‘Almost all teachers dislike questions, they don’t want many questions’.

An investigation of social practice taking place between teachers and students within the Tanzanian classroom.

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Abstract
This paper describes an analysis of social practice taking place between teachers and students within the classroom in a Tanzanian Secondary School. The aim of this contemporary study is to describe and explain classroom interaction with respect to existing role patterns and frame factors. The studied material consists primarily of collected data from classroom observations, with concentration on one class in form one and five single teachers. In addition to the observation method the investigation is also based on complementary informant study where five students within the observed class were interviewed. An analysis consisting of categorisation, description, and explanation of the different variables of verbal and written communication is expected to yield information about the social practice within the Tanzanian classroom. Such information will aid in addressing a potential connection between pattern of roles and certain frame factors.

The results of the observations imply that the teacher has the most active role; the teaching was almost entirely based on the use of direct, reproductive, teacher-centered methods leaving diminutive room for student moves. A notably high frequency of questions of a reproductive form, where students merely had to emulate the teacher, was discovered. Even though students were rarely addressed with questions of an open form, observations and interviews reveal students’ eager to break free from their constrained roles. What occurred to be a fixed pattern of steered activities turned out to be highly dynamical process. Considering relevant frame factors, there are reasons to believe that the Tanzanian classroom interaction is about to shift from a monologic to a dialogic classroom discourse; making this a highly interesting matter to investigate.

Key Words: classroom interaction, situated roles, frame factors, reproduction
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1. Introduction

As the teacher entered, the sound of a countless number of chairs moving against the floor stretched out over the Tanzanian classroom. Students quickly rose to their feet, a crowd of white blouses and quilted skirts emerged in front of him. A group of almost fifty individuals, but insignificant in the context where each student was only a building block of perfectly well organised lines. As part of the customary convention the teacher was welcomed by the students in choir, but this time his following response branched off from what was expected. The given would have been to ask about the students’ well being, instead the teacher continued by introducing a guest in the room. Even though the students never received a question concerning their current state of health, they unhesitatingly replied ‘we are fine thank you, and how are you?’ (Observation 2013-10-23, male teacher, 48 female students, form one, aged 12-14, secondary school)

The general comprehension of the concept of roles is that a role is a patterned sequence of learned actions performed in an interaction situation. (Lindzey 1959:225)

Social practice within any situation is constrained by established implicit and explicit frame factors. Within the school, frame factors in terms of national curriculum, time dimension, class size, expectations of different roles, social status, authoritativeness, and age difference are expected to be found. However, a prevailing assumption suggests that classroom interaction is primary governed by asymmetrical rules whereby the teacher is expected to be approached by the students in a more polite manner. Such assumption would probably suggest that active participation is made difficult due to a social distance between teachers and students. As interaction is the crucial element linking students and teachers together, the way they position themselves in the classroom will have great impact on the mediation of knowledge and thereby also the learning process. For this reason, classroom interaction as a phenomenon becomes most relevant to investigate within the teaching proficiency. (Aspelin 1999:18; Säljö 2013:46-50)
2. Background
According to Aspelin (1999), the prevailing comprehension of classroom interaction encapsulates the idea that the activity is governed by a fixed set of social rules. Such rules or frame factors constitutes a framework within which the relationship between teachers and students is arranged. The idea of social rules suggests that the teacher is appointed the task to organise the complex interaction by regulating the students’ freedom of speech. (Aspelin 1999:13–14) In order to map out a potential role pattern, one must consider what frame factors are established in this current context. Previous research refers to the Education Act as the prime explicit frame factor. (Lindblad & Sahlström 1999:73-74) According to the Tanzanian Education Act (2010) the teacher is expected to maintain *the most important role* in education, the teacher should organise the education in such a way that the students will relate with the content of the teaching and thereby meet the *content of the curriculum*. When this is put to interpretation, it implies that the classroom interaction should be constructed in such a way that the teacher possesses the most central position which the students should arrange themselves in relation to. Moreover, within this Act, two frame factors are emphasised; expectations of the teacher’s role and the explicit curriculum. Both are likely to endorse a certain kind of teaching style which will allow more or less social practice. As interaction is crucial for achieving the aim of education, it appears necessary to also interpret the definition of the notion *education* within the Tanzanian Education Act. (Säljö 2013:46-50) ‘Education’ is defined as a process by which individuals acquire knowledge and skills necessary for adapting to the environment and the ever changing social, political and economic conditions of society. In other words, the relationship between education and development depends on the extent to which the kind of education provided and its *methods* can meet the expectations of the individual and the needs of society. (Education Act 2010: 7, I, IX) Thereby is the teacher, as the central organiser and primary source of knowledge, expected to use a teaching method that ensure that the individual will acquire the skills that is necessary for satisfying ever changing needs of society. Depending on what teaching method the teacher chose, students will be left with more or less room for interactive participation.

This way of reasoning emphasises the prospects to detect frame factors that steer the social practice within the Tanzanian classroom. However, it should be noticed that frame factors are dynamic and change over time through human cooperation. (Säljö 2013:47–50) Previous
research has found that Swedish schools have undergone a dramatic transformation in terms of increasing the level of social practice over time. The emergence of 'the knowledge society', building of the pervasive influence of modern information and communication technologies, has brought about a fundamental reforming of the education system. The new view of knowledge is reflected in changed teaching methods and new expectations with respect to different roles within the classroom. (Dysthe 1995:46-47) Lindblad and Sahlström (1999) compared classroom interaction in the 1970s and the 1990s by drawing on the current curriculums (Lgr69 and Lgr80). The results from their investigation revealed that time had brought about new ways of teaching which allowed the occurrence of social practice to a larger extent. (Lindblad & Sahlström 1999:83) This confirms that frame factors do modify over time, and triggers the idea that the knowledge society challenge old expectations of roles. The knowledge society introduced the ‘new role of the teacher’ whereby the teacher is primary expected to guide the students in their work, and thereby increase the importance of their roles within the teaching. This new approach to the role of the teacher detaches from behaviourism, and rather coincides with the values of constructivism. Within constructivism the purpose in education is for the students to become creative and innovative. This perspective is based on experimental learning in such a way that it integrates new knowledge with existing knowledge, and allows innovative procedures. Students are encouraged to intake a self-directed role whereas the teacher mentors the students during heuristic problem solving by enabling quested learning. (Dysthe 1995:241) This suggests that societies undergoing a natural development, where conditions are continuously reformed and updated, must not only change the content of teaching but also the methods of teaching. How teaching is conducted will inevitably steer the expectations of the different roles in the classroom. Returning to the Tanzanian Education Act, this advocates that the relationship between education and development relies on the importance of the teaching to meet the ever changing conditions of society. Such expectation requires the education system to constantly undergo transformation in order to stay up to date. Altogether this puts great pressure on the teacher’s ability to maintain the role as the most important actor and thereby the primary source of information. As this suggests that the Tanzanian school depends heavily on the individual teacher’s proficiencies, one must question how the new knowledge society will challenge the teacher role. This study will devote consideration for these external and internal factors in an attempt to map out the social pattern within the Tanzanian classroom.
3. Purpose & Aim
The aim of this paper is to bring about new knowledge about the social interaction between teachers and students within the Tanzanian classroom. By giving language the prime importance this study seeks to map out the role system in the classroom.

3.1 Research Questions
This study intends to answer the following research questions:
   I. In what ways does the teacher interact with the students in the classroom?
   II. How are the students approaching opportunities of interaction with the teacher?

3.2 Scope
Classroom interaction is crucial for arbitrating and acquiring new knowledge, by engaging with this issue one will find it gives great insight into the nature of learning. Social practice within the classroom is central to any teacher, and the phenomenon should not be marginalised. By shedding light on this issue teachers would achieve a greater understanding of the meaning of interaction and the causes of using different categories of communication, which would have consequences for classroom practice whereby appropriate teaching methods could easier be adapted.
4. Overview of Literature

This section accounts for literature relevant for this field of inquiry. Section 4.1 provides a description of the theoretical perspective that the analysis has been based on. Section 4.2 offers an outline of previous research. As language is given importance in this study and the language of instruction within the Tanzanian school system is conducted in a most unique way, a part of section 4.2 is devoted to this aspect whereas the latter part accounts for two studies that together illustrate how frame factors have steered classroom interaction over time.

4.1 Theoretical Perspective

By approaching the study of social practice with respect to curriculum studies, the classroom interaction is understood in terms of a system of rules that conduct the practice of the school. Accordingly, curriculum studies summarise the idea that established frame factors enable a certain process. Such factors refer to the whole system of rules in the school that predetermine the students’ learning process. The theory of curriculum studies is useful in attempts to address a potential connection between frame factors in terms of time dimension (time for instruction), class size and character, content, student group and results. This approach embrace the idea that consequences of political decision making steer the way the teaching is carried out and thereby also the results of the teaching process (frame factors → process → results). (Lundgren 1999; Gustafsson 1999; Lindblad, Linde & Naeslund: 1999)

According to the treatise by Säljö (1997), the idea of frame factors offers a framework for studying the learning process whereby the actions of both students and teachers are understood with respect to their contexts. Säljö advocates that learning occurs through interaction or as an outcome of active participation in interaction, and not through teaching where knowledge is merely arbitrated. (Säljö 1997:1; Säljö 2003:47–48) He recognises language as a critical element in linking individuals with their fellow human beings, and as the main cultural tool used in social interaction. Additionally, Dysthe (1995) argues that specific features of language have consequences for the construction of interaction. She distinguishes reproductive and productive nature of verbal communication by arguing that both could always be retraced to the teaching process. The distinctions falls within the idea of authoritative and dialogic classroom discourse, where the reproductive communication tends to occur within an authoritative discourse and the productive communication occurs within a
dialogic discourse (Bakhtin in Mortimer 2005). Dysthe emphasises the importance of promoting a productive based teaching where the students are encouraged to participate in a dialogue with the teacher, and thereby interact with the content, rather than merely emulate the teacher. She argues that where a functioning dialogue is established no authoritative rule is found. (Dysthe 1995:222, 227) Dysthe’s approach reflects the fundamental property of the dialogic discourse conveying that it involves bringing together, exploring and working on ideas. (Mortimer 2005) However, categorisations of language and physical artifacts as primary cultural tools are alone inadequate for humans’ understanding. Additionally, fellow human beings must organise themselves within communities of practice. Such community is formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor, such as a group of students defining their roles in various school situations. Communities of practice could be understood as cultural institutions whereby a stabilisation of the social interaction is achieved. The stabilisation emerge when appropriate accounts of certain situations are established, such as ways of greeting in a casual environment and ways of acting within cultural institutions of more public nature for instance the school. (Säljö 2003:46) As within all communities of practice, the interaction within a school situation takes place within a certain framework of social expectations. Such expectations entail routines for conversation, physical artifacts, and structures of appropriate behaviours. This concept draws on the idea of systems of situated activities where students acquire certain positioned roles that their social practice depends on. Learning the situated roles in a specific situation is a complex affair. Within the school the development of situated roles is very central; students must identify different expectations of being a student, a class-mate, and the various rights and responsibilities for interaction. (Säljö 2003:47–50) Students and teachers accommodate their social practice to the appropriate accounts of certain situations by forecasting its potential consequences. Considering situatedness of human activities as fundamental, the ways students and teachers act are always integrated in and relative to the cultural institution, in this case the classroom. However, cultural institutions are dynamic processes and change over time through new ways of cooperative interaction. The term itself suggests that there is a mutual relationship between the individual action and the social structure; consequently, as they are intertwined no causal relationship could be detected. (Säljö 2003:47–50) The complexity of how knowledge is produced or reproduced in social encounters with respect to various frame factors must be taken into account in this current study.
4.2 Previous Research

As language is the main cultural tool for social practice, the language of instruction within teaching will have crucial relevance for the classroom interaction. The language of instruction determines the quality of education by being a fundamental medium for transmitting knowledge both from teachers to students and among students. Qorro (2006) advocates that only a language that is well understood could effectively function as a language of instruction, and only when achieving this understanding teachers and students are able to generate knowledge and accomplish a didactic success. However in Tanzania, where primary education is conducted in Swahili and secondary education in English, the importance of language of instruction has been neglected for a long time which has impaired the quality of education. (Qorro 2006) Documented issues of classroom interactions in secondary schools indicate that standards of English education are falling and students perform significantly better under the medium of Swahili. (Roy-Campbell et al 1997; Brock-Utne 2005) The challenge associated with second language acquisition concerns everyone within the Tanzanian secondary school. Teachers and students struggle to express themselves in a language they have not mastered, and students with a mother tongue other than the language of instruction risk being unable to grasp valuable information in numerous subjects. (Imani 2009) As findings suggest that secondary school students lack sufficient knowledge to understand and express themselves in English, within the current study this must be regarded as a frame factor that is likely to constrain students’ ability to active participation.

Gustafsson (1997) investigated the teaching process in terms of rules and roles by analysing the classroom interaction. Her study derived from the assumption that there are a number of frame factors constraining the teaching process by giving rise to rules which govern this process. The identified frame factors were subject matter, time dimensions, ability grouping, and class size. In order to detect a potential role system in the classroom she carried out studies of classroom communication with use of observational methods of students in grade four and five, and complementary interviews. (Gustafsson 1977:59) Language was given prime importance when examining teaching situations. The teaching situation is based upon the assumption that there is an existing difference in knowledge between teachers and students, and this difference is controlled by the teacher. Consequently, interaction is commonly built as a dialogue where teacher and students alternate in the roles of sender and receiver. This suggests that the individuals position themselves in a social system where role
expectations are associated to each position. The concept of situated roles signifies a restricted position which delimits the possibilities for spontaneous contributions; consequently, the student intakes a passive role that becomes rather steered. (Gustafsson 1977:59-63) The results imply that the teacher has the most active role; the figured revealed that the most active teacher in her study was responsible for two thirds of the total number of moves. The teacher asked both ‘open’ and ‘closed’ questions. Closed questions were frequently used in a sequence which taken together constituted a wider question, that is one question generating another question rather than only requiring one answer such as right or wrong. In addition, there were a few questions were the students only had to repeat the answer. Rather seldom, the teacher asked questions which were open and allowed students to structure their own answers. As the teacher was in charge of the organisations, the student role had no function in terms of structuring the situation or subject matter. The student role appeared more monotonous and rigid than the teacher role. (Gustafsson 1977:104-106)

Also the study by Lindblad and Sahlström (1999) draws on the idea of frame factors when investigating the space for interaction within the classroom. Their study derives from the assumption that classroom situations are based on social practice and as a consequence of this social practice, restrictions and opportunities for teaching emerge. Lindblad and Sahlström carried out a longitudinal study by put research made in the 1970s to scrutiny, and carry out a similar study by their own in the 1990s. This allowed them to explore how social practice had changed over time in Swedish upper secondary schools. Both explicit factors, such as the National Curriculum, time dimension, structure of teaching, and implicit factors in terms of social expectations were taken in to account. The investigation discovered great differences in classroom interaction between the 1970s and the 1990s. The changed teaching method between the years of comparison was viewed as a consequence of reforming the national curriculum, where Lgr80 brought about a decentralisation that encouraged greater flexibility in organisation. (Lundgren 1999:37) The shift from a more detailed and centralised steering of the content of teaching has resulted in a more indivisible pedagogy where students are able to control their own of work. However, the increased individual freedom due to individual work is limited by the fixed content of the teaching. During the 1970s, the classroom situation lacked individual work. The traditional teaching method was teacher led teaching from beginning to the end leaving insignificant time for individual work. This resulted in a strong framing where the teacher was an exclusive transmitter with explicit control over selection,
sequence, and social base. (Lindblad & Sahlström 1999:77-78) In the 1990s the students had greater freedoms to control their own learning process. The teaching method was based on combinations of collective and individual work divided over each session. Lindblad and Sahlström argue that this way of teaching has great impact for the social practice; where framing is weak, the acquirer has more apparent control over the communication and its social base. Noteworthy, they also found that classroom interaction requires certain precondition; for instance, exclusively teacher led education requires the students to act as a collective group where all students faced the front of the room which encourage students to focus on direct instruction. Teacher centered methods becomes a frame factor in such sense that students position themselves in situated roles that limit their participation. Even though the teacher enables student interaction to a certain extent, the students participate in conversations with the teacher as a collective group and not as individuals. When teacher or another student talks everyone else must be quite, and only one student can speak when the teacher allows. This means that, from a student perspective, there are few occasions (other than by listening) occurring where the student could contribute to the social interaction which constitutes both learning and socialisation. Altogether, teacher centered methods require that not all students actively participate individually. If each student would want to contribute by saying something it would be impossible to organise whole class teaching. Another study by Garpelin, Lindblad and Sahlström (1995) reveals that situations where too many students are contributing in the teaching are not successful. This suggests that whole class teaching requires a partial failure in such sense that not all students could engage because not more than a minority could actually contribute. For this reason, peer discussion is useful. For instance, individual work could radically increase the opportunity for the individual student to engage in the classroom interaction actively whereas a whole class teaching would not enable that to such a great extent. (Lindblad & Sahlström 1999: 83-84)
5. Method

This is a qualitative case study which intends to explore the classroom interaction in order to accomplish a descriptive and explanatory analysis. (Esaiasson, et al. 2012:99) The case study is based on the use of a combination of two different methods. The empirical data was collected in two phases; the former part entails classroom observations whereas the latter part will be based on a complementary informant study in an attempt to make comparisons with the outcome of the former part. The combination of methods makes it possible to take both objective conditions and the students’ subjective interpretations into account. (Esaiasson, et al. 2017:197) This study is restricted to categorisations of verbal and written communication.

In order to become systematic and selectively attend to what was perceived as most useful a structured observation scheme was conducted. The formal observation was preceded by six pilot studies within the same class. This allowed the scheme to be tested and guided the selection of different variables relevant to the problem. As this scheme was alternated over time, moving from a wider range of variables to focus on the once that most frequently occurred within this particular context, the formal observation accounted for the following variables: open- and closed-ended questions, reproductive questions, follow up questions, and disciplinary speech. The selected variables were operationalised with reference to Nystrand, et al. (2010) and Dysthe (1995) (see table 1 and Appendix I). The pilot studies improved the quality of measurement as it strengthen the reliability¹ and validity² which were crucial in order to ensure that the results would be well-founded and correspond accurately to the studied object. During the observations potential frame factors will be paid attention and incorporated in the analysis. In order to reinforce the quality of the results of the interviews the questions were organised in detailed and rehearsed with one external student before beginning the formal study. The interviews were carried out on campus in connection to the student hall. Each interview last for about thirty minutes and the methods used for recording data were both with a sound recorder and taking notes. After the interview additional notes and observations made during the interview were written down. (Esaiasson, et al. 2010:283)

¹ Reference to the confidence placed on the measuring instrument ensuring that the same numeric value is given when the measurement is repeated on the same object (Esaiasson, et al. 2010:63).
² Term ensuring that the measuring instrument corresponds accurately to the property it is supposed to measure (Esaiasson, et al. 2010:63).
Table 1: Displays an operationalising of the selected variables of communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables of Interaction</th>
<th>Definitions of Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Question</td>
<td>A question for which the asker has not prespecified an answers. ‘What is your opinion about this?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Question</td>
<td>A question for which the asker has a prescipted answer in mind. ‘What year was the revolution?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive Question</td>
<td>Occurs when the listener emulate an already given answer. ‘The earth is round. What shape has the earth?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Up</td>
<td>Occurs when one conversant ask someone a question about something another person said. ‘What do they have to do with Polyphemus?’ ‘Blind him’ ‘How come that this is the plan?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary Speech</td>
<td>Encourage someone to learn to obey necessary rules of conduct. ‘You should not raise your hand when I am talking’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 Observation as a Method
The studied material consists primarily of data collected during classroom observation with concentration on interaction with an inter-individual aspect, where verbal and written communication is carried out between the teacher and the students. This inter-individual aspect is considered to be the most obvious to deduce from observation. With regard to the research question of the current study, this method is considered appropriate as it reveals pattern of roles in the classroom which might be governed by invisible rules that the actors could not be expected to express (because it is doubtful if they know why they act in a certain way within the classroom). This provides rich qualitative data where the relevant phenomenon has been carefully observed and detailed field notes have been recorded. The observation scheme was a way to record the ongoing activity and allowed the information to be analysed and interpreted. The analysis entailed an internal focus where a categorisation of different kinds of communication was made. A consequence of using observation as method is the ‘observer effect’³. However, the pilot studies were also a way of approaching this potential problem by making teacher and students familiar with this method. (Esaiasson, et al. 2010:343–344)

³ The ‘observer effect’ is a form of reactivity whereby those being observed modify an aspect of their behaviour, which is being experimentally measured, in response to the fact that they know that they are being observed (Esaiasson, et al. 2010:343–344).
5.2 Interview as a Method

In addition to the observations, this investigation is also based on complementary informant interviews where five randomly selected students in form one, students aged between 12 and 14 years, were separately asked questions relevant for this field of inquiry (for interview questions, see appendix II). This was an attempt to map out the role patterns by including the students’ perception of the classroom situation. The semi-structured questions ensured that the same general areas of information were collected from each respondent, but still allowed a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting the information from the respondent. Interviews are particularly useful as follow-up to other methods in order to further investigate the particular phenomenon. These kind of qualitative research interviews seek to understand the meaning of what the respondent says. (Esaiasson, et al. 2010:283)

5.3 Selected Samples

The observation studies were carried out in a secondary school based in the Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania. The region is recognised for having high-performed schools, and the students enrolled could be assorted as higher middle class. This case was partly based on practical circumstances, as personal contacts gave access to this particular school. It is reasonable that this has consequences for the external validity which would restrict the ability to draw any universal conclusions; hence, the results only apply to this current context. (Esaiasson, et al. 2010:176). As the study concentrates on students’ access to interaction within the teaching, the study was restricted to one class within form 1 and five single teachers within different subjects (reference to table 2). This study will not account for any gender aspect; however, the observed class consisted of only female students, and the teachers were a mix of three males and two females. Each teacher was observed during a double session, two times forty minutes. Totally five double sessions were observed.

Table 2: Offers an overall view of the formal observations with respect to the participating teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Observation Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>2 × 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2 × 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>Civics</td>
<td>2 × 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2 × 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2 × 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the interviews the respondents were randomly selected by choosing the 8th student from the list of names. As the group appeared very homogenous, students mainly acted in a collective group during observations, it was impossible to identify a particular steering group in relation to less active students. Therefore, the selection was made with no respect to the respondents’ individual activity in the classroom. Each respondent was requested to answer 6 questions, and the duration time for each interview was about 30 minutes (reference to appendix II). (Lindblad, Linde & Naeslund 1999)

5.4 Method of Analysis
All data was interpreted and reflected up on with respect to the selected variables of communication including considering the person involved in it, and the discovered frame factors (see section 5 ‘Method’); this in order to come close to the research question. By processing the data while it was collected, it was possible to immediately add relevant notes. In order to prepare the interview material for analysis, all interview data was initially transcribed. The analysis consists of two parts, the results from the observation including discovered frame factors and the outcome of the interviews. The results of the two studies will be understood hermeneutically as a whole with reference to one another. (Gilje & Grime 2007:198) In order to achieve a well-founded understanding, the results will be interpreted with reference to curriculum studies, and previous research within this field, in this respect the current study is an elaboration of previous research. (Dysthe 1995:50–51)

5.5 Research Ethics
Throughout the entire investigation fundamental ethical principles have been applied involving protecting the rights of participants, keeping their anonymity secure, and carrying out the confidentiality of those involved. This investigation was administrated by the Swedish Council for Higher Education and financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA; for this reason, all employees at the school received a document informing about the intentions of the investigation written in both English and Swahili. Since the students were under the age of 15, the headmistress had informed the parents about the current investigation and its purpose. (Vetenskapsrådet 2013-12-15)
6. Results Analysis

This section provides a presentation of the results divided into two main parts. The first part entails a presentation of the observation study by using tables accompanied with a descriptive text followed by a second part dealing with the results of the additional interview study. The analysis is interwoven with the displayed results. This structure intimately joins the results with the analysis which will aid when seeking the answer to the following research questions:

I. In what ways does the teacher interact with the students in the classroom?

II. How are the students approaching opportunities of interaction with the teacher?

6.1 Result of Observation

The observation results are displayed in two parts; the first part calls attention to the frequency of interaction initiated by the teachers, whereas the latter part emphasises the number of times a single student or the entire class initiated interaction by addressing the teacher. This arrangement is appropriate as it bears a resemblance to the structure of the two research questions, initially focusing on the teacher moves and then on student moves. The results will be put to interpretation with respect to the following frame factors which were considered detected during the observations: class size, teaching method, resources, language, physical artifacts, and the national education act.
### 6.1.1 Teacher Moves

*Figure 1:* Displays an overall view of all instances of classroom interaction initiated by a teacher.

![Bar chart showing teacher moves](image)

*T1-T5:* Observation of five teachers within different subjects.

*Address individual:* Teacher addresses a single student.

*Address class:* Teacher addresses the entire class.

As revealed in figure 1, during the observations teacher number one and four made no attempt to address any single student. The numbers reveal that teacher number two, three, and five occasionally addressed a single student (number of frequency 3, 4, and 2 times). In contrast to these numbers, the frequency of teachers addressing the entire class was notably higher in this study. In comparison, teacher number three addressed the class with highest frequency (74 times in relation to 46, 47, 34, and 17). The results obviously suggest that teachers within this study enabled single student participation to a rather limited extent. According to the treatise by Lindblad and Sahlström, teacher centered methods require students to be positioned in situated roles as receivers. Employing the theory of frame factors it is possibly that this choice of teaching style is a consequence of the vast number of students in this class, each group consisted of 45 and 50 students which suggests that teacher centered methods only gave the single student 2 percent chance to contribute in verbal communication. It is likely that the *class size* inevitably had an impact on the social practice within the classroom in such way that individual interaction was prohibited unless it was only realised by a minor group of individuals.
Figure 2: Displays an overall view of teacher’s utterances addressed only to the entire class with respect to the selected variables.

Open questions: Question which answer must be of undecided matter, and could not be answered with yes or no
Closed questions: Question which limits students with answers to choice from
Reproductive questions: Question which answer is an emulation of what the teacher says
Follow up: Students’ answers generate new questions which may change the path of teaching course.
Disciplinary speech: Speech with the function of a disciplinary act

As a high frequency of teachers initiating interaction with the class as whole was detected, the numbers in figure 2 display the variables of communication used by the teachers when addressing all the students in the class (note that figure 2 do not account for utterances addressed to single students). The numbers reveal that the most common form of interaction initiated by the teachers occurred with the use of reproductive question. During the observations each teacher requested the entire class to emulate what they had said 25, 37, 38, 18, and 4 times (altogether 122 times, which is approximately every third minute). The frequent use of reproductive questions is prominent during all observations with exception to the fifth observation were only 4 questions of such form were registered. The reproductive method is characterised by the teacher making all the decisions, and where the students are expected to only copy what the teacher says. Example 1 and 2 refers to situations where the students imitate what the teacher said. Reproduction encourages students to react only when they are told to do so by the teacher. Considering the selected teaching method as a potential frame factor, this method is expected to offer little room for individual activity.

1. T: ‘They started to make revolution. They made what? (Teacher one, entire class, reproductive question)
S: Revolution’
2. T: ‘It is very important to write properly, don’t write poor. Avoid laziness. (Teacher three, entire class, reproductive question)
   T: Don’t write what?
   S: Poor
   T: And you should what?
   S: Avoid laziness’

In figure 2, numbers present a reappearing occurrence of questions of closed form. The use of closed questions where a rather limited range of answers have been made available to the students was particularly prominent during the observation with teacher number three where 36 instances were noted (18, 9, 36, 15, and 12 times). Altogether the use of questions of an open form allowing authentic answers occurred 4 times. The different use of closed and open questions are illustrated in example 3 and 4.

3. T: ‘Is this difficult?’ (Teacher three, single student, closed question).

4. T: ‘Who can explain this us?’ (Teacher five, entire class, open question).

The use of disciplinary speech addressed to the entire group occurred during one observation of teacher number one. Common for the three cases of occurrence was that the teacher referred to the students’ lack of knowledge, (reference to example 5 and 6). The three cases indicate a rather seldom occurrence of such category of communication, however the fact that each disciplinary speech was made with respect to the students’ lack of knowledge makes it interesting to regard. Within section 2 ‘Background’, the idea that the teacher’s way of constructing the classroom interaction is unified with the definition of knowledge was introduced. Both example 5 and 6 illustrates a situation where the teacher recognises his or her role as primary source of knowledge, and thereby control the students’ contribution to the process of defining knowledge. The students’ role has no function in terms of structuring the situation or subject matter. However, what is regarded as knowledge could only be defined by the teacher themselves during isolated circumstances. Hence, resources in terms of access to information become a relevant frame factor in this context.

5. T: ‘You were not right on this question. You must go back and read your book. You do not know this’. (Teacher three, entire class, disciplinary speech)

6. T: ‘You are not yet ready, you must read the book until then you do not know and I do not want to hear arguments from you. We will discuss this later’. (Teacher four, entire class, disciplinary speech)
The use of ‘following up’ denotes situations where the teachers ask series of questions or sets a series of problems that when answered or solved lead the students to discover a desired skill or concept. Altogether, the use of such constructions occurred 3 times during the observations, but as figure 2 only accounts for interaction between teacher and the entire class (and the follow up only occurred with single students) the numbers are not displayed in the figure. Still it appears valuable to bring attention to the use of follow questions as it actually occurred as part of the numbers illustrating teachers addressing single students in table 1 (see example 7). The inclusion of one students’ answer in the next question is considered a productive style of teaching as one question generates another question rather than only requiring one answer such as right or wrong. Consequently, the follow up form of questions is likely to promote active participation in contrast to questions of a reproductive nature.

7. T: ‘Describe water. (Teacher B, single student, follow up question)
   S: Water is a liquid.
   T: Good, what are the properties of liquids?’
6.1.2 Student Moves

*Figure 3:* Displays all instances of interaction initiated by either a single student or when the entire class addressed the teacher.

Figure 3 accounts for all classroom situations where social practice occurred as an outcome of either a single student move or a move made by the entire class acting as a collective group. As the numbers reveal the frequency of student move is a lot less in relation to the discovered teacher move (30 cases of student moves versus 227 cases of teacher moves, reference to figure1). The highest number of times where single students addressed the teacher occurred during the second observation with teacher number two, totally 7 times were noted. According to the figures no single student addressed teacher number 5, this was also the observation where least student initiated interaction occurred. The number of cases where the student addressed the teacher as a collective group appears rather steady over time. These cases refer to situations where the students communicated with the teacher by the use of fixed phrases, and as a choir. Without question, this was part of a customary routine (see example 8). It is likely that this kind of interaction took place within the frames of a standardised pattern of asymmetrical rules (see section 1 ‘Introduction’). Accordingly, the teachers were always greeted in a very respectful manner, and addressed with a socially appropriate title which gave an impression of a social distance between teachers and students. By establishing this routine teachers immediately engaged in direct interaction with students which could be a way to control student behaviour and intend to promote student learning. By doing this, students were provided with an activity as soon as the teacher entered the classroom. Example 9 refers to a situation where the teacher branched off from this expected
routine. Once the student greeted him the teacher continued by introducing a guest in the classroom, instead of asking about their state of well being. The situation either uncover students lack of adequate language skills, the most important cultural tool for communication, or/and indicates how students rather rely on intuition than understanding. Considering the unique situation within the Tanzanian school system with reference to the switch in language of instruction from Swahili to English, there is reason to suspect that their English language skills have crucial relevance for even enabling interaction in this context (see section 4.2 ‘Previous Research’).

8. T: ‘Good morning class, how are you? (Teacher three, entire class, fixed phrase)
   S: ‘We’re fine thank you Teacher, and how are you?
   T: I am very well, you may sit down’.

9. T: ‘Good morning Teacher, Good morning class, today we have a guest here should you greet her as well? (Teacher two, entire class, fixed phrase)
   S: We are fine thank you, and how are you
   T: Ok, sit down’.

Altogether, 7 cases where the dialogue expanded from including only one student and the teacher to involve two students or more occurred. Within figure 3, those situations are registered as both an individual addressing the teacher, and the entire class is addressing the teacher, as a single comment trickled down into a collective act the ‘student move’ shifted from a single student to embrace the entire class. Example 10 and 11 refers to a situation that initially derives from a single student’s reaction on the content of the teaching and then develops into a larger interaction.

10. T: “The man is the head of the family, he is the one who is in charge of all decision making.” (Teacher one, single student, reaction on the content)
   S: “But Mr. There are households where the women are doing most of the things.”
   T: “Yes, but she is only doing things in the household, the man is still in charge of the decision”.
   S: “But, Mr. There are some households were the women decide.”
   T: “Yes, there are a few exceptions but all those families will collapse.”

11. S: “No, why?” (Teacher one, entire class, expanded dialogue)
   T: “Yes, that is how it is. If a woman takes a decision the family collapses.”
   S: “No”
   T: “Yes”
   S: “No”
   T: “Yes, whatever let us move on”.
Also example 12 and 13 refers to situations that initially derives from a single student’s reactions on the organisation of the teaching but develops into a larger interaction. Example 13 illustrates a situation where the teacher is handing back previous exams, and the students found that the assessment did not coincide with the given instructions.

12. S: “Teacher, we haven’t had our break yet.” (Teacher three, single student, reacting on the organisation)
   T: “Oh, really. Do you want to have a break?”
   S: “Yes” (Teacher three, entire class, expanded dialogue)

13. S: “You said that we could use more words when translating the sentences.” (Teacher four, single student, reacting on the organisation)
   T: “Yes, but then I saw that your answers did not correspond with the key to the national exam.”
   S: “But why is this wrong when you told us to use more words if we wanted?”
   T: “Well, you must use your common sense. I did not have the key to the test before If this is the way it is going to be, then I won’t answer any questions before. You should use your common sense.”
   S: “Yes, Sister.” (obs. 5) (Teacher four, entire class, expanded dialogue)

Altogether, the expanded dialogues are of relevance for this study as they illustrate a productive and active process among the students who on the surface appear to be steered by rather passive roles. Both example 11 and 13 projects the impression that the teachers are aware of their uncertainty, but as it becomes face threatening they rapidly seek an end to the conversation. If the teacher would have welcomed the students’ contribution to defining knowledge, the students could have been approached with follow up questions of an authentic nature. In such way they would have been encouraged to argue for their point of view and likely practice already existent skills while acquiring new. The reappearance of expanded dialogues among the students could reasonably be a reflection of the way students perceive themselves as a collective group, supporting each other.
Figure 4: Displays the divisions of times a single student addressed the teacher with a question of an open respectively closed form.

Figure 4 shows the number of times a single student addressed the teacher with either an open or a closed question. According to the numbers in figure 4, altogether teachers were addressed by single students 17 times. Note that this number differs from the numbers in figure 3, which suggest that the teacher was addressed by the students 18 times. The reason for this is that the numbers in figure 3 in addition accounts for one occasion where a single student made a move in an attempt to ask a question but was denied the chance by the teacher. Even though the students were not encouraged to ask question most of the students eagerly rose their hands in attempts to participate. Regarding the 17 times of individual student moves, the figures reveal that the dominating form of questions were open (13 versus 4). Questions of an open form tend to require more communication than closed question; hence, it is possible that questions of an open form could trigger classroom interaction (reference to example 14). Example 15 illustrates the most reoccurring kind of closed question where the arrangement of the classroom as a physical artifact strengthens the teacher’s social control.

14. S: “Mr. But how does the rain go up in the clouds?” (Teacher one, single student, open question)

15. S: “Sister, may I go to the washroom please?” (Teacher two, single student, closed question)
6.2 Results of Interviews

This section accounts for a descriptive presentation of the interviewees’ responses in the context of the research questions. The structure reflects the previous section where the first part draws attention to the teacher role whereas the latter address the student role.

6.2.1 Teacher Moves

The students were requested to reflect up on the teacher role within the classroom. One student generally experienced that teachers immediately interacted with the students. She stated that the teachers make sure that the students are awake and active. She considered this a customary activity that distinguished the teacher role from the students (reference to example 16). This point returns to what was previously mentioned in the background section where the National Education Act was put to scrutiny; the teacher is expected to intake a central role and thereby ensuring that the student enact with the content of the teaching. Furthermore, both example 16 and 17 refers to situations where the students call attention to the choice of language of instruction. The students expressed that Kiswahili is sometimes needed in order to ensure the students’ ability to participate. This suggests that not everyone is always able to grasp the content of what is mediated. Consequently, it is reasonable that the choice of language of instruction in this case English occasionally constitutes an obstacle for social practice (see section 4.2 ‘Previous Research’).

16. ‘First the teacher greets you to make sure you’re awake, cheer you up, trying to make the students recall the previous lesson. Sometimes he uses Kiswahili to make sure we are able to interact with him.’ (Female student, form one, age 12)

17. ‘It would be easier if everything was in Kiswahili. Sometimes if there is a new teacher we might misunderstand each other because of how we stress and pronounce certain words for instance work and walk, and not all of them know perfect English.’ (Female student, form one, age 13)

When the students commented on whether or not they thought that the teaching methods enabled social practice in terms of verbal and written communication, four out of five informants announced a lack of opportunities where they could interact with each other and thereby reflect upon their thoughts (see example 18 and 19). One student argued that the current method prevents student to speak up, whereas the other one felt like she would want to contribute more, but she felt that the opportunity was rarely made available to her. Example
20 illustrates an existing knowledge gap between teachers and students that the teacher controls in such way that the roles of sender and receiver never alternate. Altogether, four out of five students in this study perceive that the current teaching method is constraining them in a role as passive receivers. As the teacher allows students little influence, a monologic classroom discourse is reinforced.

18. ‘The students should be talking more, since they have to revise the subject before they teach it. I think that the students should get a chance to contribute more’. (Female student, form one, age 12)

19. ‘I think that the students should talk more, because sometimes we don’t remember everything and it could be good for us to get time to practice and explore ourselves.’ (Female student, form one, age 14)

20. ‘Sometimes when you ask a very simple question and the teacher thinks that you should go and ask your fellow friends, if you cannot even understand a simple question like this. (Female student, form one, age 12)

When they were requested to comment on the question form in the classroom the five responses suggest that the students favour the productive style where they could debate different opinions together with their fellow class friends. As found in example 21, one student referred to the form of questions as a reason for the lack of interaction. One student expressed that questions did not always occur as part of the teaching (reference to example 22). With regard to the high frequency of questions of reproductive form that was registered during the observation study, it is possible that the student did not consider those as ‘actual questions’ as they never offered room for her to express herself. This could indicate different perceptions of the situation; it is reasonable that the teachers are not as aware of the lack of questions as the students’ experience, because they recognise and thereby identify the term ‘question’ differently. All five informants expressed the importance of discussing the content of the teaching in order to improve their learning process. The responses projected the impression that the students strived to position themselves differently within the classroom. It appeared that the students were in favour of a shift from a monologic discourse to a dialogic discourse. The students have perceived the importance of being innovative and develop a critical mind for learning. Their approach to the role of the teacher whereby the teacher should guide them and thereby increase the importance of their roles falls within the concept of constructivism, and a new view of knowledge. The idea that the new knowledge society would trigger a change in the established role pattern has previously been introduced (see
section 2 ‘Background’). Within this context it is possible that the lack of resources in terms of inputs from other sources than the teacher prohibits the introduction of such knowledge society.

21. ‘Sometimes it becomes complicated according to the way the teacher is asking questions. Maybe they could give us a little bit more freedom of speech. And sometimes the teachers are not giving us enough time to think. Because they ask for rapid answers’. (Female student, form one, age 14)

22. ‘All teachers don’t ask individual questions, but I would like them to because first example, in answering questions could bring discussions in the class and it gives me confidence to learn how to speak in front of a group and how to explain myself’ (Female student, form one, age 13)

6.2.2 Student Moves
During the latter part of the interviews, students were encouraged to discuss how they evaluated their own activity in the classroom. Two of five students addressed a social distance between the students and the teacher which complicated their ability to communicate with the teacher (see example 23 and 24). However, the other three students did not express such constriction; instead, they explained the need to actively participate as the teacher occasionally provided inaccurate information (see example 25).

23. ‘I find it difficult telling my ideas to the teachers. Because they are teachers, they are not the same age, and sometimes I think that the teachers will not understand me.’ (Female student, form one, age 13)

24. ‘The relationship with the teacher is nice, but with the teachers you sometimes feel like you don’t want to go to them because you feel shy and you cannot express the way you feel and how you experience the teaching.’ (Female student, form one, age 13)

25. ‘Sometimes the teacher has learnt something wrong, than we make sure to let them know that the information has changed. I like my friends in the class to support me.’ (Female student, form one, age 13)

The students were requested to provide information about their experience of individual work, as this never occurred during any of the observed occasions. The interviews revealed that the students found this method or the use of peer work to have crucial relevance for the learning process. It appeared that the students usually organise themselves in this kind of individual work outside of teachers’ control. Four of five students expressed a great will to answer questions and work individually in order to favour their friends. Example 26 illustrates one
student’s will to work in a group in order to enhance the learning process. Example 27 illustrates a situation where an informant emphasised the strength of working as a group.

26. ‘Yes, because I like to share ideas with my fellow students and to tell them what I know so they can learn from the knowledge that I have.’ (Female student, form one, age 12)

27. ‘We work a lot individually before lessons and then the teacher goes over it and then he asks for a summarisation from us, not me as an individual but from us as class. Because he says I cannot complete it alone. I think it is very important for us to act as a group, being an individual and only working alone is not worthwhile.’ (Female student, form one, age 12)

By the end of each interview the students were asked if they thought they were offered opportunities for evaluating various aspects related to teaching, such as their own performance or the content of teaching. Each student said that they never experienced such evaluation. Example 28 refers to a situation where one student explains what she does in case she would like to comment on the teaching. All students added that they would like to complete an written evaluation of either the teaching, to improve the content or methods, or their own learning process, even though they do not think that will ever happen. The result from this present study reveals that the teachers at this school did not employ teaching styles which might improve their students’ planning or evaluation skills. Their expressed absolute lack of written communication would explain why no was discovered during observations.

28. “No, we are not allowed to hand in any written. But if we have not understand we would talk in the class and then go to ask our teacher questions.” (Female student, form one, age 12)
7. Summary & Conclusion

As this analysis employs the theory of frame factors in making a logical judgment on the basis of the empirical evidence, it is necessary to incorporate the discovered classroom conditions that constitute the framework within this context (see frame factors written in italics).

With respect to the first research question investigating the various ways the teacher enable active participation in the classroom, this study found that the ways the teacher initiated social practice are seriously constrained. With reference to the theory of frame factors, teaching must be understood as a process of social construction which depends on the relationship between current factors and classroom interaction. Within the Education Act the teacher was recognised as the most central actor. This study found that the teacher carried out the most active role as he or she was responsible for most of the initiations to interaction (227 versus 30 times). Lindblad and Sahlström identified a change in classroom interaction as an outcome of the decentralisation in the shift from Lgr 69 to Lgr 80. With regard to their finding, it is reasonable to consider that the current Education Act has influenced a dominating kind of teaching method and thereby also the construction of classroom interaction. This was conveyed in such way that the observed teachers were controlling the teaching, and to a considerably less extent answered questions. The teachers employed only teacher led method of teaching, and did rarely provide students opportunities for either verbal or written communication. This is also the reason for why no written communication was displayed in the tables. Dysthe’s treatise suggests that the teaching method is an outcome of current view of knowledge; what count as knowledge will steer the teaching methods, and above all what the students learn. Accordingly, one of the ways teachers contribute to constructing classroom interaction is to influence the definition of classroom knowledge. In this study the teacher was regarded the as the primary source of knowledge. What was regarded as knowledge was only defined by the teacher themselves. Due to a severe lack of resources in terms of work material, text books, internet access the teaching was carried out in an isolated environment where the teachers provided the exclusive input of information (see section 2 ‘Background’). In terms of time dimension, each session was only 40 minutes, but as each observation stretched over a double session it is not considered in terms of time of instruction but rather as an aspect in relation the class size. The number of students was between 45 and 50 each session. According to Lindblad and Sahlström, a precondition for successful teaching in
whole class with a vast number of students is that only a minority of the students participates individually. This suggests that absolute interaction is only possible if the student act as a collective group; hence, individual interaction could not be expected to take place. During all observations in this study only whole class teaching occurred. However, as Lindblad and Sahlström found in the study of the Swedish classroom over time, it is possible that individual work and peer discussion could radically increase the opportunity for the individual student to engage in the classroom interaction actively (see section 4.2 ‘Previous Research). Physical artifacts in terms of the arrangement of the classroom are likely to affect the actions of the students. The way desks were arranged enabled all students to face the teacher and encouraged them to focus on direct instruction. As all desks in every classroom were arranged in rows it was easy for the teacher to control their behaviour. Desks were never moved or place in a way that would facilitate cooperative learning groups. Nor did the students leave their own seat to go and work individually or in peers somewhere else. In contrast to the Swedish classroom, there was no teacher desk. The teacher was always standing giving the impression that he or she was physically above the students and never sat down as he or she was the most active one. Yet the teacher never left the teacher space in front of the chalkboard, not even to walk around while instructing or to allocate paper sheets. This created distinguished domains between the teachers and the students which possibly constrained the social interaction. Exit from the room was tightly controlled; no student could leave the classroom without asking for permission. A few cases where language as a cultural tool for communication did not function probably due to inadequate language skills were noted. The use of questions of reproductive form overrode all instances of teacher initiated interaction. Even the few times where a teacher addressed a single student only questions of closed forms were registered. Each session was initiated by fixed phrases, both the use of fixed phrases and reproductive questions appear to be the primary aspect of teachers’ effort to pursue interaction. As all teachers kept the organisation of classroom time and space firmly in their own hands they appeared as strictly authoritative rulers and thus controlled the monologic discourse. The method of teaching appeared to be a reflection of the teachers’ agenda of controlling student behaviour to promote student learning. As part of their effort to enact this agenda, teachers construct classroom activities with little opening for interaction, and strictly controlled opportunities for student contributions. With respect to the second research question investigating the ways the students approached the openings initiated by teacher moves, the rigid constrictions forced the students to position themselves in a rather steered
role. This made it less obvious to detect how they approached the teacher initiated interaction. Even though the student role appeared more monotonous and rigid than the teacher role, and the fact that students were allowed little voice over the flow of classroom discourse, observations and interviews confirm that most students eagerly sought openings for active participation. They eagerly rose hands to ask authentic questions, and they created individual and peer work outside of the teachers’ control.

The Tanzanian Education Act defines the aim of education in the context of a modern society, where individuals acquire knowledge necessary for adapting to the ever changing conditions of society. Within a modern society citizens are generally recognised as active participators. However, the active manner of participation does not coincide with the idea of an authoritative ruler. Previous research found that the Swedish education system underwent a fundamental reforming, resulting in changed teaching methods and existing role patterns, as an outcome of the new knowledge society (reference to section 2 ‘Background’). Lindblad and Sahlström found that the Swedish classroom interaction had change over time to involve more active participation due to alteration of the curriculum. As the frame factors are dynamic and inevitably change over time, it is reasonable to argue that the interaction within the Tanzanian classroom will change, and come to involve greater extent of social practice as the development of society will challenge old patterns. Such idea suggests that Tanzanian teachers would not be able to remain in the most central position if students continue with their inquiries mind in the search for new information. Altogether, it is possible that the development of the Tanzanian society will enhance a shift from as monologic to a dialogic classroom discourse.
References


Symposion


Tanzanian Education Act and Training policy 2010. the Ministry of Education and Culture Dar es Salaam, The United Republic of Tanzania

### Appendix I, Observation Scheme

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Appendix II, Interview Script

Question 1
How would you describe the teacher role within the classroom?

Question 2
In what ways do you understand that the teaching methods enable active participation?

Question 3
How would you describe your own opinion about the use of different question forms in relation to classroom interaction?

Question 4
How would you evaluate your own activity in the classroom in terms of initiating interaction with the teacher in the classroom?

Question 5
What are your experiences of individual work?

Question 6
What are your experiences of evaluating the content of a course, your own learning process, or expressing your opinion about other matters related to the teaching?