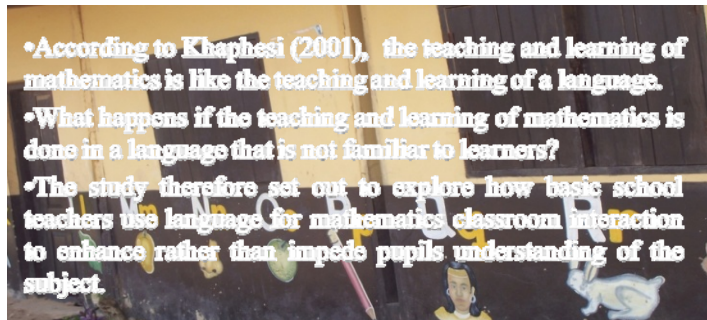


Alfred Ampah - Mensah

A Qualitative look at basic school teachers' use of language.

- for mathematics classroom interactions in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area of the Central Region of Ghana.

Rationale and background



Aims and Objectives

- Explore how basic school teachers use languages in the teaching of mathematics.
- Explore the patterns of interaction that are played out in basic school mathematics classrooms and their implications.
- Identify various teaching strategies that teachers use to develop learners active participation in mathematics classroom discourse.
- Examine the reasons behind basic school mathematics teachers choice of language for classroom interaction.

(Emerging) Findings at a glance

- Teachers wield a lot of power in their classroom and therefore determine which language to use for classroom interaction, who should speak in class and how lessons should progress.
- Teachers prefer to use English for classroom interaction because they see English to hold more political, economic and social and educational capital
- Teachers encounter a lot of challenges in using English to implement child centered approaches to teaching.
- However they implement other pedagogic strategies to help pupils to participate in lessons.
- Analysis of teacher talk beyond the patterns of interaction is needed to understand how teachers use language to facilitate pupils understanding of lessons.
- It appears that teachers focused more procedural understanding to the neglect of conceptual understanding.
- Teachers did not consider mathematics language to be relevant.

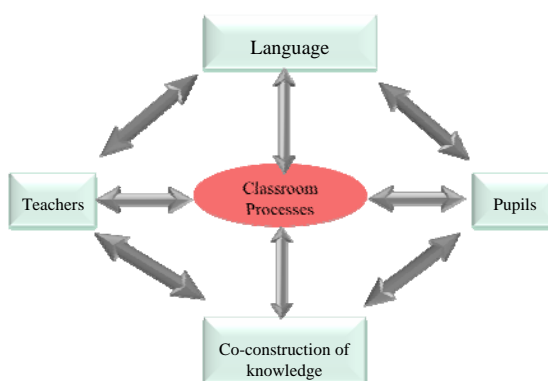


Sufficient exposure to the language of classroom interaction is necessary for effective teaching and learning



Research Design

- Ethnographic case study involving two basic schools (one public, one private)
- Each school was visited each day for a sustained period of two weeks.
- Mathematics lessons in classes 4 and 6 of each school were observed and videoed.
- Teachers in these classes were interviewed (stimulated recall and semi formal).
- Each teacher was analysed as a single case.



Policy and practice implications

- In posting teachers, the GES should take into consideration the linguistic backgrounds of the teacher
- The English language should be taught very well as a subject before it is introduced as the medium of instruction
- Teachers should use their pupils home language as a resource to facilitate the teaching and learning process

Publications

Ampah – Mensah, A (2009) *Teachers' use of language in teaching mathematics in Basic Schools in Cape Coast, Ghana* in Joubert, M. (Ed.) Proceedings of the British Society for Research into Learning Mathematics 29(2) June 2009

I trained as a secondary school mathematics teacher and also as an educational planner. I have taught in all the pre tertiary stages of education in Ghana prior to my PhD studies. My PhD has enhanced my critical thinking skills and also my capacity as a researcher and a teacher. My understanding of classroom processes and especially mathematics classroom processes has been deepened. I now have a better understanding of the role of language in teaching. The depth of knowledge and experience gained throughout my PhD journey will go a long way to enhance my ability to support my department better in teaching and research.

