

The influence of teacher talk on pupils' participation in classroom talk-in-interaction in Tanzanian primary school

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Doctor of Philosophy (Linguistics)

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The purpose of this study was to analyse classroom talk-in-interaction in Tanzanian primary schools focusing on how teacher language provided opportunities for pupils to verbally participate in the classroom talk-in-interaction. The study was guided by two objectives. The first one was to analyse the structures of classroom talk-in-interaction, and the second one to examine teacher language that promoted or inhibited pupils' participation in the classroom talk-in-interaction. The study deployed a qualitative approach and a case study design which involved class six pupils and their teachers from two primary schools – one English medium and one Kiswahili medium in Kinondoni district in Dar es Salaam. Data were collected by observations supplemented with note taking and audio recording. The audio recorded data were transcribed and subjected to Discourse Analysis and Conversational Analysis analytical frameworks. The findings revealed that most structures of classroom talk-in-interaction aligned with the traditional IRF/E structures which are teacher dominated and a few episodes of structures initiated by pupils. The findings further showed that teacher language, to a large extent, determines the nature of pupils' participation. On the one hand, forms of teacher language that promoted participation were such as open-ended questioning, contingent questioning, extended wait time and positive feedback. On the other hand, limited wait time, negative feedback and teacher's preference of form over content inhibited pupils' participation in classroom-talk-interaction. The study recommends that teachers' language use should be given a closer look in order for teachers to purposely use language forms that promote pupils' participation. They should receive necessary trainings that will give them necessary pedagogical support to enhance pupils' participation in the classroom talk-in-interaction.