 5.3.3.1 – 5.3.3.3.

5.3.3.1 The findings relating to error correction as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire

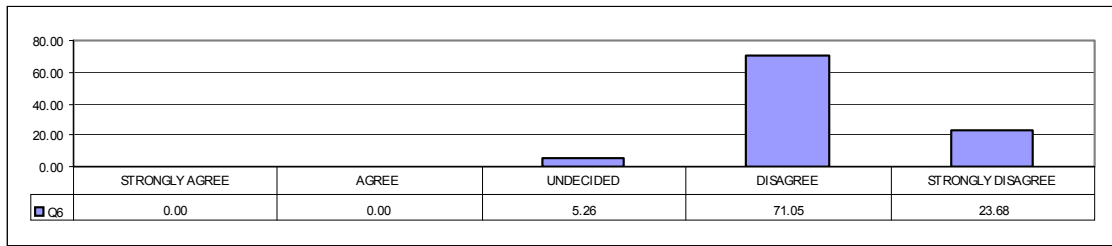
The third category of the questionnaire concerns statements about error correction done by teachers. This category consists of four statements: Two are negative and two positive (cf. Appendix A). When teachers give feedback to correct learners' responses, they have to focus on both fluency and accuracy of L2 (statement 11). 34.21% strongly agreed and 52.63% agreed (i.e. a total of 86.84%); 10.53% were undecided and 2.63% disagreed (cf. Figure 5.24). Most of the teachers believe that error correction should help to develop ESL meanings and forms.

Figure 5.24: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 11



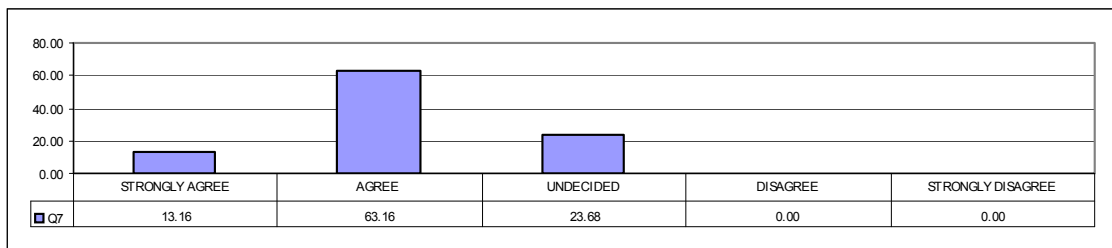
Statement 12 examines whether teachers' feedback has to focus only on the accuracy or correctness of English (cf. Figure 5.25). 71.06% of the respondents disagreed and 23.68% strongly disagreed (i.e. a total of 94.74%). Only 5.26% were undecided. Most of the teachers believe that their feedback should not focus on ESL accuracy only.

Figure 5.25: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 12



According to the Communicative Approach errors are generally regarded as a natural part of the learning process (statement 13 in Appendix A). This was evident from the data summarised in Figure 5.26 below, where 63.16% agreed and 13.16% strongly agreed (i.e. a total of 76.32%). However, 23.68% of respondents were undecided, indicating that a considerable percentage of respondents considered learners' errors unacceptable. This might be due to the fact about 15 of the teachers were not initially trained in the Communicative Approach and some of them did not consider errors as a natural part of the learning process.

Figure 5.26: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 13



Statement 14 assesses whether correcting all errors leads to effective L2 learning. Figure 5.27 below shows that 68.42% of the respondents disagreed and 18.42% strongly disagreed (i.e. a total of 86.84%); 13.16% were undecided. This shows that most teachers believed that it was not imperative to correct all errors, except if they could impede communication.

Figure 5.27: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 14

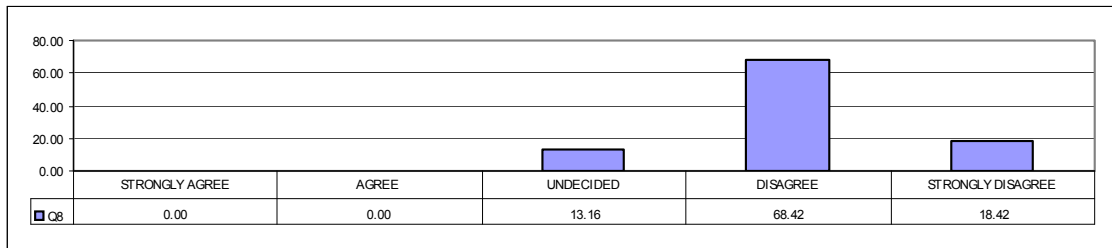
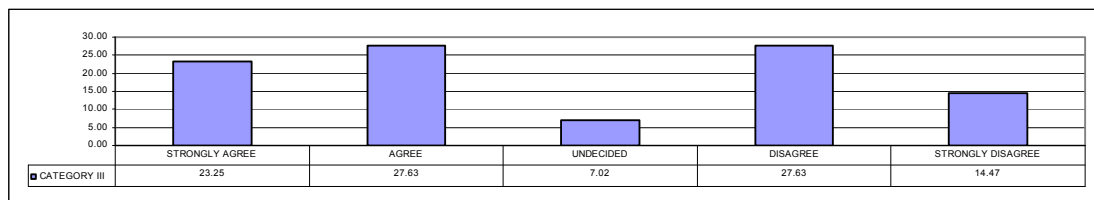


Figure 5.28 below summarises the findings for error correction as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire. Overall responses to the first category of the attitudinal questionnaire were positive; that is, most teachers (92.98%) rather agreed with the positive statements (11 and 13), or disagreed with the negative statements (12 and 14) and only 7.02% were undecided. This indicates that teachers believed that learners’ errors should be tolerated, and that corrections should be made primarily to enhance communicative competence.

Figure 5.28: Bar chart and frequency table for error correction

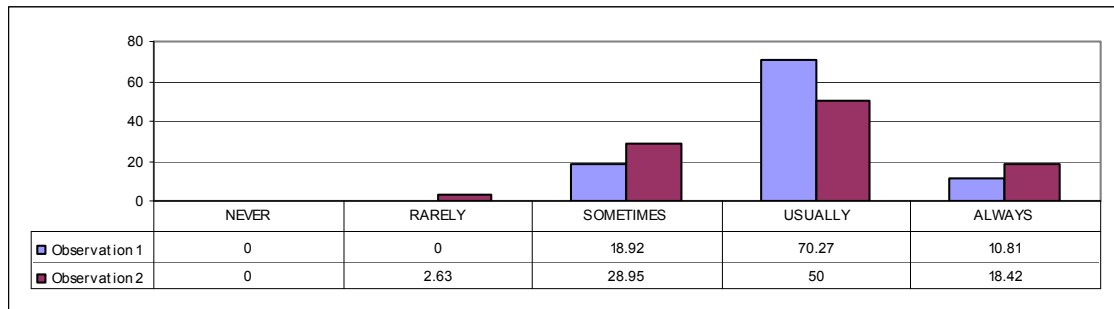


5.3.3.2 The findings relating to error correction as derived from the observation instrument

Statements 8 to 10 are set to determine teachers’ decisions regarding error correction in the classroom (cf. Appendix B). The object of statement 8 was to determine whether the observed teachers correct selected errors. Most teachers’ responses according to the two observers (70.27% and 50%) were recorded as ‘usually’; 10.81% and 18.42% were recorded as ‘always’; 18.92% and 28.95% were recorded as ‘sometimes’, and 2.63% according to one observer was recorded as ‘rarely’ (cf. Figure 5.29 below). Thus,

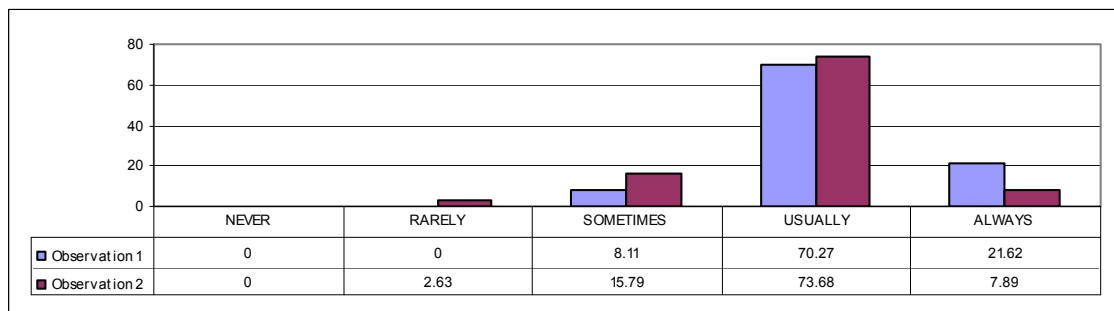
teachers' behaviour showed that they corrected only selected errors, mainly by elicitation, asking for clarification and repetition.

Figure 5.29: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 8



The object of statement 9 is to determine whether teachers tolerate learners' errors. 70.27% and 73.68% of teachers' responses were recorded as 'usually'; 21.62% and 7.89% as 'always'; 8.11% and 15.79% as 'sometimes'; and 2.63%, according to one observer as 'rarely' (cf. Figure 5.30 below). This indicates that teachers displayed behaviour that showed they were tolerant of their learners' errors.

Figure 5.30: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 9



The object of statement 10 is to examine whether teachers encourage learners to correct each other's errors. In this case, the response of most teachers was 'usually' and there was a significant difference between the values recorded by the two observers (83.78% and 55.26% respectively). The observers differed markedly in their recording of teachers' responses as 'sometimes' (8.11% and 39.47%). Finally 8.11% and 5.26% of teachers' responses were recorded as 'always' (cf. Figure 5.31 below). The difference in the

recordings of the two observers is probably inevitable given that 18 teachers were observed separately in three lessons per teacher (i.e. teaching different periods such as essay writing, revising a book, poetry, interview with a social welfare worker, a debate etc.).

Figure 5.31: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 10

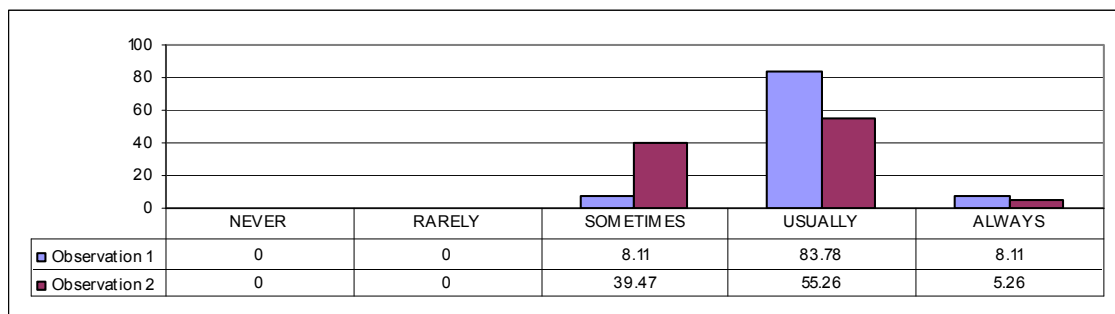
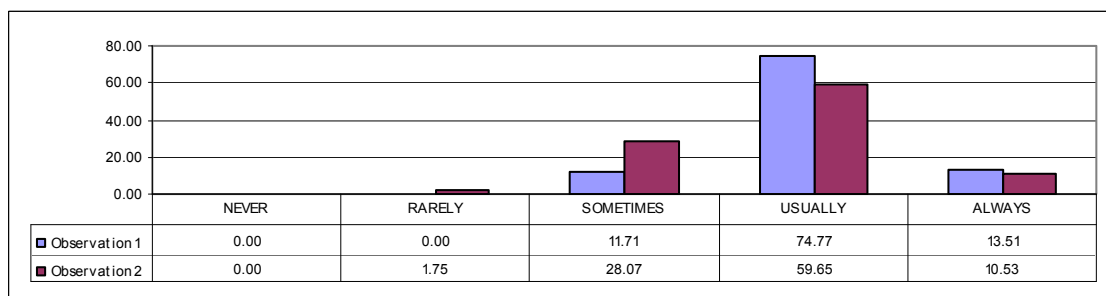


Figure 5.32 shows clearly that most teachers displayed behaviour that showed that most teachers ‘usually’ corrected errors so that ESL learners gain communicative competence (88.28% and 70.18% respectively); 11.71% were recorded as ‘sometimes’, while one observer recorded 1.75% as ‘rarely’. This indicates that the majority of the teachers displayed behaviour that showed they corrected errors selectively and tolerantly as a natural part of ESL learning process.

Figure 5.32: Bar chart and frequency table for error correction

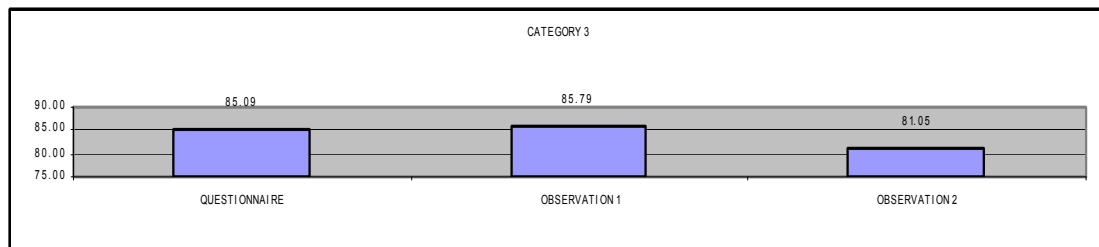


5.3.3.3 Comparison of the findings relating to error correction as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument

The findings indicate that teachers' responses to learners' errors tend to focus on L2 fluency and accuracy rather than accuracy alone, and that they regard errors as a natural part of the learning process. Most teachers believe that errors that inhibit the transmission of meaning should be corrected immediately to prevent them from becoming habitual impediments to learners' progress and effective L2 learning.

Figure 5.33 below displays a comparison of findings relating to error correction as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument. It shows that 85.09% of the teachers were in favour of integrating error correction with the Communicative Approach. This was borne out by 85.79% and 81.05% of teachers displaying behaviour that effectively implemented error correction as recommended by the Communicative Approach.

Figure 5.33: Bar chart of error correction percentage as derived from of the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument



Five of the interviewees (25%) who were trained in the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods (and after 1992 were trained in the Communicative Approach), as well as three teachers (15%) who were trained in the Communicative Approach believed that errors should not be tolerated and have to be corrected immediately lest they would become habitual (cf. 2.3.3 and 2.4.3). Their ideas follow:

- 3-1** It is better to make corrections as early as possible (Mr Gotore, 20 June 2005).

- 3-2** Errors need to be corrected immediately so that learners will not forget the accurate usage of the language (Mrs Chirapa, 22 June 2005).
- 3-3** Errors should be corrected immediately so that when we move to the next level, we will be sure that we have fixed problems in the previous levels (Mr Madongonda, 24 June 2005).
- 3-4** It is better to correct errors immediately lest learners forget about the errors and they become part of learners' language system (Mr Macheka, 21 June 2005).
- 3-5** Immediate correction is better (Mr Musonda, 26 May 2005).
- 3-6** Errors are better corrected immediately because learners tend to get into the habit of doing certain things (Mr Chikoti, 25 May 2005).
- 3-7** Immediate error correction is better, because habitual errors inhibit progress and effective learning. To make sure that learners will not learn the wrong usage of the language; they have to get things right from start to finish (Mr Magweba, 3 June 2005).
- 3-8** Some errors need to be corrected immediately as they affect later learning (Mr Mutunzo, 23 May 2005).

The views expressed by the eight interviewees (40%) quoted above, namely that errors should be corrected immediately, show that they are mainly concerned about the formal accuracy of ESL, rather than the development of communicative competence as explained in Chapter 2 of the literature review.

The belief that attention must be drawn to learners' errors immediately may be attributable to the syllabus which states that "in addition to language practice in key areas, the course seeks to get rid of common language errors by providing remedial exercises based directly on recurrent errors collected from the writing of 'O' level learners" (Chinodya 1994:iv).

Six (30%) interviewees, who studied and were trained in the Communicative Approach, believed that errors were natural in L2 learning and learners had to be given opportunities to correct themselves. Some of the interviewees said:

- 3-9 Practice makes learning perfect so learners will be learning from correcting themselves (Ms Madabi, 27 June 2005).
- 3-10 Errors are natural and part of L2 learning (Mr Chideme, 27 May 2005).
- 3-11 Learners learn better when they make errors when learning L2 (Mr Mahachi, 13 June 2005).
- 3-12 Errors do not necessarily have to be corrected immediately, we can provide learners opportunities to identify and correct these errors, but some errors have to be corrected immediately depending on the type of errors (Mrs Musisinyani, 24 May 2005).
- 3-13 Correcting immediately or not depends on the situation (Mr Phiri, 17 May 2005).
- 3-14 Errors are acceptable to a certain extent as long as they can be corrected in the future (Mr Mudawariwa, 20 May 2005).

The views expressed in the above quotations are consistent with studies from which it is clear that (explicit) corrective feedback during classroom interaction can improve accuracy and help to develop communicative competence in the L2 (Lightbown and Spada 1990, Spada and Lightbown 1993, and Edge 1989 in Ancker 2000:20).

Twelve of the interviewees (60%) regarded errors as a natural part of language learning, and their feelings and beliefs about the principle of integrating error correction judiciously within the Communicative Approach were consistent with their behaviours in the classroom. Eight (40%) of the interviewees expressed the conviction that errors were unacceptable and should be corrected immediately without giving learners the opportunity to correct themselves and interact with their peers to correct themselves. These teachers' position may be attributable to the demands of the syllabus in which coaching for the examination is the overriding concern, and not spontaneous communicative interaction in their classrooms.

5.3.4 The role of the teacher

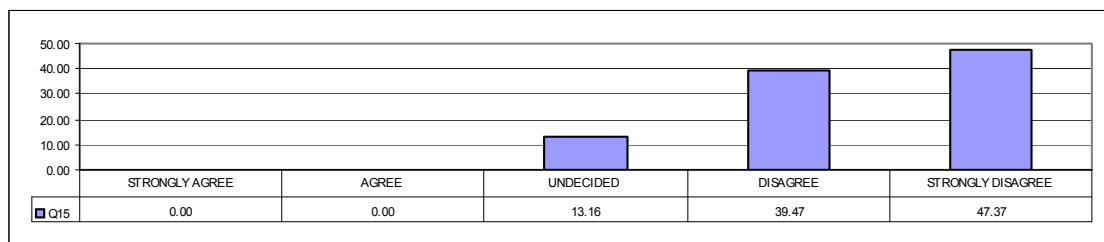
Subsections 5.3.4.1 – 5.3.4.3 below reflect the findings relating to the teachers' role as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire (statements 15 and 16 in Appendix A), the

observation instrument (statements 12 and 13 in Appendix B), and some contributions from the in-depth interviews.

5.3.4.1 The findings relating to the role of the teacher as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire

This category consists of two mutually exclusive statements about the teacher’s role in the classroom (cf. Appendix A). Statement 15 examines whether teachers believe that in pursuing the Communicative Approach they should be recognised as the sole authority in the classroom as they dominate all classroom activities. 47.37% strongly disagreed and 39.47% disagreed (i.e. a total of 86.84%) that teachers should dominate all situations in L2 classrooms; and 13.16% were undecided (Figure 5.34 below).

Figure 5.34: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 15



Statement 16 focuses on whether the teacher should be an instructor and manager who guides and facilitates English learning. The responses were consistent with those to statement 15 as 57.89% strongly agreed and 31.58% agreed (i.e. a total of 89.47%), while 10.53% were undecided (cf. Figure 5.35 below).

Figure 5.35: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 16

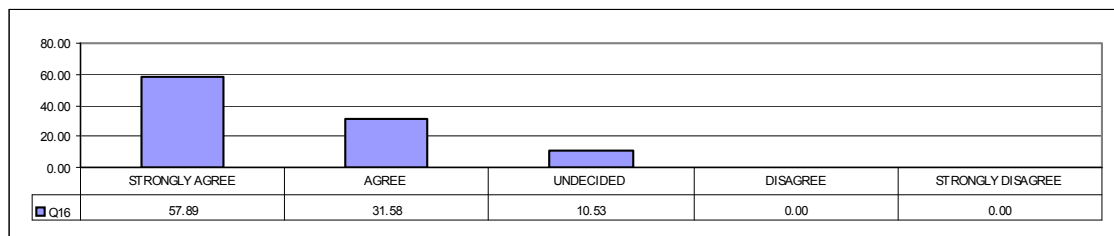
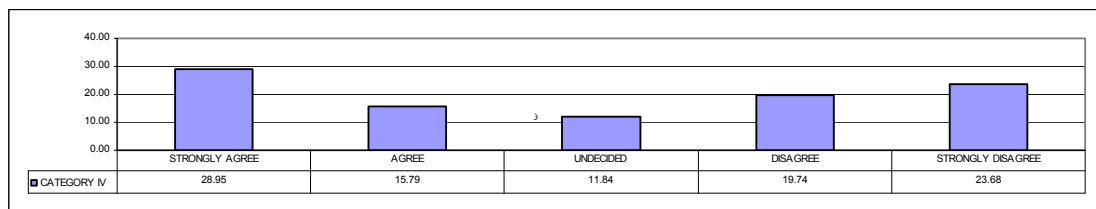


Figure 5.36 summarises the findings relating to the role of the teacher as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire. The response was positive (in favour of a facilitative role). Most teachers agreed with the positive statements and disagreed with the negative statements to a similar extent (i.e. a total of 88.16%); 11.84% were ‘undecided’. This indicates that teachers believed they should facilitate rather than dominate classroom discourse.

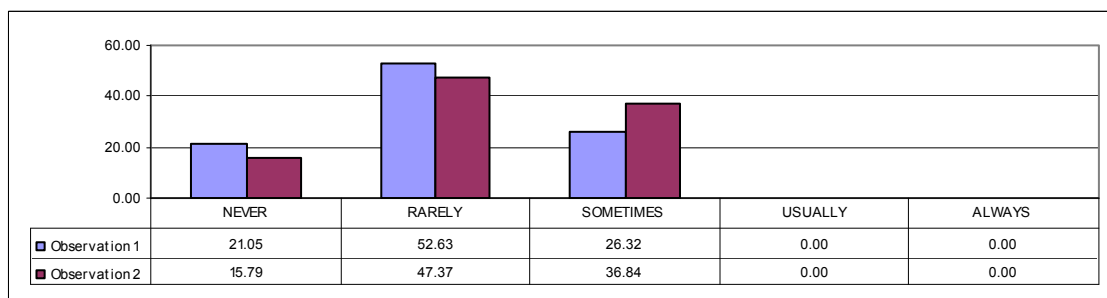
Figure 5.36: Bar chart and frequency table for the role of the teacher



5.3.4.2 The findings relating to the role of the teacher as derived from the observation instrument

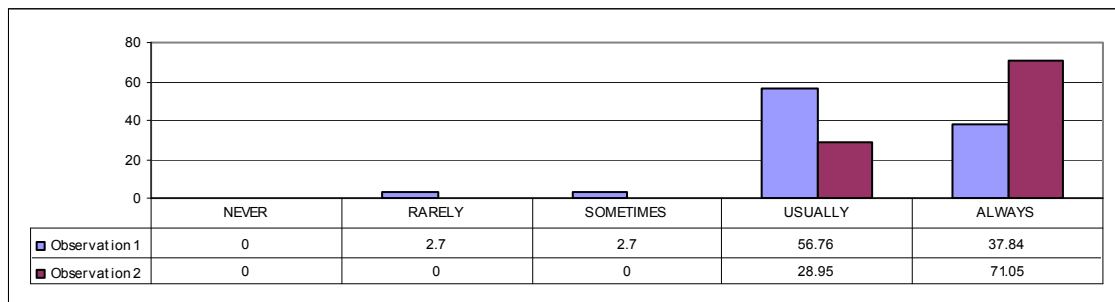
Statements 11 and 12 assess the role of the teacher in the classroom. Statement 11 tries to establish whether the teacher dominates classroom situations. 21.05% and 15.79% of teachers’ responses were recorded by the two observers as ‘never’; while 52.63% and 47.37% were recorded as ‘rarely’. However, there was a marked difference in the percentages recorded as ‘sometimes’ (26.32 % and 36.84 %). The findings indicate that most of teachers displayed behaviour that is in favour of the facilitative role (cf. Figure 5.37 below). The differences in the recordings of the observers may be due to observing different classes studying different lessons such as literature, writing a composition, using prefixes and suffixes, write an interview, etc.

Figure 5.37: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 11



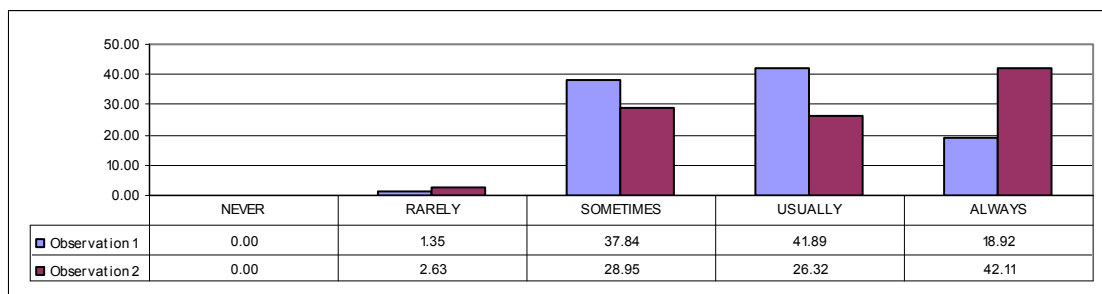
Statement 12 is intended to establish whether teachers monitor classroom situations without dominating them (cf. Figure 5.38 below). The observers respectively recorded 37.84% and 71.05% of teachers' responses as 'always'; 56.76% and 28.95% as 'usually' (which may be attributable to observing different classes); and 2.7% and 2.7% were recorded by one observer as 'rarely' and 'sometimes'.

Figure 5.38: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 12



It is clear from Figure 5.39 below that most teachers displayed behaviour that indicates that they favoured the facilitative role. In particular, the observers recorded 60.81% and 68.43% of the responses as 'usually' and 'always'; and 37.84% and 28.95% as 'sometimes' which indicates a considerable proportion in favour of the dominant role, possibly because their training and experience were critically informed by the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods. There was a big difference in the recordings of the two observers, as they observed 18 classes separately.

Figure 5.39: Bar chart and frequency table for the role of the teacher

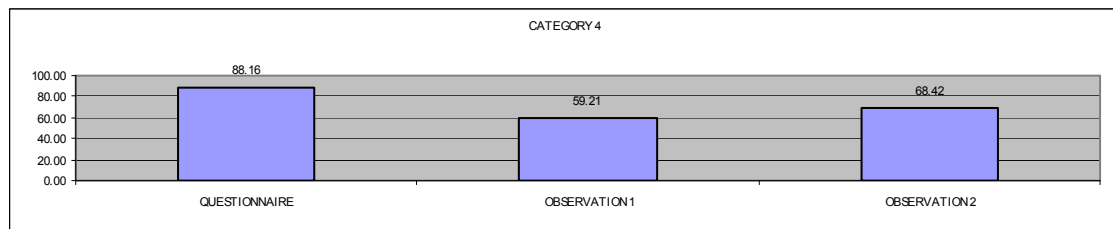


5.3.4.3 Comparison of the findings relating to the role of the teacher as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument

The findings derived from the questionnaire, shows that teachers who are committed to the Communicative Approach, believed that their role in teaching ESL should be facilitative. However, the responses of a considerable number of teachers were recorded as 37.8% and 28.95% for ‘sometimes’ (cf. Figure 5.39 above). Those teachers dictated classroom activities, which is consistent with Holliday’s views (1997:228-30) that the teacher is the authority in the classroom in the sense that he/she controls, directs and guides classroom activities to draw learners’ attention to the communicative purposes of the spoken and written texts.

Figure 5.40 below shows that 88.16% of teachers’ responses to the statements of the questionnaire are consistent with their classroom behaviours (59.21% and 68.42% recorded by the two observers).

Figure 5.40: Bar chart reflecting percentages for the role of the teacher as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument



Eight of the interviewees’ opinions (40%) show that teachers prefer a dominant role in the teaching of ESL:

- 4-1 My instructions in the lesson are obviously beneficial to the learners since I should have planned for the lesson. Teachers need to facilitate the L2 learning process (Mr Chideme, 27 May 2005).
- 4-2 The teacher is there to guide through giving instructions and directions to learners to enhance classroom interaction (Mrs Musisinyani, 24 May 2005).

- 4-3 Since learners are exam-oriented, instructions are needed for learners to follow (Mrs Chirapa, 22 June 2005).
- 4-4 Giving instructions develops classroom interaction through communicating meaningful messages similar to that in life outside the classroom (Mr Madongonda, 24 June 2005).
- 4-5 Giving instructions and directions will motivate learners and assist them to go on with their work (Mrs Chauke, 26 May 2005).
- 4-6 Instructions are important as learners normally learn better and they perform better when they are under supervision (Mrs Nhera, 23 May 2005).
- 4-7 Teachers are facilitators so they should give proper instructions and directions to do the right thing at the right time and pace (Mr Chitsungo, 2 June 2005).
- 4-8 Giving instructions and directions is beneficial as it is orderly and organised and will give learners opportunities to understand better (Mr Mahachi, 13 June 2005).

In the above quotes seven of the interviewees (35%) expressed the conviction that teachers should assume a dominant role in order to ‘enhance classroom interaction’. One interviewee (4-3) expressed a similar conviction but gave the reason as: ‘Since learners are exam-oriented’, implying that the critical importance attached to the demands of the examination in the syllabus made a dominant role for the teacher inevitable.

Figure 5.40 above shows teachers’ conviction that they need to assume a dominant role in order to facilitate classroom interaction is consistent with their teaching behaviours. The interviewees concur with this conclusion.

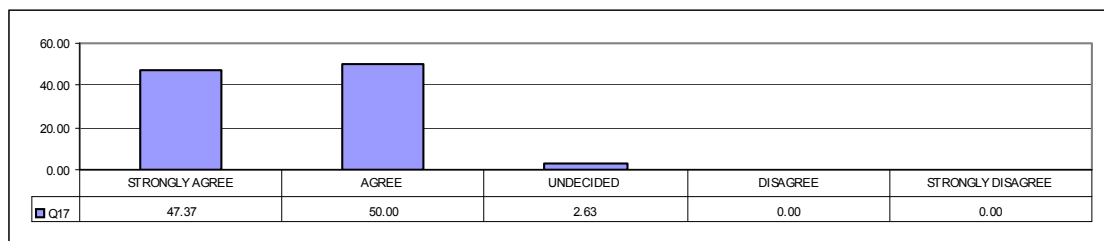
5.3.5 Content of materials

The findings relating to content of materials as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire (statements 17 – 22 in Appendix A), the observation instrument (statements 13 –15 in Appendix B), and teachers’ views as expressed in interviews will be presented.

5.3.5.1 The findings relating to content of materials as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire

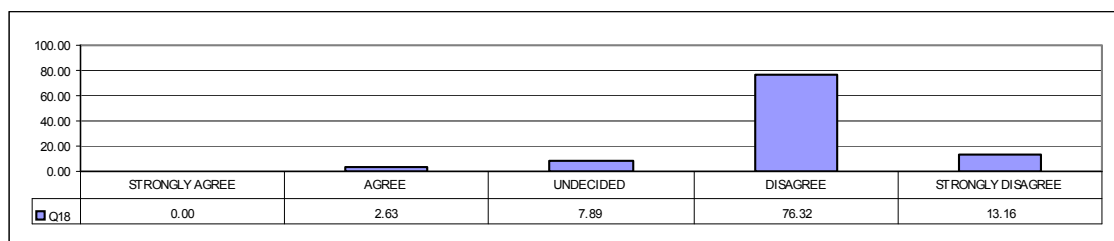
There are six statements in this category. Statement 17 (cf. Appendix A) examines whether teachers think that texts provided as learning materials should be well organised and logical. 47.37% strongly agreed and 50% agreed (i.e. a total of 97.37%); 2.63% were undecided (cf. Figure 5.41 below). The majority of the teachers believed that texts should be coherent.

Figure 5.41: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 17



Statement 18 determines whether learners should be provided with texts provided as learning materials that concentrate on decontextualised sentences rather than the logical flow of the argument in the relevant subject matter. 76.32% disagreed and 13.16% strongly disagreed (i.e. a total of 89.48%); 7.19% were undecided and 2.63% agreed (cf. Figure 5.42 below). These findings show that teachers expressed their strong belief in that texts should concentrate on the logical flow of arguments.

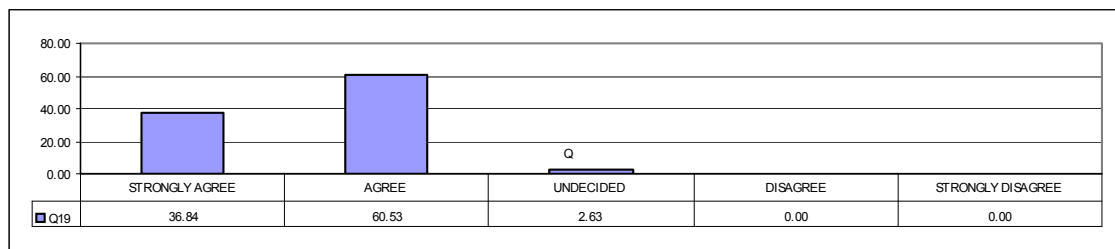
Figure 5.42: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 18



Statement 19 concerns whether various varieties and registers of English need to be taught to ensure effective learning. 36.84% strongly agreed and 60.53% agreed (i.e. a

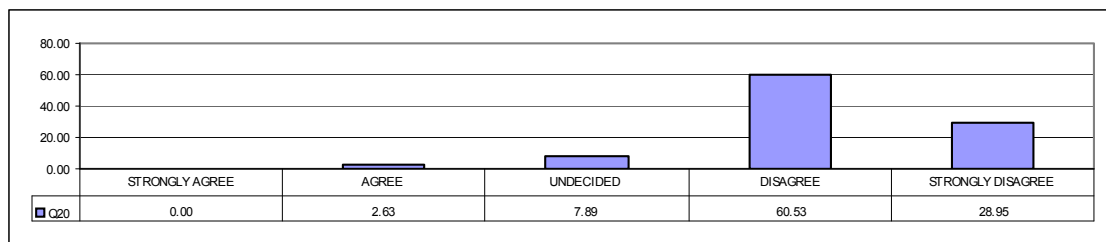
total of 97.37%); and 2.63% were undecided (cf. Figure 5.43 below). From these findings it is clear that teachers believed in providing various varieties and registers of ESL to ensure effective English learning.

Figure 5.43: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 19



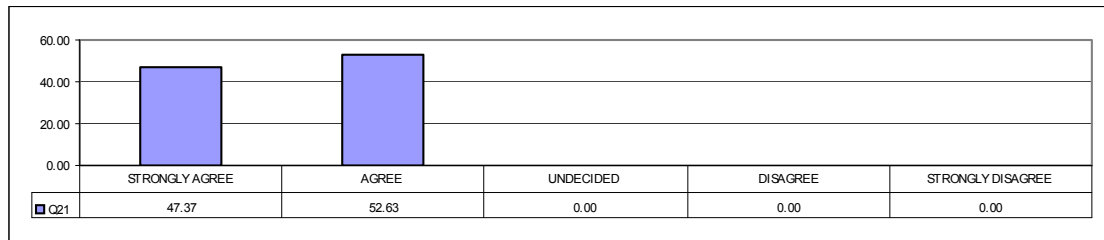
Statement 20 is in direct contrast to statement 19, as it suggests that the formal register or variety is sufficient to teach English usage successfully. 60.53% of the respondents disagreed and 28.95% strongly disagreed (i.e. a total of 89.48%); 7.89% were undecided; and 2.63% agreed (cf. Figure 5.44 below). Responses to the two statements are evidently consistent with each other.

Figure 5.44: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 20



The last two statements of the questionnaire examine whether various strategies should be taught for effective English learning (statement 21 in Appendix A). 52.63% of the responses agreed and 47.37% strongly agreed (i.e. a total of 100%), as shown in Figure 5.45 below.

Figure 5.45: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 21



Statement 22 examines whether strategies such as presentation, drilling and repetition in themselves ensure learning. 47.37% of the responses disagreed and 15.79% strongly disagreed (i.e. a total of 63.16%). Yet, 26.32% were undecided and 10.53 % agreed (cf. Figure 5.46 below). Thus, the responses show that there was a decided preference for communicative strategies such as contextual functional use of language instead of repetitive drills, for example. The O-level syllabus in Zimbabwe encourages using various strategies such as skimming, scanning, previewing, analysing, identifying key words, discussion, planning, clustering, sequencing, cubing, mapping and linking (Chinodya 1994:x-xi).

Figure 5.46: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 22

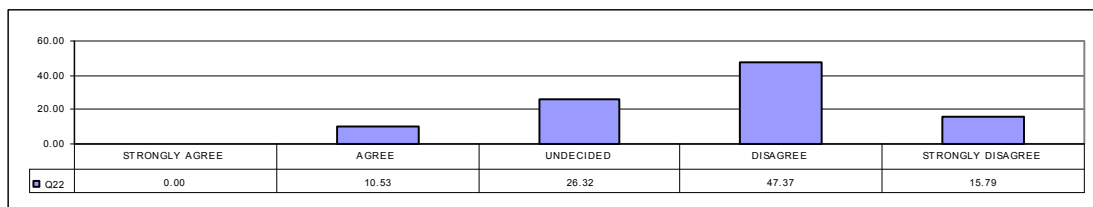
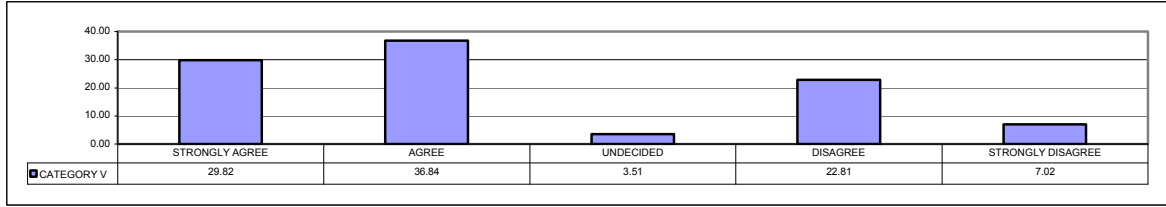


Figure 5.47 below summarises the findings relating to content of materials as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire. The responses were generally positive for statements 17 to 22. In particular, 66.66% agreed or strongly agreed with the positive statements (17, 19 and 21); 29.83% disagreed with the negative statements (18, 20 and 22); 3.51% were undecided. This indicates that teachers believed in providing their learners with rich, coherent materials; with sufficient varieties and registers of ESL; and with sufficient communicative strategies to enable them to learn ESL effectively.

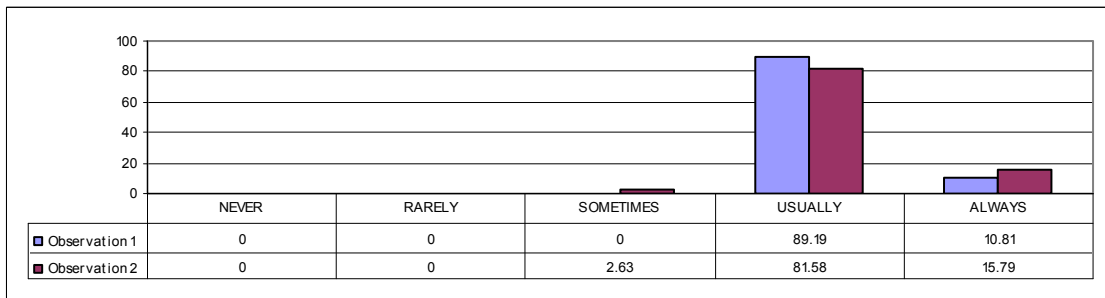
Figure 5.47: Bar chart and frequency table for content of materials



5.3.5.2 The findings relating to content of materials as derived from the observation instrument

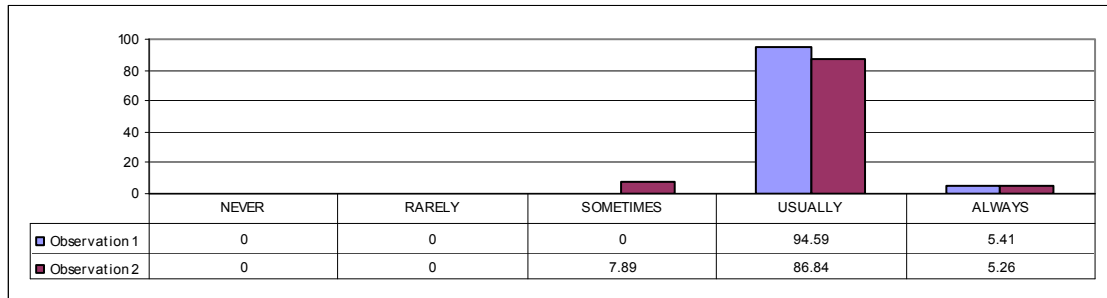
Statements 13 to 15 relate to the content of materials. Statement 13 establishes whether teachers encourage learners to focus on coherent English text (cf. Figure 5.48 below). The two observers respectively recorded 89.19% and 81.58% of teachers’ responses as ‘usually’; 10.81% and 15.79% as ‘always’; and one observer recorded 2.63% of the responses as ‘sometimes’. Most of the observed teachers displayed behaviour that encouraged learners to focus on coherent English texts.

Figure 5.48: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 13



Statement 14 attempts to determine whether teachers encourage learners to use a range of varieties of English. The two observers recorded 94.59% and 86.84% of teachers’ responses as ‘usually’; and 5.41% and 5.26% as ‘always’; while one observer recorded 7.89% of the responses as ‘sometimes’ (cf. Figure 5.49 below). This shows that the majority of the observed teachers displayed behaviour that encouraged learners to use various registers of English.

Figure 5.49: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 14



The last statement determines whether teachers help learners to acquire a variety of strategies to learn English. The two observers recorded 91.89% and 78.95% respectively of the teachers' responses as 'usually; and 8.11% and 15.79% as 'always', while one observer recorded 5.26% of the responses as 'sometimes' (cf. 5.50 below). Thus, the vast majority of the observed teachers displayed behaviour that helped learners to acquire various strategies to learn English.

Figure 5.50: Bar chart and frequency table for statement 15

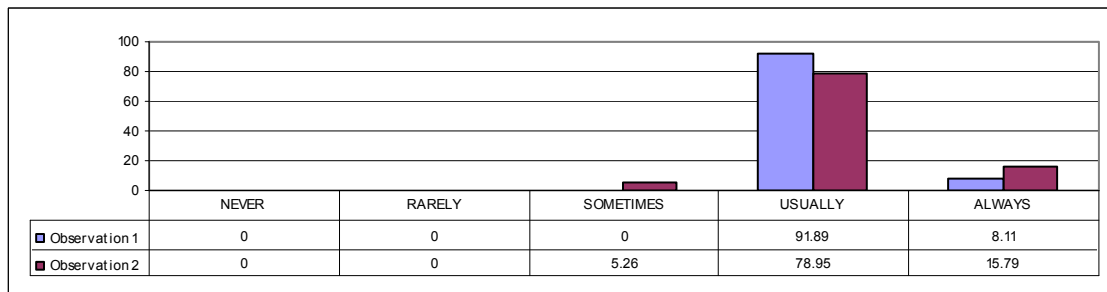
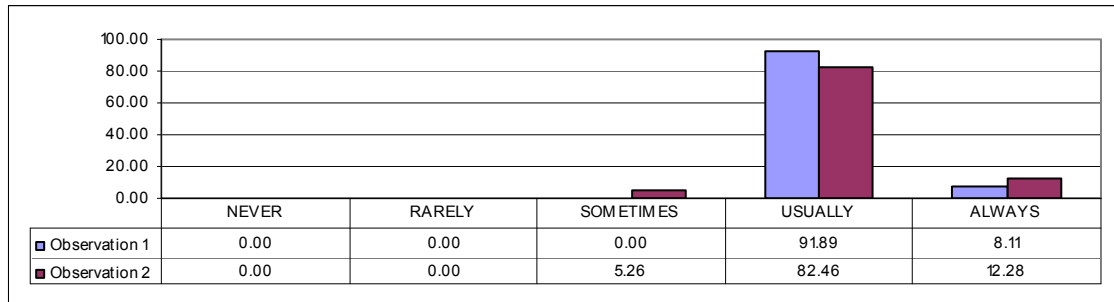


Figure 5.51 below shows that most teachers displayed behaviour indicating that most of them favoured to use the content of materials that helped to use coherent texts, different varieties of ESL and various communicative strategies as 'usually' (91.89% and 82.46% respectively).

Figure 5.51: Bar chart and frequency table for content of materials

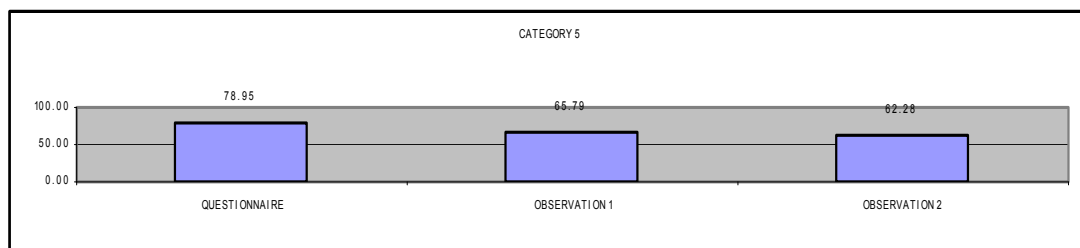


5.3.5.3 Comparison of the findings relating to content of materials as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument

The recorded responses show that texts provided for English learners should be well-organised and should not merely be included to ensure the correctness of ESL sentences. English cannot be learned effectively if the focus falls only on one register or variety of ESL. It is therefore important to use various strategies such as paraphrasing, summarising, presentation, drilling and repetition. Figure 5.52 below shows that teachers' attitudes (78.95%) are in line with their classroom behaviours in their classrooms recorded by the two observers respectively as 65.79% and 62.28%.

The interviewees were not asked about their contributions in this category, as materials, which were provided by the department, depended on what was contained in the syllabus and they had no control over the content.

Figure 5.52: Bar chart of percentages for content of materials as derived from the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument



The recorded responses relating to the content of materials show that teachers are in favour of the Communicative Approach, but their behaviours in their classrooms were not entirely consistent with this stated preference, probably because they were operating under the influence of the kind of training they received towards using the Communicative Approach in ESL. The following subsection reports on the training that the Zimbabwean O-level teachers received as reflected in the in-depth interviews held with them.

5.3.6 Teachers' assessment of their training in Zimbabwe

This subsection focuses on interviewees' responses to questions about the benefit they received from their training.

Some interviewees were satisfied with the training they received:

5-1 I received training at college and I feel it has improved my knowledge and my ability to implement the Communicative Approach (Mrs Mussinyani, 24 May 2005).

Three interviewees expressed the view that their training had been 'shallow', insubstantial and of little use to them:

5-2 I feel the training I received was very shallow (Mr Nyaudi, 25 May 2005).

5-3 I feel we are let down by lack of adequate training (Mr Macheka, 21 June 2005).

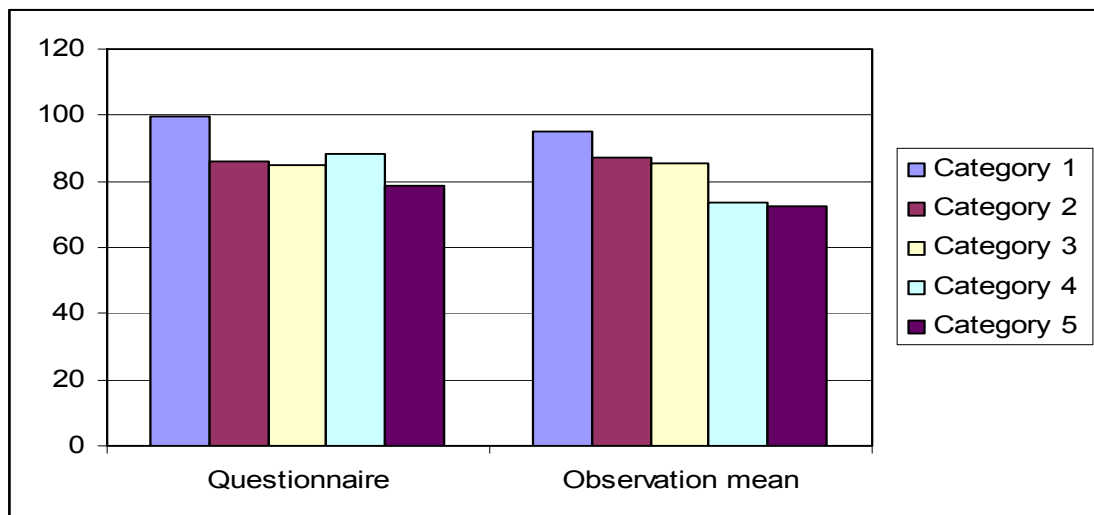
5-4 Training did not provide anything new to me, since I had been in service for a number of years before training. Training only confirmed what I already knew (Mr Chideme, 27 May 2005).

Poor training reported here is partly attributable to the fact that the qualified teachers emigrate to settle in countries like Australia and South Africa.

5.4 The correlation between the questionnaire and observation totals

In order to correlate findings derived from the attitudinal questionnaire with the data recorded by the two observers, the values expressed as percentages were plotted on a graph (cf. Figure 5.53 below) and the non-parametric correlation coefficient was calculated. The significance of the relationship at issue will be tested. The percentage of the questionnaire was correlated with the observation mean of the five categories stated in this study. Figure 5.53 shows little variance in the percentages obtained for the various categories, which means that teachers' attitudes and behaviours in all categories with regard to the Communicative Approach are positive. This Figure confirms that the percentages are never lower than 60%, indicating that the effect of the teachers' attitudes towards the Communicative Approach on their classroom behaviour is effective, and that assuming that teachers' attitudes positively affect their behaviours in their classrooms is valid.

Figure 5.53: Percentages for the various categories of the questionnaire and the observation mean



The values in Table 5.1 below reflect the *non-parametric Pearson correlation*, which is quite high and positive for all cases, indicating strong correlations between the

questionnaire and the two sets of observations, i.e. teachers implemented the Communicative Approach effectively because they had positive attitudes towards it. The range of the *correlation coefficient* is between -1.00 and 1.00 . -1.00 indicates a perfect negative correlation while 1.00 indicates a perfect positive correlation.

To find out whether there is a significant correlation between the responses to the questionnaire and the recordings derived from the observations, the correlation matrix of these two variables will be considered.

Table 5.1: Correlation Matrix between the questionnaire and the observation mean

		Observation mean	Questionnaire
Observation mean	Pearson Correlation	1.00	.877
	Sig. (2-tailed)*	1.00	≤ 0.05
	N=	(5)**	(5)
Questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	.877	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	≤ 0.05	1.00
	N=	(5)	(5)

* 2-tailed: it is the two-sided test determining the connection and correlation value between the two variables: teachers' attitudes and their behaviours, at the two sides of the test.

** (5): refers to the five categories of the study.

The correlation between teachers' attitudes and their behaviour classroom variables was very significant at .877, which is close to $+1.00$. Mulder (1989:73) states that the correlation significance ranging from 0.80 to 0.99 is very high. The hypothesis is tested to find if there is a significant correlation. The associated *p*-value of this test is provided along with an interpretation. A significance level of 0.05% will be assumed.

Table 5.1 shows that the correlation between teachers' attitudes and behaviours was significant (0.05), and the interpretation assuming a positive relation between teachers' attitudes and behaviours in ESL classrooms was correct.

It is clear from table 5.1 above that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes and their behaviours, which means that teachers'

attitudes have a positive effect on the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach, is supported. That is, teachers' attitudes were found to have a direct positive effect on the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms.

5.5 Estimating reliability and validity

Reliability depends on the degree to which findings are consistent and dependable. Leary (1991:57) states: "Reliability reflects the proportion of the total variance in a set of scores that is systematic, true-score variance". Low reliability would suggest that the statements of the questionnaire contain variables that have not been accounted for.

Validity is measured as content and construct validity. For the purposes of this study, content validity, on the one hand, concerns the degree to which the scores of the attitudinal questionnaire and the observation instrument measure the principles and features of the Communicative Approach and teachers' attitudes towards them.

Construct validity depends on the degree to which the statements comprising the questionnaires and the statements of the observation instrument test what is supposed to be tested in the study with regard to the different categories relating to attitudes and behaviours as a reflection of the essential features of the Communicative Approach. The use of various data collection methods (a questionnaire, an observation study, and a semistructured interview) was meant to ascertain both the reliability and validity of the study.

5.5.1 Reliability

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used as a measure of the internal consistency (i.e. the extent to which tests or procedures assess the same construct) of the statements comprising the attitudinal questionnaire (Appendix A).

Tables 5.2 below shows the Alpha reliability analysis of the statements included in the questionnaire. The high range for *Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient* is usually between 0.7

and 1.0. Table 5.2 also shows that the statements of the questionnaire are within the acceptable range of reliability.

Table 5.2: Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient of the statements of the attitudinal questionnaire

Statement pair	Alpha Coefficient
1-2	0.4342
3-4	0.5309
5-6	0.7438
7-8	0.723
9-10	0.718
11-12	0.7284
13-14	0.3589
15-16	0.8691
17-18	0.5096
19-20	0.7866
21-22	0.5077

5.5.1.1 Pair and group-work activities

The statements (1 – 4) relating to this category of the questionnaire are moderately reliable ranging between 0.4 and 0.5 (cf. Table 5.2 and Appendix A). Pair and group-work activities were perceived by teachers as crucial to give learners enough opportunities to interact purposefully and cooperatively with written and spoken texts and to negotiate meaning with fellow learners and the teacher. It was found that pair and group-work activities are conducive to learning and are not a waste of teachers’ or learners’ time. The overall disposition (i.e. 99.34% of teachers) towards pair and group-work activities was positive, and teachers’ attitudes were consistent with their behaviour, where 90.79% and 85.16% of the observed teachers initiated pair and group-work activities (cf. Figure 5.9). This could be seen from the testimony of nine of the twenty interviewees (45%) who did not use pair and group-work in ESL large classes and

complained that they were simply too pressed for time to implement pair and group-work activities effectively (cf. 5.3.1.3).

5.5.1.2 Fluency and accuracy

All the statements (5 – 10) relating to this category are very reliable (rating 0.7 and higher – cf. Table 5.2 and Appendix A). Fluency and accuracy of L2 were taught to develop linguistic, discursal, pragmatic and strategic competencies of L2 learners. Teachers involved in this study agreed that English was learnt effectively when used as a vehicle for doing something, and that focusing on planned forms of the target language aided the development of learners' communicative competence. 86.17% of the teachers expressed positive attitudes towards teaching ESL fluency and accuracy, while 87.72% and 70.18% of the observed teachers taught ESL fluency as well as accuracy (cf. Figure 5.23). However, some teachers showed a tendency to teach forms of English as uncontextualised entities and an end in themselves. Figure 5.17 shows that 32.43% and 21.05% of the observed teachers taught uncontextualised forms 'usually, while 62.16% and 71.05% followed this practice 'sometimes' (cf. 5.3.2.2). This was further supported by the views of two of the twenty interviewees (10%) who regarded fluency and accuracy as separate issues (cf. 5.3.2.3). The uncontextualised approach can be seen as a backwash of the examination system in Zimbabwe where the accurate use of the L2 is given precedence over listening and speaking. In the O-level syllabus teachers are reminded that the Communicative Approach does not neglect the teaching of grammar.

5.5.1.3 Error correction

The first two statements relating to error correction (11 – 12, cf. Appendix A) are very reliable (higher than 0.7); the other two statements (13 – 14) are less reliable (below than 0.4. – Table 5.4). Some theorists believe that errors are part of the language learning process and that both incidental and planned error correction are useful to develop linguistic competence in meaningful contexts. 85.09% of the teachers were positive towards tackling error correction according to the tenets of the Communicative

Approach; 85.79% and 81.05% of the observed teachers displayed behaviour showing that they implemented error correction effectively (cf. Figure 5.33). Eight of the twenty interviewees (40%) were inclined to correct learners' errors immediately without giving them the opportunity to correct each other's errors (cf. 5.3.3.3), possibly as a result of the O-level syllabus in Zimbabwe that motivates teachers to root out common language errors by providing remedial exercises. Moreover, there was pressure on teachers to complete the syllabus and prepare their learners to do well in the examinations. The backwash effect of coaching for the examination is that ESL teachers regard their teaching materials mainly as an error-purging mechanism leading to the examination.

5.5.1.4 The role of the teacher

The two statements relating to the role of the teacher category (15 – 16, cf. Appendix A) are very reliable (higher than 0.7 – cf. Table 5.4). Teachers who are committed to the Communicative Approach tend to be managers, instructors and facilitators. Teachers should assume the authority to direct classroom activities and distribute opportunities effectively so that all can participate equally in class and can be monitored and facilitated, but in this study it was found that a considerable number of teachers tended to dominate classroom discourse, probably because they were observed impressionistically by the two observers. The system of coaching for the examinations in Zimbabwe is a major reason why teachers tend to dominate their classrooms, as they endeavour to complete the syllabus on time and ensure that their learners “know all the right” answers. 88.16% of the teachers had positive attitudes towards being facilitators; 59.21% and 68.42% of the observed teachers acted as facilitators (cf. Figure 5.40); and eight of the twenty interviewees (40%) preferred to play a dominant role in their ESL classrooms (cf. 5.3.4.3).

5.5.1.5 Content of materials

Statements 17, 18, 21 and 22 relating to this category are moderately reliable, while statements 19 and 20 are very reliable (cf. Table 5.4 and Appendix A). The content of

materials provided to L2 learners should be chosen with a view to developing the linguistic, discoursal, pragmatic and strategic competencies of the L2 user. Materials therefore have to be authentic and realistic in the sense of being recognisably related to learners' own lives. In their responses the teachers expressed the belief that content of materials should be well-organised and not merely designed to ensure the correctness of English sentences. They also believed that ESL could only be learned effectively with the aid of materials that included different varieties and registers of English, as well as a variety of communicative strategies as explained (cf. 2.3 and 2.4.5). Teachers' positive beliefs about the content of materials (78.95%) and their behaviour (65.79% and 62.28%, cf. Figure 5.52) show that the prescribed textbooks have provided authentic topics related to the interests of learners in Zimbabwe, as well as the necessary built-in grammar, so they are well-suited to communicative activities. The need to ensure that the most suitable textbooks are used is emphasised by Whitley (1993:149-154). O-level textbooks in Zimbabwe proved to be crucial in the successful implementation of the Communicative Approach as manifested by the positive attitudes of the teachers in all the categories in this study, although three of them complained from poor training. This shows that the Department of Education in Zimbabwe was able to choose the right textbooks.

5.5.2 Validity

The validity of this study was evaluated in terms of content and construct validity. Content validity is inferred on the basis that the questionnaire and the observation instrument measure the particular features of the Communicative Approach adequately and sufficiently. In this regard, the independent variable (teachers' attitudes) was adequately and explicitly described from different sources and research studies in the field (cf. Chapter 3). The dependent variable (the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach) was also described and features were defined and operationalised in a clear and consistent manner. These principles and features were operationalised into a questionnaire and an observation instrument (cf. 4.4.1, 4.4.2, Appendices D and E) to ensure both the external and the internal validity of the study. The observation instrument tested the actual implementation of the Communicative

Approach in terms of activities in ESL classrooms to validate teachers' attitudes and behaviours.

The researcher chose a large number of subjects for this case study (38) to avoid interference of subjects' variability in the case of small population samples, and thus to ensure internal validity. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989:98), "The greater the size, the smaller the effect of individual variability or any other population-related variable on the outcome". The *P-value* was significant (i.e. 0.05) which means that the correlation (i.e. relationship) between teachers' attitudes and behaviors was high, that is teachers' behaviours were dependent on their attitudes in this study.

5.6 Testing the research hypothesis

This section will discuss whether or not the hypothesis of the study is confirmed from the findings of the statistics above.

5.6.1 Research hypothesis

H If teachers are positively disposed to the Communicative Approach, there will be a higher frequency of communicative activities in ESL classrooms.

Table 5.1 of the non-parametric Spearman correlation showed that the correlations were all positive. And since Table 5.1 showed a significant correlation between teachers' attitudes and their communicative teaching behaviour, the null hypothesis could be rejected. The two variables were dependent on each other, which meant that there was a significant correlation between teachers' attitudes and their behaviours. Thus, teachers' attitudes had a positive effect on their effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in their ESL classrooms.

The finding that teachers' scores on the implementation of the Communicative Approach correlate significantly with their scores in the attitudinal questionnaire, indicates that teachers' attitudes do influence their behaviour to a high degree (60+). The findings of the hypothesis thus seem to confirm the assumption that teachers' attitudes play a

significant role in implementing the Communicative Approach. This is sufficient reason to conclude that there is a strong likelihood that teachers will implement the Communicative Approach effectively if they have positive attitudes towards it, and therefore, the extent to which teachers implement successfully (or not) is directly dependent on their disposition towards it (i.e. the more positive the disposition, the better the chances of success, and the more negative the disposition, the worse the chances of success). Thus, any opposing hypothesis could be rejected in favour of the conclusion that attitudes and behaviours are significantly and positively correlated. This finding has pedagogical implications as proposed in Chapter 6.

5.7 Conclusion

The influence of teachers' attitudes towards the Communicative Approach on how effectively they apply it is certain but not necessarily conclusive because it is only one of a number of variables that have to be considered in this regard, such as individual differences, the role of educational policy-making authority and of parents and society as well as teachers' competencies. In view of all these variables there can be no question of a simple cause-effect relationship between teachers' attitudes and successful implementation of the Communicative Approach because other critical factors may be beyond their control. It should be stressed that teachers are not necessarily aware of their own attitudes as they merely follow instructions without considering whether prescribed procedures are the most appropriate for the task in hand.

Conclusions, implications of the study and recommendations will be dealt with in Chapter 6 with reference to the content of this chapter

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter focuses on reviewing the contribution of this research study. The aims of this study are reviewed. An overview of each chapter is presented, showing how each chapter relates to the overall aims, analysing and detailing its contribution to the study. The limitations and implications of the study are explored and explained.

6.2 Review

This section outlines the problem statement, the aims and the hypothesis of this study.

6.2.1 Problem statement

The aims of this study were addressed by way of specific research problems identified in Chapter 1. The Communicative Approach has been adopted worldwide, including Zimbabwe. This approach sets out to develop ESL learners' skills and abilities. However, the Communicative Approach proved difficult to implement, not least because teachers might resist its implementation, consciously or unconsciously (cf. 1.1), with the result that the effectiveness of its implementation tended to vary with the negativity (or otherwise) of teachers' attitude towards it. In the field of research in L2 learning, teachers' attitudes are of crucial importance to the effective implementation of any teaching approach, in this case the Communicative Approach.

The role of teachers' attitudes has been neglected to a great extent in the field of L2 teaching (cf. 1.1). This study is an attempt to determine the impact of teachers' attitudes on their classroom behaviour and thus on the effectiveness of their implementation of the Communicative Approach.

6.2.2 Aims of the study

The general aim of this study was to determine the effect of teachers' attitudes on their implementation of the Communicative Approach in Zimbabwe. To this end, teachers' attitudes and the consistency between their attitudes and their behaviours in the classrooms were investigated. The following subaims were set up with a view to achieving the main aim of the study:

- Isolate the salient communicative principles and features in ESL classrooms in O-level secondary schools.
- Gauge the effect of 38 Zimbabwean teachers' attitudes on their implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms,
- Observe 38 Zimbabwean teachers' behaviours in ESL communicative classrooms to determine how consistent their behaviours and congruent with their attitudes, and
- Review 20 Zimbabwean teachers' opinions about teaching ESL using the Communicative Approach.

After conducting an extensive review of the literature on traditional methods (i.e. Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods) and the Communicative Approach, an attitudinal questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale was devised to gauge teachers' attitudes. An observation instrument was designed on a 5-point scale to document teachers' behaviours in an attempt to correlate them with their attitudes. A semi-structured interview was conducted to elicit the teachers' verbalisation of how they conceive of their professional task.

6.2.3 Research hypothesis

In order to address the research aims, a hypothesis was formulated which was tested by means of descriptive statistics:

H If teachers are positively disposed to the Communicative Approach, there will be a higher frequency of communicative activities in ESL classrooms.

An overview of the chapters in the following section shows how the problems of the study were addressed.

6.3 Overview of chapters

The main focus of Chapters 1 through 5 is summarised in this section and the relevance of the subject matter to the research problem is outlined. The review of literature on teachers' attitudes and the implementation of the Communicative Approach were inevitably wide – ranging over Chapters 2 and 3; and it served to situate the research issues within a broader theoretical and empirical framework.

Chapter 1 embodied the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research hypothesis, method research, structure of study and abbreviations used in the study.

Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature on ESL teaching methods, comparing the principles of the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual Methods and the Communicative Approach. Chapter 2 concluded that although these three methods hinge on different naturally exclusive principles, they can coexist in ESL classrooms.

The general principles of the Communicative Approach were clearly articulated since they constituted the dependent variable of the study. Some specific features of the Communicative Approach were corroborated from the review of related studies. This conceptualisation of the Communicative Approach was the basis from which the statements of the questionnaire and the observation instrument were operationalised, in addition to the questions of the semistructured interview. The statements were grouped under five categories: pair and group-work activities, fluency and accuracy, error correction, the role of the teacher, and content of materials.

Chapter 3 covered the independent variable of teachers' attitudes. It served to situate the research issues of this study within a broader theoretical and empirical perspective with

regard to teachers' attitudes. The discussion first focused on providing a working definition of attitudes since teachers' training background and experience influence how they feel about and implement a particular approach to teaching. Teachers' attitudes are essentially formed by their beliefs, feelings and behaviours. The relationship between beliefs, feelings and behaviours was also scrutinised, and the contextual factors that might impede the successful implementation of the teaching approaches were mentioned.

In Chapter 4, the focus shifted away from the broader theoretical and empirical issues to the more concrete analytical issues of the study. The research design and analytical framework were discussed. The research mainly comprises a descriptive case study, conducted at six secondary schools in Harare, Zimbabwe, in which qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used.

Data collection was done by means of a questionnaire, an observation instrument and a semistructured interview. A pilot study was carried out with 20 Zimbabwean O-level teachers and others in the field (i.e. from colleges and universities in Zimbabwe), in order to refine the statements of the questionnaire and the observation instrument. 38 O-level English teachers were asked to state their attitudes on a Likert 5-point scale, and were observed twice for at least three lessons. 20 of those teachers were interviewed.

The rationale underlying the statements of the questionnaire and the observation instrument was explained. This rationale helped to establish criteria for the assessment of teachers' behaviours in their classrooms and served as a basis from which to follow a procedure that could be used to analyse and quantify the data pertaining to this study. Data analysis was done by means of descriptive statistics.

The data obtained in pursuing the study were noted and interpreted in Chapter 5. Bar charts and frequency tables were used to explain the correlations between teachers' attitudes and their behaviours in their classrooms. The presentation of data and the resultant findings proceeded from the attitudinal questionnaire to the observation instrument and then to a comparison between these findings for each category.

Contributions from the semistructured interview were provided to lend substance to all the categories.

In all five categories a significant correlation was found between teachers' attitudes and their behaviours in their respective classrooms, showing that there is a dependent relation between teachers' positive attitudes and their effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in their ESL classrooms. Thus, the hypothesis of this study was confirmed and its null hypotheses was rejected.

Cronbach's Alpha correlation was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire, which turned out to range from moderate to high degree of reliability (0.4 – 0.7). To ensure inter-rater reliability, the researcher, assisted by an experienced teacher, carried out an observation of all 38 subjects for at least three lessons per teacher. The observer and the experienced teacher attended together three lessons with 20 of the observed subjects. The observation instrument was designed to validate the attitudinal questionnaire. Content and construct validity of the study were found to be high which shows that the study is valid.

6.4 Limitations of the present study

This study was carried out in six secondary schools in Harare, where qualified teachers and good resources are available in most of these schools. More schools from many cities and areas would be a reliable indication of the status quo in secondary schools in Zimbabwe.

Teachers were not asked about their ideas regarding the content of materials because materials, which were provided by the department, depended on what was contained in the syllabus and they had no control over the content. Asking teachers about their views concerning the content of materials that they see suitable for their learners may add useful insights to the study.

The reliability of some statements of the attitudinal questionnaire was moderate (i.e. lower than 0.7) and may therefore have affected the outcome of this study. Future studies have to ensure that all statements are highly reliable'.

6.5 Implications of the study

The observations and insights that emerge from this study do have some pedagogical implications.

6.5.1 Pair and group-work activities

Some ESL teachers in Zimbabwe need to exploit the potential value of pair and group-work activities to the maximum in order to provide sufficient activities for their learners, to teach learners (Figure 5.6, page 69 of this study) and to focus on text during classroom discourse (cf. Figure 5.7).

The current in-service training programmes have to employ techniques to focus teachers' attention on weaknesses in the implementation of pair and group work in large ESL classrooms, and to make sure that their time is evenly distributed among their learners so that they have equal opportunities to initiate, negotiate and follow up their peers' turns in the lessons. ESL teachers have to be observed by professional trainers to analyse and critique the lessons delivered so that the teachers can become more proficient at ministering pair and group-work activities than before.

6.5.2 Fluency and accuracy

Topics taught in the classroom were required to be realistic and not contrived. Six of the twenty interviewees (30%) were convinced of the effectiveness of using both meaning- and form-focused instructions in ESL (cf. 2.4.2.1, 2.4.2.2 and 5.3.2.3), though they had different views about what ought to be addressed first fluency or accuracy.

The current in-service training programmes are intended to provide teachers with techniques that help them to contextualise ESL forms and to promote their ability to integrate their teaching of ESL fluency and accuracy. ESL forms should be used to promote learners' spontaneous fluency. Techniques then have to be developed to contextualise ESL forms to make pragmatic sense in the relevant situation by ensuring that realistic communication takes place in classrooms.

6.5.3 Error correction

The current in-service training programmes should be in present based on the best error-correction techniques in order to develop ESL learners' communicative competence. Teachers need to know when to use explicit and implicit error correction, when and how to tolerate learners' errors and what kinds of errors are likely to impede communication. Research studies of Lightbown and Spada (1990), Lyster and Ranta (1997), Pica (1994) and Spada and Lightbown (1993) can contribute insights regarding the best communicative techniques to address error correction in ESL environments. Insights gained from these sources can be applied in ESL in-service training programmes with a view to improving teachers' error-correction abilities.

6.5.4 The role of the teacher

The current in-service training programmes in Zimbabwe need to address the issue of preserving a fine distinction between guiding classroom discourse to facilitate the learning process (two-way communication) and controlling to the extent of dominating and/or precluding all classroom discourse (one-way communication). Three of the observed teachers called for more effective in-service training to enable teachers to implement the Communicative Approach effectively (cf. 5-2, 5-3 and 5-4 in 5.3.6).

6.5.5 Content of materials

Teachers who were trained in the Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods of ESL teaching should be informed of their weaknesses in the various aspects of using content of materials in their current in-service training programmes.

6.6 Conclusion

Teachers' attitudes, while critical for the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach, are only one component of this process and must be considered in relation to other variables such as individual factors that contribute to its effective implementation.

If the Communicative Approach is to be effectively implemented in Zimbabwe, then teachers' attitudes towards it have to be improved. Teachers' attitudes are formed by their beliefs, feelings and behaviours. Teachers, whose attitudes are positive, are able to mediate between what the theory calls for and the classrooms actually require and allow, due to different situations in the teaching environment. Provision of in-service training is important to inform teachers of the theoretical and practical considerations of the Communicative Approach.

This study provides analyses of the phenomenon of teachers' attitudes towards the effective implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL classrooms. These findings can be used to complement studies on teachers' attitudes from other disciplines such as education and psychology. There is still plenty of scope for further investigation into the various aspects of the research issues dealt with in this study and the implications that follow from them.

Appendix A: The attitudinal questionnaire

Dear teacher

I am enrolled for a postgraduate study at UNISA and I am conducting research on **The Effect of Teachers' Attitudes on the Effective Implementation of the Communicative Approach in ESL Classrooms**. Please respond to these statements by ticking (√) in the spaces provided. Please note that this information is strictly confidential.

The statements	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Undecided 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. Pair and group-work activities help to provide opportunities for developing genuine interaction among learners.					
2. Pair and group-work activities waste the teacher's and learners' time.					
3. Pair and group-work activities help learners to focus purposefully and cooperatively on understanding spoken and written texts.					
4. Pair and group-work activities distract learners from concentrating in a useful way on the spoken and written texts.					
5. English is most effectively learnt when it is used as a vehicle for teaching forms of the language (i.e. grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling) in isolation from contexts of English.					
6. English is learnt most effectively when it is used as a vehicle for doing something, such as greeting, requesting, giving, apologizing, etc.					
7. Focusing on selected English forms helps to raise the level of learners' communicative competence in using English correctly and appropriately.					
8. Teaching English forms as separate statements as an end in themselves can develop learners' fluency.					

9.	To prepare learners to communicate fluently, topics have to be realistic. They have to be related to learners' real-life situations.					
10.	Learners can use English fluently if the taught forms are contrived (i.e. not related to learners' real-life situations).					
11.	Teachers' feedback to correct learners' errors must focus on developing the meanings of L2 (i.e. suitable to social contexts and situations) and the correct usage of English.					
12.	Teachers' feedback to correct learners' errors must focus only on the accuracy or correctness of English (e.g. grammar, spelling and syntax).					
13.	Errors are seen as a natural part of the learning process, so less correction helps to focus on the meaningful negotiation of English.					
14.	Correcting all learners' errors out of contexts can lead to effective learning of English.					
15.	In applying the communicative approach the teacher dominates all the activities and is the only speaker throughout the lesson.					
16.	In applying the communicative approach the teacher is the manager, guide and facilitator of the learning process in the classrooms.					
17.	Texts provided for English learners should be well-organised and logical (coherent) so that the readership or audience will readily understand them and participate effectively in conversation about the topics concerned.					
18.	English learners should be provided with texts that provide incoherent sentences rather than the logical flow of the relevant subject matter.					
19.	Effective English learning necessitates teaching varieties and registers of English (e.g. formal and informal) that are appropriate to a variety of situations and purposes.					

20. English can be taught successfully by focusing only on the formal register or variety. One variety is suitable for mastering English for all situations and purposes.					
21. Various strategies such as storing, retrieving, recalling, paraphrasing, skimming, and summarising have to be taught to develop learners' communicative command of English effectively.					
22. Especially since they are easy to teach, the only strategies required to teach English effectively are presentation, drilling and repetition.					

Appendix B: The observation instrument

Category / Statements	Always 5	Usually 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
<p>The teacher</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides learners with activities that have to be carried out in pairs and groups. 2. Insists on interactive focus on text. 3. Provides meaning-based activities. 4. Provides contrived forms. 5. Provides selected forms in context. 6. Encourages authentic activities in English. 7. Helps learners to relate contexts to their lives. 8. Corrects selected errors. 9. Tolerates learners' errors. 10. Encourages learners to correct each other's errors. 11. Dominates classroom situations. 12. Monitors classroom situations. 13. Encourages learners to focus on coherent English texts. 14. Encourages learners to use various registers of English. 15. Helps learners to acquire various strategies to learn English. 					

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