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Micro-teaching as a tool: Identifying factors influencing English additional language speaking pre-service teachers' English instruction and learning interactions

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ABSTRACT

Many South African teachers are required to competently and confidently use English as a tool for learning interaction with their learners and as a medium of instruction. This might be problematic for English additional language pre-service teachers, whose medium of instruction is not English. This paper explores how micro-teaching can be used to identify factors that influence the abilities of English additional language speaking pre-service teachers to use English as a medium of instruction. Three data collection instruments were used in this case study: an observation checklist completed by the researcher during micro-teaching lessons; a questionnaire completed by each participant after they conducted their micro-teaching lesson; and an unstructured interview with each participant, which served as an opportunity for clarification and discussion on the data generated from the observation checklist and questionnaire. Data collection and analysis operated under an interpretivist framework, using a thematic approach to data analysis. Data generated from the three instruments supported the identification of factors that influence participants' abilities to teach in English. Learner interaction and lesson preparation and execution emerged as the two main themes of the data analysis The findings of this study hold implications for English additional language pre-service teachers, Teaching Practice and Work Integrated Learning departments, didactic lecturers and the broader tertiary education sector.

Keywords: English additional speaking skills, English medium of instruction, learning interactions, micro-teaching, pre-service teachers

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1. Introduction

Many South African higher education institutions, such as the one where this study is located, expect pre-service teachers to be taught in English and, in turn, for such pre-service teachers to teach the content of Social Sciences, Natural Science, Technology, and Mathematics in English. This might be problematic for English additional language speaking pre-service teachers who come from a non-English medium of instruction background during their 12 years of schooling. Such pre-service teachers must adapt to predominantly using English as their medium of instruction (MoI) for the first time during their Bachelor of Education (BEd) course. Pre-service teachers who participated in this study were Afrikaans or IsiXhosa home language speakers, studying at an institute where the MoI is English. Most of the participants completed their 12 years of schooling through the medium of Afrikaans, with English as a first additional language subject. One participant received English instruction from Grade 4–12, with IsiXhosa as their home language subject and English as their first additional language subject. This group of pre-service teachers are at greater risk of decreased subject knowledge and teaching skills, including being able to teach in English. Sah and Li (2022) stated that disparities are created in educational access, favouring students who were previously exposed to English as a MoI over those who had a different MoI at school level.

The Department of Higher Education (DHET) acknowledges that English remains the medium of instruction across many South African higher education institutions (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020). The DHET revised the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) and created the language policy framework for public higher education in 2020, which stipulates that "necessary support must be provided to students for whom English is not their first language or mother tongue, to ensure academic success" (DHET, 2020:17). Ngcobo and Barnes (2020) found that many South African universities have created language policies that affirm the importance of home languages being the medium of instruction in higher education but recognise the dominance of English as a medium of instruction at such institutions. The dominance of English as a MoI is also prevalent within South African schools. Gordon and Harvey (2019) examined public attitudes towards the main language of instruction at different levels in the South African education system and found that most of the community preferred English as the language of instruction at all levels of education.

English additional language speaking pre-service teachers not only have to acquire knowledge and skills in English but also teach in English to meet the demands for English medium of instruction in schools. Pre-service teachers, such as those who participated in this study, are at risk of academic and economic exclusion, as they might be at risk of unemployment if they are unable to competently teach Intermediate Phase subjects in English. As part of an intervention to decrease the academic and employment risks that English as a medium of instruction hold

to certain pre-service teachers, the study aims to use micro-teaching as a tool to identify factors that influences English additional language speaking pre-service teachers' abilities to use English for learning interactions and as a medium of instruction. Micro-teaching refers to an educational approach used in teacher education and training to create a structured, scaled-down teaching experience. Short lessons, lasting between 5–20 minutes, are usually delivered by students or educators to small groups of students, peers or learners. The mini lessons aim to develop specific teaching skills and competencies in controlled environments (Lozgka, 2024).

This study thus seeks to respond to the following research questions:

2. Main research question

What factors does micro-teaching reveal that influence the competence and confidence of English additional language speaking pre-service teachers when using English as a medium of instruction and learning interaction?

Subsidiary questions

- What factors decrease the competence and confidence of English additional language speaking pre-service teachers when using English as a medium of instruction and learning interaction?
- What factors increase the competence and confidence of English additional language speaking pre-service teachers when using English as a medium of instruction and learning interaction?

3. Theoretical frameworks

3.1 Long's interaction hypothesis

The interaction hypothesis, as explained by Long (1981), describes how interactions with other speakers help the acquisition of additional language skills. There is a development of language abilities when speakers have face-to-face contact and communication (Owusu et al., 2022). This hypothesis declares, firstly, that comprehensible input is an important tool for language learning and acquisition. Secondly, "differences to the interactional structure of communications that take place in the process of negotiating a communication difficulty, assists [sic] in making input understandable to the second language learner" (Owusu et al., 2022, p. 76). Concerning this study, when pre-service teachers interact in English with learners, there is a modification that takes place between the two parties while a process of meaning-making takes place to ensure that what is communicated to learners is comprehensible to them. In the same instance, once the pre-service teacher comprehends the intended message, the communication process can continue, where meaning is once again negotiated to ensure oral

comprehensible output from the learners' side. Long (1981) further explained the importance of conversation between speakers, saying that the modifications to the interactional structure at the oral discourse level were the most important forms of meaningful communication (Ellis, 1991). Long (1981) agreed with the work of Krashen (1982), which stated that comprehensible input is necessary for effective additional language skill acquisition. However, in his theory, Long (1981) focused on how input can be made comprehensible. He argued that modified interaction is the vehicle for making language comprehensible (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Below are examples of different interactional modifications that are involved in the negotiation of meaning, as found in the work of Pica et al. (1985) and constructed in table form by Ellis (1991, p. 5) in his study. Table 1 shows examples of how participants could negotiate meaning. Although it is not referred to directly in this study, the general term of negotiating meaning between the participants and learners refers to the modifications listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Interaction and modifications involved in the negotiation of meaning

INTERACTIONAL FEATURE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Clarification requests	Any expression that elicits clarification of the preceding utterance.	A: She is on welfare. B: What do you mean by welfare?
Confirmation checks	Any expression immediately following the previous speaker's utterance intended to confirm that the utterance was understood or heard correctly.	A: Mexican food has a lot of ulcers. B: Mexicans have a lot of ulcers. Because of the food?
Comprehension checks	Any expression designed to establish whether the speaker's preceding utterance has been understood by the addressee.	A: There was no one there. Do you know what I mean?
Self-repetitions:		
(1) repairing	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of her utterance to help the addressee overcome a communication problem.	A: Maybe there would be B: Two? A: Yes, because one mother goes to work and the other mother stays home.
(2) preventive	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of her utterance to prevent the addressee from experiencing a communication problem.	A: Do you share his feelings? Does anyone agree with Gustavo?
(3) reacting	The speaker repeats/paraphrases some part of one of her previous utterances to help establish or develop the topic of conversation.	A: I think she has a lot of money. B: But we don't know that? A: But her husband is very rich.

Source: Ellis (1991: 5)

When the participants of this study interact in English with learners, opportunities for reciprocal meaning-making and collaborative language correction are provided. Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis was in line with the approach undertaken in this study concerning factors that influence the ability to use English as a tool for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction by pre-service teachers.

3.2 Communicative competence

Communicative competence is a term used by Hymes (1966) in response to Chomsky's (1965) notion of linguistic competence, where Chomsky defined competence as what one knows without being necessarily aware of it. This was referred to as linguistic knowledge. Chomsky further defined performance as the way people would use their linguistic knowledge when communicating (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007). The concept of communicative competence is a progressive concept that has seen different additions and significant contributions to the refinement of the concept. In Chomsky's (1956) concept of communicative competence, the importance in language users using language correctly is highlighted. Hymes (1966) added to the concept of communicative competence by highlighting that what is also critical for communication is the correct use of language that is socially or contextually appropriate. This definition of Hymes' communicative competence is in line with this study because, when looking at English oral competence, it is not just about the knowledge that participants have of English or oral communication, but rather, how they use it to teach in the classroom context. Thus, when looking at language learning, and in the case of this study, the development of English oral competence starts with the context in which pre-service teachers must use language and not with language itself (Street & Leung, 2010).

South African classrooms are multilingual and culturally diverse and using language as a tool of interaction and a medium of instruction requires more than just being fluent in English. There are four components of communicative competence: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies (Mariani, 1994). Linguistic competence is also referred to as grammatical competence and focuses on the skill of creating grammatically correct utterances. It focuses on a knowledge of words and language rules. This competence is also the only one where interaction is not a requirement for development (Canale & Swain, 1980). Sociolinguistic competence focuses on the ability to produce socio-linguistically appropriate utterances, while discourse competence focuses on the ability to produce utterances that are coherent and cohesive. Strategic competence focuses on the ability to solve communication problems as they arise and to find the appropriate communication to use (Canale & Swain, 1980).

This study used principles of strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence to create a criterion for data collection and analysis. Strategic competence is characterised by systematic

strategies that help restore communicative interruptions that cause communication breakdown (Alam 2020). English additional language speakers "experience moments where there is a gap between communicative intent and their ability to express intent" (Alam, 2020, p. 1332). Developing and using strategic competence in English is vital in determining pre-service teachers' fluency and conversational skills. Alam (2020) refers to two models of strategic competence, both of which relate to the nature of this study. Firstly, Alam (2020) refers to a model of communication with a continuity/maintenance perspective. This focuses on strategies that help to keep the communication channel open when faced with communication difficulties and "playing for time to think and make (alternative) speech plans" (Alam, 2020, p. 1328). Secondly, Alam (2020) refers to the interactional perspective, which refers to communication strategies such as petitions for assistance and the use of other cooperative resolution behaviours when a communication problem surfaces during communication. This then refers to the collaborative meaning-making efforts between speakers, and in the case of this study, between pre-service teachers and learners. The ability to cope with unexpected problems when no ready-made solutions are available is an important skill for teachers, as they are often in positions where they must think on their feet when interacting with learners in the classroom (Mariani, 1994). For the participants in this study, it was not just that they had to think on their feet during interactions with learners, but that they also had to draw on knowledge and skills to do so effectively in their additional language, English.

Sociolinguistic competence focuses on using language appropriately as it relates to the social context, like a classroom. It encompasses aspects such as register use, adaptation to context and non-verbal communication. For teachers, adapting language usage is critical for effective teaching and interaction in educational settings (Pérez-Ferra et al., 2022). Pre-service teachers must navigate teaching and interacting with learners that come from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. The teacher must be able to adapt their language usage to fit the nature of the interaction. This could be more formal during the teaching of content or more informal during one-on-one or smaller group interactions with learners. The components of oral strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence, therefore, formed the basis of the analysis of data that was collected in this study. The above-mentioned categories of competence is believed to be important for pre-service teachers to have. Especially for pre-service teachers who must use their additional language to interact and teach, as is the case with the participants of this study. Principles of strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence in this study are the criteria used to determine English competence when using English as a tool for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction. Strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence and the interactional hypothesis align well with the nature of the study, as both theories focus on collaborative meaning-making efforts and understanding the social nature of acquiring language skills. This study provides opportunities for participants to collaborate using micro-teaching as a tool to identify factors that influence their ability to teach in English.

4. Literature review

Micro-teaching has been used as a tool to identify factors that influence English usage and skills by pre-service teachers for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction. Micro-teaching enhances pre-service teachers' capabilities to teach subject content in English. A study conducted by Ismail (2011) at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) reported on the experiences of 61 pre-service teachers participating in micro-teaching lessons. Micro-teaching allowed participants to practice pedagogical theory, different teaching strategies and discipline specific language. The feedback provided by peers and the post-lesson execution allowed participants to reflect on and implement the feedback provided. Ismail (2011) recommends that micro-teaching experiences form part of the initial teacher education programmes at tertiary institutes and universities. Though Ismail's study was conducted in the United Arab Emirates, the recommendation made to higher education institutions are relevant within the South African context. Pre-service teachers get to frequently practice their teaching abilities and their knowledge of subject content in English. This develops the competence and confidence in pre-service teachers and support the ability to teach effectively in English. As previously mentioned, pre-service teachers who do not meet the demand for English medium of instruction may be at risk of being unemployed. This further aligns with the study by Ariff et al. (2023) that found that the use of micro-teaching as a tool effectively prepared pre-service teachers to use content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to teach subject content well.

Koross (2016) contends that micro-teaching among peers creates a safe environment where teachers can try out different teaching methods, practice how they convey content and interact with learners in a protected space. In addition, peers can provide critical feedback to teachers that they can reflect on and use to adapt or implement practices in their classrooms. Similarly, this study created an environment for pre-service teachers to practice their content knowledge and methods using English, receive critical feedback from their peers and the main researcher, and engage in self-reflection after conducting micro-teaching lessons. Micro-teaching can be an effective tool to develop English competence, fit for the teaching professions. Mpofu and Maphalala's (2021) study supports this statement. They collected data from 102 pre-service teachers from three South African universities where micro-teaching was one of the tools used by all three universities to develop structured and unstructured use of English for academic purposes (EAP), developing pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills concerning teaching in English across multiple disciplines. In addition, Nugraheni (2019) used micro-teaching lessons as part of a curriculum module to determine pre-service teachers' learning difficulties on three competencies – content competencies, facilitating competencies, and environmental competencies. Under each competence, sub-competencies were identified that pre-service teachers could further develop before going out for their practice teaching, thus enhancing their knowledge, skills and confidence to teach effectively in real classrooms. Micro-teaching thus

served as an intervention to narrow or remove the gaps in knowledge and skills relating to teaching. Similarly, in this proposed study, micro-teaching is used as a tool to determine which factors influences pre-service teachers' English competence. Msimanga (2020) collected data through focus group interviews with 14 fourth-year Bachelor of Education pre-service teachers who shared their reflections on participating in micro-teaching lessons. Msimanga (2020) concluded that institutions that use micro-teaching lessons should implement micro-teaching practices in a way that they empower pre-service teachers with professional skills. When it is implemented correctly, through progression, where pre-service teachers are present in different groups, different group sizes, different grades and different topics, it develops pre-service teachers in different ways. This finding also aligns with Long's interaction hypothesis, where, through collaboration, pre-service teachers were able to observe, reflect and engage in practices that would develop skills, such as the ability to competently and confidently teach in English. Based on the above discussion, micro-teaching can be considered an effective tool for learning to teach and simultaneously developing English skills.

5. Research methodology

This study used a qualitative research design and a case study approach in collecting and analysing the data. Convenience sampling was used to select participants based on their accessibility and/or proximity to the research (Jager et al., 2017) and is best suited for the study because participants were pre-service teachers at the researcher's place of employment. It allowed for adequate access throughout the research process. This was not an insignificant consideration during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, where physical access could have been limited due to lockdown restrictions and cautionary reasons. Convenience sampling also aligned well with case study research methods, as the research focused on a specific group of students in a specific educational environment. The participants were eight Bachelor of Education students who were English additional language speakers. Six participants were first-year students, and two participants were third-year students. The participants' home languages were identified as Afrikaans or isiXhosa. The number of participants in this study did not influence the depth of data generated (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). Morse et al. (2014) found in a review of 560 dissertations that the sample size was never listed as a reason for obtaining data saturation.

Three data collection instruments were used. One unstructured interview, one observational checklist and one self-assessment questionnaire. The data generated from these tools was rich and thick (Dibley, 2011). The methodology of the study allowed descriptive accounts from participants and questions of clarification on the part of the principal researcher.

Data was initially going to be collected during participants' scheduled teaching practice (TP); however, TP at schools could not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. As part of the third-year TP programme, students had to complete a 15-minute virtual micro-teaching lesson. Participants were placed in groups of four, where each participant conducted their micro-teaching lesson on any intermediate phase subject. The other three members of the group were given the role of learners to simulate aspects of face-to-face class lessons at school. The first-year pre-service teachers did not have a micro-teaching component to their online TP programme. The researcher therefore decided to hold 15-minute face-to-face micro-teaching lessons in lecture venues on campus with the same roles given to group members. Micro-teaching lessons were used to identify factors that influenced participants' abilities to use English as a tool of learning interaction and medium of instruction.

The researcher observed the participants' micro-teaching lessons and completed an observational checklist during the micro-teaching lessons. One lesson per participant was observed. An analysis of this data indicated the degree of the participants' development of oral strategic and sociolinguistic competence when having to use English as a tool of instruction and interaction in the classroom. Participants completed a self-assessment questionnaire after completing their micro-teaching lesson. The questionnaire was formulated from the same categories used in the observational checklist. The observation checklist and the questionnaire from the same observed lesson were used to cross-analyse data on how each participant perceived their oral confidence and competence as opposed to how it was observed from the researcher's perspective. Unstructured individual interviews were conducted with each participant and served as opportunities for clarification and discussion on participants' answers in the questionnaire and the researcher's observations.

6. Ethical considerations

This study adhered to all ethical considerations and conduct concerning consent from participants and how data was collected, presented and analysed. Participants had to give informed consent and were provided with all relevant information regarding the study. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study should they choose to, participation was voluntary, and their withdrawal would have no negative consequences. In terms of anonymity, participants selected their own pseudonyms and preferred gender pronouns, and these were used throughout the study. This was used to protect the identities of participants, who were only known by fellow participants, the researcher and the supervisor. The following table presents the metadata of participants:

Table 2: Metadata of participants

PARTICIPANT NUMBER AND PSEUDONYM	YEAR OF STUDY	HOME LANGUAGE
Participant 1, Snowflake	3rd Year	Afrikaans
Participant 2, Aubrey	3rd Year	Afrikaans
Participant 3, Antas	1st Year	Afrikaans
Participant 4, Ashely	1st Year	Afrikaans
Participant 5, April	1st Year	Afrikaans
Participant 6, Noah	1st Year	Afrikaans
Participant 7, Enrico	1st Year	Afrikaans
Participant 8, Thandi	1st Year	isiXhosa

7. Thematic analysis

The design of this study suggested a thematic approach. Through thematic analysis, "the research constructs themes to reframe, reinterpret and /or connect elements of data" (Kiger & Varpio, 2020, p. 2). Working with a case study method generated an abundance of data, as previously mentioned, and the data were both rich and thick. Throughout the process of analysis, patterns started emerging and themes and categories were created. Tables 3 and 4, present the first analysis of the data. Many valuable categories and themes emerged due to the nuances in the experiences of the participants. Although not all themes directly answered the research questions, they remained relevant to the study, as Tables 3 and 4 show. These tables show the raw, rich data which emerged from the first round of analysis. The tables indicated sections of related data that emerged in the first round of analysis. A discussion based on themes that are further refined, and which relate more directly to the questions, take place after this section.

Table 3: Factors contributing to decreased competence and confidence in using English speaking skills

OVERARCHING THEME		SUB-THEME AND CODE	
1	**Learner interaction**		
		1.1	Minimal learner involvement
		1.2	Longer response times to questions
		1.3	Not communicating on grade level
		1.4	Unprepared for unexpected questions
		1.5	Awareness of ending discussions impolitely
2	**Communication**		
		2.1	Struggling to find correct words
		2.2	Not communicating on grade level
		2.3	Saying the wrong "thing"
		2.4	Struggling giving explanations
		2.5	Communicating in additional language
		2.6	Speaking too fast
3	**Unprepared nature**		
		3.1	Unpreparedness for unexpected questions
		3.2	Unpreparedness for lesson
		3.3	Unpreparedness for slight teaching and learning changes during lesson.
4	**Lesson structure**		
		4.1	Unmet expectation of lesson flow
		4.2	Changes to the lesson during the lesson (adaptability)
		4.3	Time constraints
5	**Emotions**		
		5.1	Nervousness but being prepared assisted with confidence and competence
		5.2	Feeling overwhelmed due to feeling unprepared
		5.3	Unconfident due to lesson unpreparedness
		5.4	Nervousness resulted in inability to communicate
		5.5	Anxiety due to having to teach

Table 4: Factors contributing to increased competence and confidence in using English speaking skills

OVERARCHING THEME		SUB-THEME AND CODE	
1	**Subject content**		
		1.1	Enjoyment of subject content
		1.2	Relating with content
		1.3	Fun activities
2	**Preparation**		
		2.1	Lesson preparation
3	**Learner Interaction**		
		3.1	Learner enjoyment of content
		3.2	Learner understanding of content
		3.3	Verbal feedback from students
		3.4	Learner facial expression
4	**Skills**		
		4.1	Ability to explain concepts

The above data sets are included to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the data and the relationship between the raw data (the tables above) and the findings presented in the following section. The tables show the first of several iterative analyses of the data provided by pre-service teachers and researcher observations. This study took a qualitative perspective, and one of its inevitable features is the degree of involvement of the researcher in the study. It cannot be disregarded that the researcher was unable to be completely objective in this study, as she was seeking answers to research questions in her professional context and might also have her own hypotheses. However, the fact that my participants provided several different kinds of data to allow for triangulation meant that the inferences made from the data could be considered valid (Cohen et al., 2011). The objectivity of the researcher can be questioned when one uses qualitative data. This is a valid area to investigate, as the researcher was also a participant, submerged in the study. Using a case study and thematic analysis approach to the data allowed for themes to emerge instead and created internal validity to the analysis.

This study focused on a case and thus it might be limited in its validity to draw generalisations that could hold for other student teachers who are English additional speakers, not only in private higher education institutions but public universities in South Africa. Furthermore, the validity of the study might be influenced by the small sample size, though the data were rich and thick.

8. Presentation and discussion of data

In this section, findings are presented and discussed along with supporting literature demonstrating how micro-teaching was used as a tool to identify factors that influence pre-

service teachers' English when used as a tool for learning interaction and a medium of instruction. Peers who were assigned the role of learners will be referred to as learners in this discussion, additionally, no data was generated from participants who were assigned the role of learners. Pre-service teachers who form part of this study, assumed the role of 'teacher' and share their experiences from the role of teacher during micro-teaching sessions. The data is coded as follows:

I-2 = interview 2;
P1–8 = participant 1–8.

The presentation and discussion are based on data reported by participants in the self-assessing questionnaire, the observational checklist and an unstructured interview. The data collection instruments form part of a bigger data collection set obtained from the researcher's master's thesis, and thus the interview is coded as I-2, interview 2, as interview 1 does not form part of data generated or discussed in this paper. Two main themes emerged from the data analysis, namely *Learner interaction* and *Lesson preparation and execution*.

8.1 Learner interaction

Learner interaction emerged as the first main theme, and it focuses on the experiences of participants that relate to their engagement with students, representing learners, during the presentation of micro-teaching lessons to replicate a classroom environment. Thus, in this section, the pre-service teachers who imitated learners during the micro-teaching lessons are referred to as "learners". The main theme of 'learner interaction' has been divided into four categories of factors influencing English usage for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction. They are learner engagement and response times to questions, learners' facial and body expressions during lessons, verbal feedback, and strategic competence in teaching. These are discussed in greater detail below.

8.1.1 Learner engagement and response times to questions

Minimal learner engagement during the lesson was a factor that decreased the ability to use English as a tool for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction for the participant, named Snowflake and resulted in them overthinking whether they were communicating competently because of the lack of interaction. Snowflake observed that there was minimal verbal engagement from learners during the lesson. Although it did not influence their competence in engaging orally during the lesson, it affected their confidence somewhat during opportunities for learner interaction. This observation was communicated in a follow-up interview on the micro-teaching lesson Snowflake conducted. Likewise, Aubrey, another participant, explained in an interview that "the only other stressor was when some of the other students would take a while to respond or wouldn't be on the right track" (P2, I-2). Like Snowflake's account, Aubrey's ability to use English during the lesson did not decrease. However, when posing questions and asking for opinions from learners, Aubrey experienced

moments of anxiety about whether the learners would communicate clearly. Learners took longer to respond to or answer questions when there were opportunities for them to share their opinions; this made Aubrey somewhat less confident in their use of English as a tool for learning interaction.

8.1.2 Learners' facial expressions and body language during lessons

Reciprocal expressions and the body language of learners influenced participants' communication. At least three participants indicated that they communicated well in English when they saw that learners understood and enjoyed what was communicated during the lesson. Noah explained his experience in an interview: *"*But as I was doing my lesson, I could see the learners enjoyed what I was teaching them, and so it built more confidence in what I was saying and doing" (P6, I-2). The facial expressions and perhaps the body language that learners exhibited during the lesson indicated the enjoyment and interest they communicated to Noah. This may have increased his ability to continue interacting with the learners, an experience shared by Thandi who communicate that she was more confident and could communicate more fluently in English when learners' facial expressions showed that they understood what she was teaching.

8.1.3 Verbal feedback

Verbal feedback from learners emerged as a category in Thandi's statement above. Learners gave oral feedback during the lesson, and this indicated to Thandi that she was being understood during the lesson. And, as she mentioned, her confidence to continue interacting in English increased. When looking at the two categories of the learners' reciprocal facial and body expressions during lessons and verbal feedback, it signalled a willingness from the learners to understand what was communicated by the student teachers.

The last two categories also relate to managing interaction aspects at a discourse level. Strategies at the discourse level suggest ways of coping with language challenges across sentences and across taking turns (Mariani 1994). During the micro-teaching lesson presentations, there were interactions between the participants and learners where negotiation of meanings and intentions took place. Cooperative strategies were used because the oral interactions took place between the participants and learners. They thus shared in the communication process while attempting to agree on the meanings of the situations (Mariani 1994).

8.1.4 Strategic competence in teaching

Strategic competence in teaching emerged as one area of focus, as highlighted in participants' experiences during their micro-teaching lessons. This section looks at language aspects that the participants faced during their lessons. It included aspects of strategic competence in finding the correct words to communicate. These emerged from how participants responded to questions posed by learners and how successfully they felt they communicated with learners.

Lastly, the researcher discusses how being aware of communicating in English affects the ability to use it as a tool for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction.

Enrico indicated that they struggled to find the correct words at some point during the lesson. Aubrey described their experience in an interview and stated, "I did have a couple of moments where I was struggling to find the words because my brain was lost in translation" (P2, I-2). Antas shared that they were scared to say the wrong thing, while another participant stated that they struggled at certain times to give adequate explanations of certain terms or clarify certain topics under discussion. The above data relates to aspects of oral strategic competence and strategies that can be used in oral interaction (Canale & Swain, 1980). These aspects focus on understanding strategies used on a word, sentence and discourse level. Additional English language speakers would benefit from strategic and discourse strategies when managing oral interactions. Communicating in an additional language emerged as a variant of communication aspects experienced by participants during lessons. In an interview, Thandi shared that she was aware that as a pre-service teacher she'd need to communicate and teach in her additional language. She was concerned about being understood, which could have decreased their ability to communicate in English during the micro-teaching lesson; however, the researcher observed that the participant was able to communicate clearly. Thandi did, however, end discussions abruptly and failed to provide feedback to students on verbal questions posed. Students posing as learners were thus uncertain whether their answers were correct or not.

The practice of participants' English oral strategic and sociolinguistic competence skills took place through dialogue with interactions between them, either as learners or those presenting the micro-teaching lessons. The analysis of data and specifically the emergence of the main theme and its categories illustrated the communicative and social nature of the development of English usage for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction. The main theme is underpinned by the principles of Long's (1981) interaction hypothesis and aspects of communicative competence in language learning. When participants interacted orally with learners, it provided opportunities for reciprocal meaning-making and collaborative language correction.

8.2 Lesson preparation and execution

This second main theme emerged as a factor that influences English usage as a medium of instruction and tool for interaction for English additional language pre-service teachers. Two categories were created, namely lesson preparation and lesson content interest and enjoyment.

8.2.1 Lesson preparation

This section focuses on aspects of lesson preparation that influenced the participants' behaviour during their micro-teaching lessons – how prepared participants felt in conducting their lessons and interacting with learners in English. Three participants alluded to feeling underprepared for some aspect of presenting the lesson in English. In an interview, Thandi explained that she

felt unprepared because it was her first time teaching; she found it challenging when the lesson structure or flow changed. A high level of strategic competence would have helped her negotiate the changes. Thandi felt unprepared when facing slight changes during the lesson, whether it was an unexpected question asked about teaching content not prepared for or struggling to adapt to an activity when learners responded differently to what the participant had anticipated. The researcher observed that the participant ended discussions with learners abruptly and failed to provide feedback to students on verbal questions posed. This awareness thus created moments of decreased ability to engage with learners in English during the teaching and learning phase of the micro-teaching lesson.

In contrast, Ashley, described her experience: "I was a little bit on my nerves, but I think because I prepared, it was not that nerve-wracking, like the other times" (P4, I-2). Similarly, April, explained that before conducting the lesson, she had a practice run with family members that provided her with insights on how to adjust the lesson and ensure that learning interactions were meaningful and that instructions were clear and well understood. Being and feeling prepared was a recurring area of focus. Though it may not always be possible to have a run-through of a lesson before conducting it, as April did, it proved useful in delivering a successful micro-teaching lesson in English. During April's micro-teaching lesson, the researcher observed that she confidently communicated in English during interaction and engagement with learners. April was able to answer all the "unexpected" questions for clarification clearly and effectively. Feeling prepared and preparing well for lessons where oral interaction takes place influenced participants' confidence to engage orally. Consequently, it affected how competent participants perceived themselves in teaching effectively in English.

8.2.2 Lesson content interest and enjoyment

Participants indicated various aspects relating to subject content that increased their competence and confidence during the presentation of micro-teaching lessons. The participants' enjoyment of subject content emerged as a factor that increased three participants' oral competence and confidence during their micro-teaching lessons. In an interview, Aubrey stated, "And I was very confident about my lesson and the way I set it up. I liked the content that I was covering, so I felt like it was a very fun lesson to do" (P2, I-2). While Enrico, in an interview, described his experience of teaching content he enjoyed: "I was confident in the content of that lesson because I enjoy teaching Mathematics, and I enjoy the subject of Mathematics. So, I think I felt confident in teaching the subject" (P3, I-2). These statements demonstrate well how enjoyment and students' sense of competence in the subject content increased their confidence and competence in interacting with and instructing learners in English. Similarly, Snowflake stated in an interview that the topic of their lesson, which he connected with, increased their competence.

This statement reveals that when the participant could relate to the content they were teaching and thought it was personally important, communicating orally came easily – this increased

their ability to use English well when engaging and interacting with learners in the classroom. Kurnia (2019), Cao (2011) and Kang (2005) all found in their studies that students who found certain topics interesting or enjoyable were more confident in engaging orally.

9. Limitations of the study

The findings of this study resulted from a qualitative perspective applied to a case study methodology. Thus, the conclusions of this study are pointers rather than generalisations that could hold for other student teachers who are English additional language speakers, in private and public universities in South Africa. The small sample size is mentioned as a limitation of this study. However, participants provided rich, detailed data in response to different data collection tools. The rich data provided an authentic, textured insight into the experiences of participants concerning using English as a tool for learning interaction and a medium of instruction. These insights can confidently be taken as starting points for further study or for further interactions with other additional language speakers in similar training programmes.

Participants conducted micro-teaching lessons, which served as simulations of actual classroom interaction with learners. To a certain extent, the fact that participants were unable to conduct a full lesson during their TP because of COVID-19 restrictions impacted the data gathered in that section of the study. The data gathered from the classroom simulations created by using micro-teaching lessons gave significant insights. Findings on "classroom" factors that influenced the development of oral competence and confidence in participants were thus limited.

10. Significance of the study

The findings of this study have implications for practice and policy and provides insights that contributes to the development of teaching and learning practices, initiatives and policies that support English additional language pre-service teachers' professional development during their initial teacher education.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the Teaching Practice and Work Integrated Learning departments re-evaluate how students are prepared for classroom practice before completing their TP at schools. There is scope for the development of a module that can enhance speaking skills specifically for presenting lessons, for example, through creating micro-teaching experiences. Nugraheni's (2019) approach to using micro-teaching lessons may be a good foundation for creating such a module. She used micro-teaching as part of a curriculum module to determine pre-service teachers' learning difficulties on three competencies. Pre-service teachers further developed these competencies before going out for their practice teaching, thus enhancing their knowledge, skills and confidence to teach

effectively in real classrooms. TP departments need to consider implementing interventions or remedial measures for pre-service teachers, who, after TP, have become aware, either through their own experience, their mentor-teacher, or supervisor, about the need to develop their oral discourse and strategic competence skills.

Moreover, the findings highlight the need for didactic module lecturers to include more micro-teaching lessons. Some participants who experienced such challenges were first-year Bachelor of Education students who had been at their tertiary institution for more than four months and had didactic module lectures for several weeks before conducting their micro-teaching lesson for this study. Changes in lesson direction and focus are constant occurrences because lessons are complex social constructs during which teachers are dealing with learners and monitoring their responses as they interact with new information and learning experiences. Regular micro-teaching lessons in didactic module lectures could assist with this flexibility, with the addition of strengthening pre-service teachers' subject knowledge and increasing subject competence. Koross (2016) demonstrates the contributions micro-teaching can have when facilitators create safe spaces among peers where pre-service teachers can try out different teaching methods, practice how they convey content and interact with learners in a protected space. Pre-service teachers receive critical peer feedback, lecturer feedback and engage in self-reflection after conducting micro-teaching lessons. They will thus practice their speaking skills, which will assist them in becoming more confident and competent when using English as their additional language in the classroom environment. This also aligns with Mpofu and Maphalala's (2021) finding that micro-teaching was successfully used by three South African universities to develop structured and unstructured use of English for academic purposes (EAP), developing pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills concerning teaching in English across multiple disciplines.

This study opens avenues for tertiary institutions to create initiatives that support pre-service teachers who are English additional language speakers in becoming competent and confident in using English as a tool both for learning interaction and as a medium of instruction. This directive was given by DHET in the revised Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) that stated that higher education institutions must make provision to support students who are not English home language speakers to ensure they reach academic success. Tertiary institutions need to evaluate the function of first additional language and communicative modules specifically for pre-service teachers so that the knowledge and skills learnt in such modules prepare them for communication in the classroom. The findings of this study hold implications for English additional language pre-service teachers, Teaching Practice and Work Integrated Learning departments, didactic lecturers and the broader tertiary education sector.

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