

HIDDEN VOICES

Insider's Perspectives on Classroom Interaction

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As I explore my teaching by describing — recording, transcribing, and coding communications — rather than by seeking prescriptions and judgments from others, patterns are broken both consciously and unconsciously. I have sought alternatives in teaching and found them. After I found that I have alternatives, I felt freer and securer about deciding on activities for the students. Throughout the internship, I have learned how to see teaching more clearly and differently. In other words, I realized how much more I can do... (Gebhard and Ueda-Montonaga 1992: 190)

In an eloquently argued case for the evolution of a nexus between classroom research and teacher education, Wright (1992), describes a situation familiar to almost anyone who has ever walked through a school while a lesson is in progress.

Imagine we walk down the corridor of a school and hear much noise coming from a classroom. We might at first assume that it is the result of the teacher having lost control of the class (or some other plausible explanation). On arrival and entrance to the classroom, we find the students engaged in an activity which involves animated discussion, in groups, with the teacher participating as a monitor in the activity. (p. 194)

In this anecdote, Wright provides a warning against drawing conclusions about behavior without knowing the context in which the behavior occurs. He wryly concludes that “we can only know what the noise is about by referring directly to the context in which the noise occurs” (ibid.).

It seems to me that a great deal of research in our field is conducted in contexts where classroom noise either is unheard or is considered irrelevant and therefore removed: from the equation before the numbers are added up and their significance determined. This lack of contact with the reality of the classroom has driven a wedge between researcher and practitioner which threatens to become a gulf unless steps are taken to bridge it. In this chapter, I would like to make a modest contribution toward closing the gap between theory and practice, and between researcher and teacher. I shall try to do this by giving teachers an opportunity to have their voices heard, and their perspectives and interpretations presented.

I should like to acknowledge and thank the teachers who took part in this study, and also David Cervi, who assisted in transcribing some of the interactions on which it is based.

The study

In this section, I shall describe the subjects and context of the investigation and the research question. I shall then set out some of the data and provide my own descriptive and interpretive account of those data. Because ethnographic investigations of this type are data rich, my account must necessarily be selective.

The cohort

The participants in this study were nine ESL teachers who were teaching in Australia and were also undertaking some form of professional qualification. They varied greatly in their professional backgrounds and length of experience. Three had been practicing for less than one year. The others ranged in experience from one to fifteen years.

The research question

The question which provided my point of departure was relatively easy to pose: In what ways are the processes of classroom instruction illuminated by the voices of the teachers? Finding answers in the data described herein was less straightforward.

Moreover, as I analyzed these data, other questions, and issues emerged, and I had to struggle to regain the original focus while admitting emerging insights into the analysis.

The research procedure

The data for the investigation were gathered through a four-stage procedure.

1. Before the lesson. Before the lesson began, I obtained background information on the teacher and took a copy of the teacher's lesson plan. (The teachers were asked to provide a detailed lesson plan, as well as biographical data in advance of the lesson.)
2. During teaching. The lesson was observed and recorded, and notes were taken to assist in the transcription process. Particular note was taken of those points at which the teacher deviated from the lesson plan.
3. After the lesson. Immediately after the class, I talked about the lesson with the teachers, asking them to focus on those points at which they had deviated from their plan.
4. Follow-up. The lesson was transcribed and a copy was sent to the teacher to annotate. The transcripts, annotations, and post-lesson protocols were then analyzed using a range of qualitative data analysis procedures. (For a description of such procedures, see Nunan 1992.)

In attempting to gain insights into the question I had posed, I revisited the transcripts, my observational notes, and the teachers' post-lesson protocols and annotations many times. As I aligned the different sources of data related to critical classroom incidents, adding successive layers of interpretation, the incidents themselves were transformed, as we shall see.

Data analysis

This section discusses some of the themes which emerged from the data. Given the quantity of data and constraints of space, I have been selective in the choice of issues and amount of data provided. However, I hope that enough supporting data are provided to sustain my case.

Getting the action going

In the ebb and flow of any given lesson, there are several critical moments. The first few minutes seem particularly important in creating the appropriate tone of the lesson, and the atmosphere which is established at the beginning of the class often persists for the duration of the lesson.

The value added by the teacher's voice is illustrated by the following incident. I had noted the beginning of one lesson in the following field-noted record.

The students wander into the class in twos and threes. As they begin to settle down, the teacher makes several of them change places. Students seem lethargic after lunch. Teacher then introduces and revises vocabulary. This goes on for over, ten minutes, and the students begin to seem rather restive. I wonder why she's going on so long.

In this observation there is an implicit criticism of the pacing of the lesson. In the post-lesson debriefing, when asked for a commentary on this part of the lesson, the teacher reported:

.....in the initial eliciting, I found it quite difficult to elicit the clothes — you know, “What am I wearing? What's he/she ‘Wearing?’” I got a bit [annoyed] at that point because we did it last week, you see. It just makes you realize. We did it as a warm-up activity a week ago, and it had just gone totally out of their heads. So that was another thing I'd not anticipated. I thought they'd just tell me — and they didn't.

The teacher's voice here reveals several things. First, it dramatizes the fact that lessons are not discrete entities that come neatly prepackaged. As a course evolves over days, weeks, and months, a culture emerges through the interaction, of personalities and events. Without an understanding of that culture, many of the events which occur in a particular lesson will be meaningless to the outside observer. One of the unfortunate realities of much classroom research is that it is carried out on individual lessons (and often on relatively short segments of individual lessons). This denies the researcher access to data which would render many seemingly odd or irrelevant interactions meaningful. Second it shows that particular classroom events only take on meaning within the context of the course. In order to understand classroom events and the interpretations of those events by teachers and learners, we need to step outside the artificial temporal framework of “the lesson.” (I shall return to this point later.) The third observation which we can make here relates to the teacher's theory of learning, and the assumption that the work which had been previously undertaken would be sufficient to ensure that learning had taken place. Throughout the data, there is evidence that everything ‘that is said and done’ in: the lesson’ and all comments on the lesson, are underpinned ‘by’ beliefs (often implicit) about the nature of language, learning, and teaching.

Particularly notable was the fact that very few lessons began with the teacher's explicitly laying out the objectives for the students. The exception was the following.

T: Okay now, the approach we're gonna take here — there will be some traditional grammar in this, but what I'm going to try to give you, is some analytical skills. Of how to analyze your own writing. Skills that you can take away from here and use them okay? It's not just grammar we're looking at. It's . . . we're looking at how do I make myself understood to somebody else? Right? And how can I work on this on my own all of the time? Now some of you gave me some examples of writing in the beginning and I've looked, at that to see exactly what kind of writing is it that you want to do and that you

have to do. Okay. And we've. We've called this course scientific writing and the type of writing you do is what we call [writes on board] ."report writing".

In fact, this was the only lesson in the entire data base in which the teacher laid out the pedagogic terrain to be covered with more than an off-hand comment. .How can we account for this apparent failure to address a basic pedagogical imperative? That is, how can we account for the fact that only one teacher bothered to explain to the students what it was they were supposed to be learning? I believe it demonstrates that the notion of a "lesson" is not particularly salient for the teachers who took part in the study. Boundaries which appear tangible in a timetable dissolve 'against the emerging culture of the classroom. There is evidence in" the data, both in the lesson transcripts and the reports of the teachers themselves, that more salient than the "lesson" are the analytical units of "task," which is smaller than "lesson," and "course" which is larger. This is explicit in the following opening gambit and commentary.

T: Remember last week when we were talking about our businesses that we were role playing and we went to the ideas centre and we had Lee to discuss our proposals for expanding into developing countries, and what. I felt was that it would be a good idea to read about something which was a successful, expansion into a developing country.

On reviewing the lesson transcript, the teacher made the unprompted comment that she "wanted to make a special effort to make a connection with previous lessons".

In several, cases; the teachers launch directly into the "meat" of the lesson. For example, in one lesson the teacher entered the room, turned her back on the class, and wrote on the board: "A woman's place is in the home." She then turned to the class and said:

T: Any' comments about that sentence: "A woman's place is in the home"?

S: Half correct.

T: Half correct? Why d'you say that Henry?

S: Em; woman's place not just at home. She should be go out and go work

T: Yeah? What about the man?

S: Man is the same, I think.

The teacher justified this rather abrupt beginning to the lesson by stating, "I didn't feel the need to use any other warmer than the initial stimulus for the functional target language, .as I know these students well."

In this section, I have presented some of the data relating to lesson openings. These data illustrate a number of emerging issues which reap-pear later in the study. First, "lesson" is not a particularly salient label for those invoked in the teaching/learning process. Second, in order to understand classroom behavior we need to study that behavior the context in which it occurs — that is, in classrooms constituted for the purposes of teaching and learning, not in those which are established to provide cannon fodder for researchers; Third, in order to understand what is going on, we need to set the interpretations of the researcher against insights provided by the other actors in the educational drama.

Maintaining control over the flow of events

In reflecting on the lessons, teachers paid a great deal of attention to classroom management, particularly in maintaining control over the flow of events. In a previous study, I noted that this tendency to focus on classroom management rather than pedagogy was something that distinguished less experienced teachers from more experienced ones. (However, I would also reiterate that the concept of “experience,” while familiar to most of us, defies definition, interacting as it does with other critical variables such as professional development opportunities and intensity, as well as length of service.).

The close attention to managing and controlling lesson “flow” is illustrated in the following extract. In her lesson plan, the teacher had indicated that she intended to run a pair work activity in which students observed each other and then sat back-to-back and described what the other was wearing. This is a fairly standard way of practicing present continuous tense, a difficult tense to practice in any meaningful way because we rarely describe what we are doing in face-to-face interactions. However, during the course of the lesson, this activity simply did not happen. I remarked on this in my observation notes with a query. In the post-lesson debriefing, the teacher reported, “I dropped: the activity... [because] . . . it probably would’ve gone on a bit too long, and as it was, I was short for time anyway, so I made a decision to drop that.” Later in the lesson, in response to a question about the selection of partners in pair work and whether she let students self-select, the same teacher reported, “Oh, I get them to mix around. I like to change the pairs quite a lot. That’s why its good to get them in two groups and then split them up for a different part of the listening.”

Another major departure from the lesson plan occurred as students were working in small groups sequencing a transcript of a listening text which had been cut up. The following extract and my fieldnotes illustrate what happened:

[Students get in three groups on the floor.]

T: I’ll give you five minutes to do this, five minutes.

T [About sixty second later, T says] Two minutes [She rewinds her tape]

T: Come oh, this group’s nearly finished. One minute. One minute left.

T: Okay, we’ll listen to the conversation now. Okay, so as you’re listening to the conversation, can you check your sequence?

[The students listen to the interview and rearrange their strips of paper.]

T: Finished? Perfect. What does — this mean? [She writes on the board “Errm”.](Erm)

Erm. Is that a word?

S: No.

T: Erm. Why, why’ve got that there? Why? Why erm?

S: We have some little bit time. . .

T: It’s because we’re listening to it. Listening to what’s written down, so don’t worry; don’t think oh what does erm mean? It’s just erm. And how do they say “yes.” Do they say “yes”?

S: Yeah (Yeah.) - Australian accent.

T: Australian accent do you think? (Yeah yeah) Anything accent.

As I observed this interaction I noted:

Teacher is really hustling the students. Several groups appear to be struggling. She then calls attention to a minor fillet on the tape. What's the point? Won't it simply confuse the students?

In the debriefing, the teacher provided the following explanation.

[W]hen they were doing the sequencing on the floor, they were taking quite a lot of time to do that and two groups hadn't finished, and I looked at my watch and I said hurry up, one minute left, and played the tape while they were still halfway through sequencing it. And then I only actually played the tape once, I didn't play it through again, but they'd got the right order by this stage; I just made the decision on the spot to tell them what 'erm' and 'yeah' were, cause one of them said, 'Erm' what's 'erm'?

Here is yet another illustration that something which made little sense to an outside observer made perfect sense to those on the inside of the action. I believe this opacity to an outsider of many things that happen in the classroom reinforces the need for classroom stories to be told from the inside: in another classroom, the following interaction took place.

T: You know when you're agreeing, like Shigeru did to me before. And it's nice to say, "Mmm, and it's good to relax," and then Jill said, she started to tell Patricia something now, and what does she say, Chong Dok?

S: Well, you see.

T [T takes over] . . . it's like this. When you're starting to tell a story sometimes, you start, you say, "Well you see, it's like this." And that means you're starting to tell what it was like. Like Shigeru, he was really telling me a story about why he was late. He could have said "Well, you see, Jill, it's like this. The train missed me this morning." Okay, and then Patricia says, "I've said my increase has been remarkable" and Patricia says — Shigeru?

S: Yes, I saw that, but you must be careful. . . .

T: Yes, that's right. And then Jill says. . . Yami?

S: Yes, I know.

It is almost impossible to convey interpersonal and affective aspects of the classroom in lesson transcripts. In the preceding extracts, the teacher and students weave the interaction together effortlessly, as though it had been rehearsed. While the interaction is largely meaningless to the outsider, the students find it amusing and make their contributions on cue. As it turned out, the obscure references were to an in-joke shared only by the class. Here is another example of Freeman's (this volume) dictum that to tell the story one must know the story.

In explaining why the previous interaction happened when it did, the teacher reported that:

The students generally welcome both humor and personalizing .of material to them. A little humor always helps to maintain interest and motivation. In this part of the lesson, we were using a little story that had evolved during the course.

In addition to illuminating the complexity of the classrooms, the transcripts and teachers' commentaries provide fascinating insights into teachers' styles. The teacher quoted in the following extract was relatively inexperienced and felt that she could not abandon her predetermined course of action, even though the students were evidently experiencing difficulty with it and the flow of classroom events was obviously affected.

I began to realize the students were finding the activity quite complex and hard, but it was too late to change it or abandon it, as they did need introducing to the vocabulary before starting to read the article. I ended up having to bring the pairs together.

From the data, it seemed that the more experienced teachers were much more comfortable with monitoring the class and modifying their lesson in the light of ongoing feedback. Here is a typical comment:

The warmer was beginning to take longer than I wanted to by this stage. I was beginning to wonder whether to pursue it for longer to involve all students in this stage or to move on. I feel less confident of timing at this level than at higher levels.

Another teacher said, "I realized that as the tape quality was poor I would have to distribute the written language from the tape sooner than expected." The images and metaphors used by the teachers are also revealing. The data are shot through with references to pace, flow, tempo, and movement. One teacher noted, "Time was running out. I had to keep the pace moving along."

In another classroom, the teacher drew an activity to a rather abrupt halt, despite the fact that it seemed to be going well. The teacher accounted for this abrupt change of pace in terms of classroom management by saying, "The time limit prevailed again and I had to draw a halt. This activity was going well. Maybe if I'd anticipated my timings better I could have given students longer to work on this role play, which they got quite a lot out of." In this section I have provided additional data on the importance of the insider's voice in helping to understand the life in language classrooms. In procedural terms, a great deal of classroom interaction is aimed at maintaining the flow of classroom interaction. In research terms, once again, we see that it is difficult to interpret the interactions without additional insights from those on the inside.

The instructional process

One striking point to emerge from the data was the relative paucity of what might be called direct instruction, in which the teacher explicitly instructs the learners. This might seem odd, given the fact that the lay- person probably sees the "bringing of good news" as the central function of instructors. In addition, a great deal of the explicit instruction which occurred came about as the teachers responded to the immediate needs of the

students. The majority of these impromptu explanations concerned vocabulary which students found difficult.

T: . . . “collateral” actually means sort of security on somebody who is taking out a loan. If I was a very wealthy person — I’m rich and you want a loan — you are poor — I could be your collateral — you would take out the loan and I would have the security for the loan. I would say to the bank “Yami will pay back the money and if she doesn’t, I will give the bank the money.” Collateral, security, another person arranges to be —
 S: Another person guarantee for you to borrow money from the bank?
 T: Yes, that’s right. . .

Direct evidence from students that they had “got: it” was particularly important for most teachers, and when it occurred, the teacher’s decision to engage in direct instruction was vindicated; For instance, in reviewing this piece of interaction, the teacher reported, “I was pleased this explanation was clear to the students. I think I’m gradually improving in explaining, defining, and giving instructions for them.”

On some occasions the explanations were prompted by a direct request from a student. In many instances, however, the explanations were prompted by the teacher’s intuitive perception of the students’ needs. For example, in one lesson the teacher was working with an authentic tape in which an interviewer asked a series of questions about the interviewees life-styles. Rather than using complete question forms, the interviewer signaled the questions through intonation: “Drink?” rather than “Do you drink?” This gave rise to the following interaction.

T: What question does the interviewer ask? The interviewer ? What question does the interviewer ask? What’s the question in here?
 S: You smoke?
 T: You smoke? You smoke? That’s not a proper question is it really? Proper question is do you smoke? So he says “you smoke?” We know it’s a question because . . . why? You smoke? ...
 S: The tone.
 T: The tone . . the . . the . . what did we call it before? You smoke? What do we call this?
 S: Intonation.
 T: Intonation. You know by his intonation it’s a question.

When I observed the lesson, I was puzzled by this interaction. Why “deauthenticate” a piece of authentic interaction by saying that the interviewer was not asking “proper” questions? At the end, of the lesson, I asked the teacher about this. . . ‘ . .

T: . . And also the on-the-spot decision” of like when it said “drink?”
 DN: So you hadn’t actually planned to teach that? ..
 T: No, I hadn’t. I mean, really, that would be an excellent thing to do in a follow-up lesson — you know, focus on questions.

DN: In fact, what you're asking them to do in their work is focus on the full question forms; and yet in the tape they're using a . . .

T: . . . Wasn't, yeah. So, I suppose it's recognizing one question form by the intonation, then being able to transfer it into the proper question "Do you drink?" rather than, "Drink?" I mean, that would be good to spend a lot more time on at another point. But it seemed like it was good to bring up there. Just to transfer the information.

Here is another example of classroom interaction which makes little sense within the immediate context of the lesson in which it occurs, but which can be justified within the broader context of the course and the teacher's overall goals and objectives. I asked whether the principal objectives of the lesson — listening to authentic texts for key information— might have been subverted by the secondary aim of introducing and practicing question forms. The teacher, however, was quite comfortable with this.

DN: I'm wondering if it's too heavy a load to have the twin aims, the listening for key information aim and also the focus on questions aims whether it's better to separate those out and look at the questions in a separate lesson?

T: What; the question forms . . . Well when I first looked at the material . I thought it was quite a straightforward listening, so therefore if I .give them a split listening, it'll make it more challenging for them. I took the decision to do that and I don't regret that. I mean, question forms are always difficult things to do, they're always difficult to slot in unless you do a whole lesson on question forms so to throw them in now and again like that is quite valid so to give the both focuses I thought was fine.

She was able to vindicate this stance by pointing out that:

I did anticipate that they would have a lot of problems with question forming; and their intonation and their spelling, and things just need huge amounts of work on. But as regards the activities, I didn't feel they were beyond their capabilities at all. I think they achieved quite a lot. I mean initially looking at it you think, "Oh God, there's so much there." But they did actually succeed in filling the whole thing out.

Not all direct, instruction was concerned with pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Several, teachers provided input on language skills and learning strategies, such as the following:

Remember how we've been talking about the importance of looking at the heading and the pictures and some of the big writing to guess what the article's about? So what sort of idea could you get from just, not reading the small writing but just looking at the pictures and seeing the heading?

Another teacher took a similar perspective, focusing on strategies for dealing with unknown vocabulary.

[B]efore we start to read the article I'd like to help you with some vocabulary, and I've got a special activity that will help you to guess and learn the vocabulary that you need to know in order to do the article, to understand the article.

Despite the range and diversity of contexts which gave rise to them, and regardless of the skills of the teachers and proficiency levels of the learners, these pieces of discourse all illustrate the central theme of this piece: that the universe in which a particular discourse is constructed is a collaborative achievement of the actors who inhabit that universe.

Discussion

In this section, I shall draw out some of the substantive and methodological issues which emerged during the course of the study.

On the substance of the study

As I struggled with the wide variety of teachers, learners, course types, and contexts contributing data to this study, and as I ran and reran the data through the filter of my own prejudices and experiences, an important insight began to emerge. Despite the variety of teaching styles, learner types, and course objectives, at a certain level of abstraction, all of these classes have one thing in common: They all illuminate an experiential view of the educational process. This experiential view is contrasted with traditional education by Kohonen (1992) in a key position paper on experiential language learning. The traditional view of knowledge is seen as objective and factual, and separated from the knower, while the experiential view sees knowledge as tentative, subjective, and intimately tied to the knower. Kohonen also contrasts the problem-solving approach of traditional pedagogy with the problem-posing approach of experiential learning. While traditional education is teacher-directed, with a focus on the acquisition of knowledge, the experiential approach values the contributions which learners make to the learning process. It is active and dynamic and focuses on the development of skills rather than on the acquisition of factual knowledge.

This constructive and interpretative concept of education is reflected in the extracts presented here. They show that both teachers and learners are actively involved in the construction and interpretation of their worlds. In addition, the interpretations of the teachers are central to the understanding of these worlds. The logical next step to pursue is to involve learners themselves in the interpretation of the pedagogic worlds they inhabit. In Kohonen's words, the experiential model offers potential for a learning atmosphere of shared partnership, a common purpose and a joint management of learning. Class behavior is owned by the whole group, of which the teacher is but one member. As the rules of conduct are agreed upon jointly, all share the responsibility for decisions and discipline. (ibid.: 31)

In retrospect, the Image which endures in my own mind is one of teachers and learners collaboratively constructing and inhabiting their own worlds to this co-construction, the "official" curriculum, which resides within the mandated documents, lesson plans, commercial textbooks, and bureaucratic directives to teachers and learners, is transformed, sometimes radically, in the experiential and ongoing interactions between

the active participants in the classroom drama. In this drama, I am an outsider, a shadowy figure inhabiting a world which is neither connected to the ongoing drama, nor entirely divorced from it. As such, I have advice, but it is only a partial one. It is a voice which needs to be complemented by the other, often times, hidden voices of the classroom, if anything like a three-dimensional picture of what drives the learning process is to emerge.

On methodological issues in language teaching research

The procedure used in this study was designed to give a voice to the teachers whose work was being investigated. At the conclusion of the lesson, teachers were provided with an opportunity to comment on what had happened, what unexpected events had arisen during the course of instruction, and what they felt had been the outcomes of the class. When the lessons had been transcribed, the teachers were provided with transcripts and given a further opportunity to comment on the lesson.

All of the teachers who took part in the study talked about the data collection procedure itself. Most also pointed out that the objective record of the lesson revealed many things which had not been apparent to them during the ongoing pedagogic action. The following examples illuminate their concerns:

Rather a wordy explanation now that I see it in black and white.
Maybe I should have got on to the vocabulary activity earlier instead, of spending so much time talking in rather vague terms about the article first.
Quite a complicated explanation. Maybe a demonstration would have been simpler.
I ask a lot of questions without waiting for students to answer them.
I find difficulty in controlling the level of my language when talking *about* the target structure or function at this level.

In retrospect, maybe it would have been better to have them do something oral here and delay the writing.

In retrospect I realize it would have been more useful to get students to summarize by feeding back to the class, rather than concluding the lesson with a lengthy monologue.

It is clear from these comments that collaborative research not only provides insights into what happens as teachers and learners work together, but also acts as a device through which teachers can reflect upon their work and grow professionally as a result of that reflection. In this way theory, research, and practice are bound together and become mutually reinforcing.

In the preface to my book on research methods (Nunan 1992: xi-- xiii), I suggested that two alternative conceptions of the nature of research provide a point of tension within the book. The first view is that external truths exist "out there" somewhere. According to this view, the function of research is to uncover these truths. The second view is that truth is a negotiable commodity contingent upon the historical context within which phenomena are observed and interpreted.

This study adheres unashamedly to the second conception of research just outlined. I would like to argue that qualitative and interpretive studies of teaching and learning, such as this, provide an alternative view of language classrooms to those accounts which emerge from the psycho-statistical research paradigm. In the field of general education, Stenhouse (1983) was able to argue that by the end of the 1970s, the illuminative tradition “now seems to have got off the ground both in research and evaluation. It no longer needs to fight to establish itself as an alternative to the ‘psycho-statistical’ paradigm worthy of consideration” (p. 1).

Things are rather different in the field of second language education. Recently I reviewed fifty widely reported pieces of classroom-oriented research. Of the fifty, 1 found that only fifteen were carried out in classrooms which were constituted for language teaching purposes. A further seven collected data from mixed environments. The majority of the studies ($n = 28$) are based on data collected outside the classroom in laboratory ($n = 20$), simulated ($n = 6$), and naturalistic ($n = 2$) environments. I concluded from this study that future researchers would benefit from the informed incorporation of five key points into their designs and the execution of their studies.

1. The implementation of more contextualized research - that is, classroom-based, as opposed to classroom-oriented, research.
2. An extension of the theoretical bases of research agendas.
3. An extension of the range of research tools, techniques, and methods adopting and adapting these where appropriate from content classroom research.
4. A reevaluation of the distinction between process-oriented and product-oriented research.
5. A more active role for classroom practitioners in applied research.

(Nunan 1991: 249—274)

I believe that the study described here goes some way toward incorporating at least some of these points into its design.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented, through the discourse of teachers and learners, an insider’s view of language instruction. It is now time to return to the point where I began and the question around which this entire enterprise revolves: In what ways are the processes of classroom instruction illuminated by the voices of the teachers? I hope I have ably demonstrated through the discourse of the classroom that to understand what is going on in language classrooms the voices of the teachers (and ultimately of the learners as well) must be heard. Classroom research, therefore, must become a collaborative enterprise between researcher, teacher, and learner. In the words of another contributor to this volume:

Questions of what teaching is and what people know in order to teach are absolutely central; to avoid them is folly for everyone concerned with education. When these questions are ignored, the immediate, daily, and intimate knowledge of teachers and

learners is belittled because it is overlooked and trivialized. . . The findings of researchers and others concerned with understanding education ought to be viewed with legitimate skepticism if these people do not seriously entertain this central issue of what teaching is and of what people know in order to do it. (Freeman, this volume)

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