

The Extent of Students' Initiation of Ideas in The Classroom

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ABSTRACT

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

Keywords

Flanders, Classrooms, Lessons, Teachers, Students, Ideas.

Background to the Study

Three classroom interaction techniques were used to investigate the extent of students' initiation of ideas in the classrooms in Port Harcourt. They are Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) Teacher Initiation, Students' Response, Teacher Evaluation (IRE) and Teaching Cycles (T.C). By initiation of ideas the author wants to investigate the extent to which students express their own ideas, how freely they develop opinions; their line of thought, the extent they go beyond the existing structure or discourse in the classroom. "The extent of voluntary verbal behaviour which was not in any way initiated by the teacher" (Ituen 2009).

Statement of the Problem

A lot of factors affect verbal behaviour in the classroom. These could be teacher's teaching style, students learning style or a combination of both. It could also be due to learning environment and other multicultural factors. Teachers often dominate instruction (Weimer 1993, Knight 1993, Gross 1996, Nassaja & Wells 2000, Rodriguez 2009). At times their method of teaching could be defective, their method of presentation may not be clear to the students. Students' disposition could affect initiation of ideas; examples include students' age, mental level, psychology, motivation. Other factors that could affect students' initiation of ideas in the classroom are parents' attitude, learning problems, poor academic environment. Gross (1993) has pointed out that students' enthusiasm, involvement and willingness to participate should determine the quality of class discussion. Barriers to students' initiation of ideas could be easily managed by an affective teacher. Although there is no best practice in meeting individual student needs but certainly in an affective classroom, different approaches to instruction should be incorporated by the teacher because learning is an interactive process. Students need to be actively involved in tasks that are achievable, useful, relevant and challenging. The new Nigerian curriculum made little change in objectives, values, content, sequencing of classroom interaction process which includes students' initiation of ideas, we are yet to find out if these objectives and changes are actually achieved in every classroom and this is the basis of this study.

Objectives of the Study

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

Research Questions

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

Hypothesis

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

Significance of the Study

The application of the findings of this study will help classroom teacher weigh classroom behaviours objectively; and expose teachers and students to a more objective mode of

interaction in the classroom. When students' voices are heard and teachers employ logical moves, students will come out with critical and analytical minds and face life challenges better.

Scope of Study

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

RESEARCH DESIGN

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

AREA OF STUDY

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

POPULATION

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

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sample of the study consisted of twelve (12) teachers and one thousand and ninety- eight (1098) students of Government studies in three randomly selected SSI and SSII secondary schools. Six teachers taught SS1 and six teachers taught SS11 using a technique. Five hundred and forty-one (541) students participated in SS1 while five hundred and fifty seven (557) students participated in SS11. Six classrooms were involved in the study, three in SS1 and three in SS11. Three public schools were randomly selected, two teachers taught using Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) two teachers taught using Teacher Initiation, Students response and Teacher Evaluation (IRE), while two teachers taught using Teaching Cycles (T.C) in SS1and SS11 respectively, the teachers were experienced. The teachers taught each class once. Twelve lessons were recorded.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

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

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENT

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

RELIABILITY

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

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

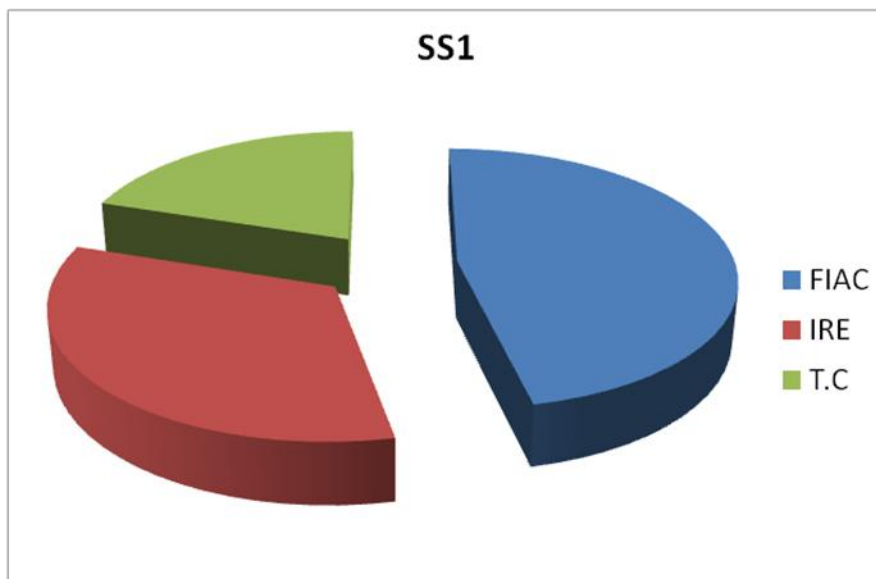
Data for the study were collected during classroom lessons. Before the observation, the researcher made visitation to the selected schools, established rapport with the Government teachers. A tape recorder was used to record all the class events. . The researcher concluded by observing each of the teachers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

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

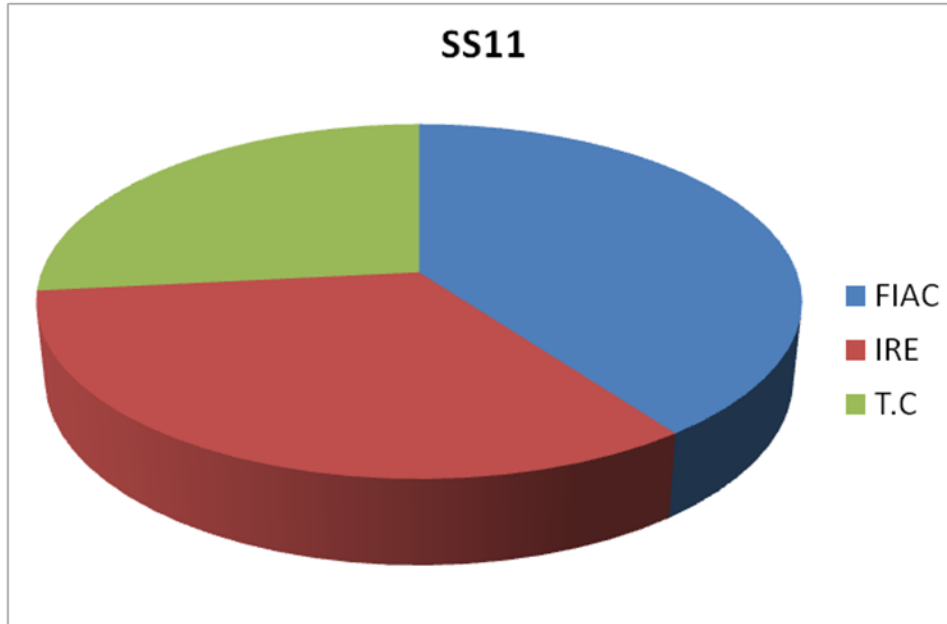
The data collected in this study were analysed as follows: the research questions were analysed using pie charts expressed in gain and gain percentages. The hypothesis was tested using chi square statistics.

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

GAIN PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS' INITIATION OF IDEAS IN SS1



GAIN PERCENTAGE STUDENTS' INITIATION OF IDEAS IN SS11



Hypothesis

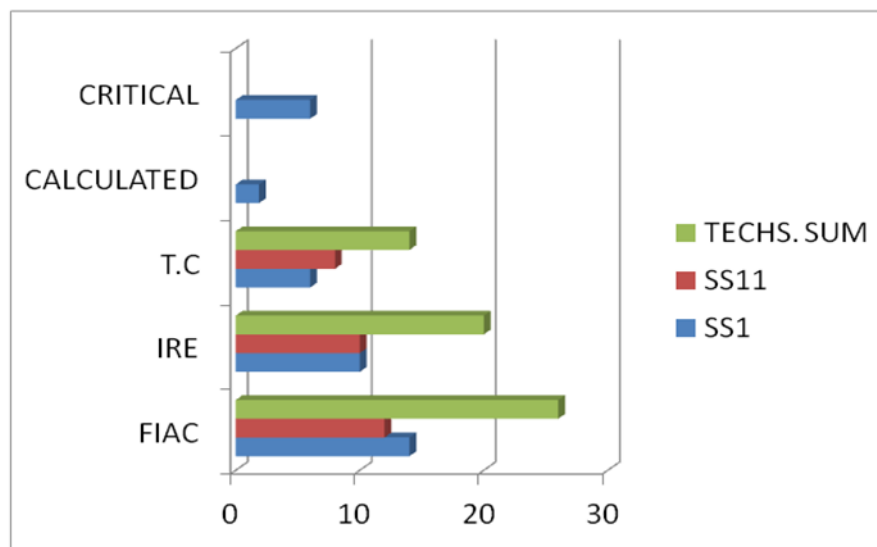
SS1 and SS11 students in initiation of ideas is not contingent upon classroom interaction techniques, namely; Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories,(FIAC) Teacher Initiation, Students Response, Teacher Evaluation (IRE) and Teaching Cycles (T.C).

Table 1.1: 3X2 Contingency Table showing Students' initiation of ideas in lesson and Classroom Interaction Techniques

Class level	Classroom Interaction Techniques				X ² Calculated
	FIAC	IRE	T.C	Total	
SSI	Fo14	10	6	30	1.88
	Fe(13)	(10)	(7)		
SSII	Fo12	10	8	30	
	Fe(12)	(10)	(7)		
	26	20	14	60	

As shown in Table 1.1, the calculated value of χ^2 is less than the critical value (5.99) which shows that students' initiation of ideas is not contingent upon classroom interaction used.

Component Bar Chart Showing Chi Square Analysis of Students' Initiation of Ideas in SS1 & SS11 Classrooms



Discussion

Based on result of the data analysed, one can rightly surmise that teachers are prone to using direct influence on students; as a result students' level of initiation of ideas is minimal (Gross 1993, Weimer 1993, Anorue 2004, Ihebuzor 2005). Teachers need to create a warm and supportive classroom where individual need is met and high level of creativity should be imbued on students. Students should develop critical and analytical minds making meta-comment and meta – cognitive contributions in classroom discussions. Teachers should place high premium on negotiated instruction strategies by increasing his wait time (Azubike 2000:1). This is necessary because from the study teachers do not emphasize extended negotiations (Atkins & Brown, 2001:3). The very fact that there is low level of initiation of ideas in the classroom challenges the teachers to design different methods of facilitation. They should embark extensively on facilitation evaluation skills like asking questions; using strategies that draw out knowledge of theory and experience, offering corrections when necessary. Oranu (2010) has emphasized that classroom discussion should be focussed; relevant and engaging; theory should be related to experience; and the application and implication of ideas clear and

accurate. Teachers should go extra step to seek students' recommendations for initiation of ideas in the classroom. This properly done reduces teacher's anxiety on whether to call a student to respond when there is increased wait time (Lathrop 1996:3). Students on their part are saved the problem of "cold – calling" by the teacher (Weimer, 1993). When some of these issues are taken care of students will be more involved in the classroom because initiating and applying ideas to challenging situations does not happen naturally; it must be carefully planned and encouraged.

Recommendations

Students' recommendations on how to increase initiation of ideas in the classroom should be sought. Teacher should not use one technique to teach they should employ any technique that better and constructively engages the students.

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