

## **Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The utterances analysed in this study were produced by English L2 speakers (student teachers) and contain idiosyncratic expressions. The aim has been to establish whether such marked speech features had any effect on the hearers' (learners) interpretation, and whether this resulted in misunderstanding. The student teachers' use of the second language was, therefore, explored in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

To what extent are misunderstandings occurring during instructional communication the result of English second language student teachers' oral proficiency?

- How/when do misunderstandings occur?
- What level of student teacher oral proficiency is required to ensure learner understanding?
- What strategies do student teachers employ to compensate for distorted/ambiguous communication?

In this chapter I explain the procedure followed in the analysis of the data, present the main categories and themes that emerged from the data, and offer a discursive analysis and interpretation of the findings. The study drew on Speech Act Theory as an analytical tool to describe the occurrence, nature, frequency and consequence of misunderstandings that occur in an instructional setting. Speech Act Theory is based on the premise that interlocutors create meaning during a linguistic interaction and when this does not occur, reasons should be found (Kaburise 2005). SAT entails establishing whether speaker intent or meaning has been interpreted correctly by the hearer, as successful communication has taken place when there is a match between speaker intent and hearer interpretation, irrespective of any grammatical idiosyncrasies or deviations from standard language used (in this case, South African English). My assumption was that where no match (a mismatch) existed, a misunderstanding had occurred.

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Four data sets, collected from the 26 student teachers in the study, were analysed, namely observational data (cf. section 4.2.1), which also provided oral data based on the IELTS rubric (cf. section 4.2.2), data from the focus group interviews (cf. section 4.2.3.) and the questionnaire (cf. section 4.2.4). Although the data collection was done in three phases (a pilot study and two collection periods) the data from these phases were collapsed per instrument, presented and then discussed as a single unit of analysis. This was done to enrich the analysis and to avoid repetition. The data sets used in the analysis are indicated in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Data sets analysed in the study**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Contribution to answering research questions</b>
Observations: video recordings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify and describe errors and misunderstandings</li> <li>To record verbal and physical interactions in the classroom</li> <li>To generate small sections of data for the database to be analyzed</li> <li>To help identify relevant questions for focus group interviews</li> <li>To help compile the questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How/when misunderstandings occur</li> <li>How oral proficiency relates to misunderstandings</li> <li>Other factors that contribute to misunderstandings</li> </ul>
Oral evaluation (IELTS rubric)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To determine the level of oral proficiency of each participant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of oral proficiency required for effective communication</li> </ul>
Focus group interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To gather information on the perceptions of participants</li> <li>To determine agreement as to the misunderstandings and errors reported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How participants deal with misunderstandings</li> <li>How meaning/understanding is negotiated</li> </ul>
Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To form an idea of the kinds of errors made and their frequency and whether this corroborated the earlier findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How meaning/understanding is negotiated</li> <li>How misunderstandings are addressed</li> </ul>

## **4.2 Data analysis – procedure**

The procedure followed for analysing the collapsed data will be discussed first, after which the presentation of the data follows. I engaged with the data inductively, approaching the data from particular to more general perspectives.

### **4.2.1 Observations (recorded lessons)**

Lessons presented by 26 student teachers were video recorded (cf. section 3.5.4.1). The student teachers taught either content subjects using English as the LoLT, or English as a subject to ESL learners.

After having organized the data (cf. section 3.5.5), the data analysis could begin. The first phase in the analysis of the recordings was a preliminary exploratory analysis, inductively scanning and combing the data (Creswell 2005:237) to gain a sense of the data. All ideas, hunches and notes about the data were documented, often as memos in the margins of the field notes and summary of lessons. I also noted aspects such as the time of day of the lesson and the type of lesson recorded, to determine whether these aspects in any way influenced the occurrence of misunderstandings.

I started the coding process with an initial viewing of the recordings in one sitting. Multiple viewings of the recordings followed until I was satisfied that saturation had been reached. I noted all the idiosyncrasies (language errors) in the utterances observed during instruction. These idiosyncrasies were examined carefully in order to group together those errors, which seemed to belong together or were the same type of error, e.g. use of tense, concord, word order, sentence structure, sentence length and pronunciation. I identified three main categories, namely errors in pronunciation, errors in grammatical use and errors of transfer (cf. section 4.4.1). This process helped me to identify whether any misunderstandings had emerged. All the marked utterances were coded and studied to determine whether any trends or themes could be identified. The emerging themes are discussed later in this chapter (cf. section 4.4).

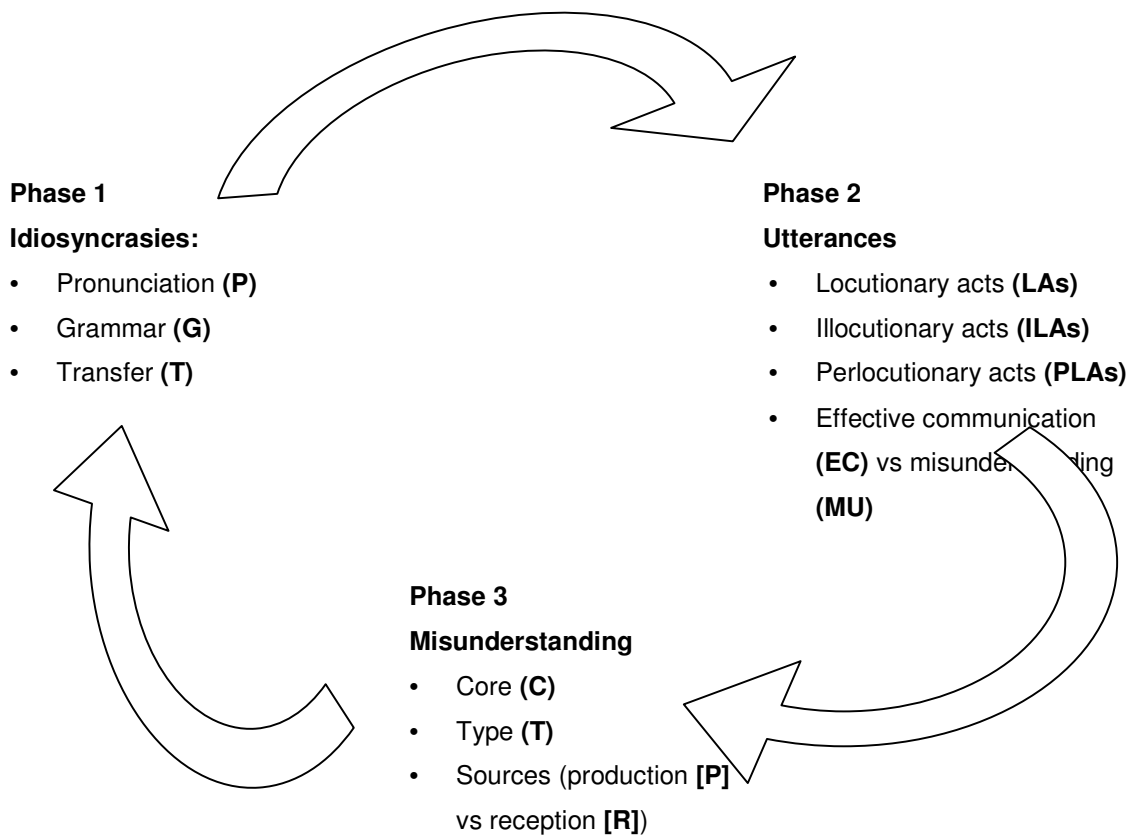
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The next phase in the analysis of this data set was to identify the speech act. I examined those utterances which were marked, either phonologically, grammatically, semantically or pragmatically. In this step, I based my examination of the utterances on the principles of SAT (cf. section 2.4 and section 3.5.5), where a match between speaker intent (**SI**) and hearer interpretation (**HI**) is required for successful communication. To determine speaker intent and hearer interpretation, I identified the type of speech act, i.e. whether it was a locutionary act (**LAs**), an illocutionary act (**ILAs**) or a perlocutionary act (**PLAs**).

The last phase in the analysis of the observations was to determine whether effective communication (**EC**) had taken place and/or whether there was a misunderstanding (**MU**). I coded the misunderstandings into categories, using the classifications of misunderstanding developed by Dascal (1999) and Hinnenkamp (1999) as the basis for my coding (cf. section 2.6). The examination of the misunderstandings was focused on the core of the misunderstanding (Hinnenkamp 1999) (**C**), the reasons for (sources of) misunderstandings (production [**P**] vs reception [**R**]) (Dascal 1999) and the types of misunderstandings (**T**) (Hinnenkamp 1999).

All the identified misunderstandings were coded in terms of the above-mentioned categories and in each case the core of the misunderstanding was identified and used for analysis. My focus was not necessarily on the structure of the misunderstanding, as dealt with in the literature (Dascal 1999; Hinnenkamp 1999; Weigand 1999; Weizman 1999), but on the reasons for, the type of, the occurrence of and the consequences of these misunderstandings. This information is discussed later in this chapter (cf. section 4.5). Figure 4.1 suggests the process followed in the coding of the observations (recorded lessons).

**Figure 4.1: Coding of observations**



#### 4.2.2 International English Language Testing Score (IELTS)

After the analysis of the recordings had been completed, I used the field notes I had made during the observation periods containing my impressions of the oral proficiency of each participant, as well as the recordings of each lesson, to do an initial assessment of the oral proficiency of each participant. I then compared my assessment against the IELTS band descriptors (cf. section 3.5.4.2; table 3.4 and addendum F) to see whether my assessment of the oral proficiency of the participants was accurate. The language usage of each participant was evaluated against the band descriptors and rated on a particular level. For purposes of credibility I had my assessment of the participants' oral proficiency peer-rated by a colleague with experience in language teaching to ensure correlation. The rating for each participant's oral proficiency was indicated on the template summary of each lesson and is explained in section 4.3.2.

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### 4.2.3 Focus group interviews

The focus group interviews were conducted after the observation data collection periods. The transcriptions of all the focus group interviews (seven) were grouped together for ease of interpretation and richness of description. I used the transcriptions to compare the answers to each of the questions for each of the focus group interviews with each other to get a sense of the general perceptions and beliefs of the participants regarding the occurrence of misunderstandings. I then coded the data by segmenting and labelling the text in order to determine categories. Some categories became evident soon in the process and are discussed in section 4.5. I captured this information in a table (cf. table 4.7) in order to determine whether any trends or themes were evident. This information is discussed in section 4.4 of this chapter.

### 4.2.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to the same 26 participants who presented lessons for observation, but only 25 were returned (cf. section 3.5.4.4) and analysed. The questionnaire determined how aware the participants were of the occurrence of misunderstandings in their instructional settings and whether they actively sought to address or repair these misunderstandings. This information is described in section 4.5. The first seven questions covered biographical information such as participants' home language and gender, the type of school at which the participants had been placed, the grade taught and the time of day of the lesson. Questionnaire data from the three collection periods were also collapsed for ease of interpretation. The statistical data relating to the participants' responses to each question were captured in a graph (cf. figure 4.3) and scrutinised to determine whether the occurrence of misunderstandings was influenced by these responses or not. Any noteworthy segments, such as the time of day of the lesson or the type of lesson recorded, were coded for later interpretation. The responses to each of the remaining questions (questions 8 to 16) were firstly compared to get a sense of the general perceptions and beliefs of the participants regarding their awareness of misunderstandings. The second step was to interpret the data and to code those segments which seemed noteworthy. The third step was to determine whether the findings from the

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first two data sets were corroborated or disputed by the data from the questionnaire. It was evident that the same recurring themes as in the observations and the focus groups were emerging. It seemed that the emerging themes from the questionnaire corresponded closely to those which had emerged from the focus group interviews. This information is presented in section 4.4 of this chapter. In the analysis of each data set I determined to what extent the research questions could be answered.

### **4.3 Data analysis – presentation**

The data are presented in the order in which the collection took place. The usable data obtained from the observations (recorded lessons) relating to the student teachers, and the application of the IELTS band descriptors to rate participants' oral proficiency, were interpreted together as a single unit of analysis, although they are indicated as separate data sets in the thesis writing.

#### **4.3.1 Presentation of data from observations**

Each of the 26 recorded lessons was summarised on a template containing headings that indicated the subject taught, the topic for the lesson, the grade taught and the time of day the lesson was taught. On the template a division was made based on identified items that had emerged from my first combings of the data. These items indicated the subject/topic of the lesson; the grade taught; the time of day of the lesson; and the oral proficiency level of the student teacher as rated against the IELTS rubric. Space was provided for a brief overview of the lesson where a description of the content, progression and outcome of the lesson was given. Space was also provided for relevant initiatives of the student teacher (e.g. actions, initiatives, examples, explanations or questions, tasks set); and the reactions (verbally and non-verbally) of the learners to the student teachers' initiatives. A further space was provided for all identified errors during the lesson, based on the categories identified earlier (cf. section 4.3.1) and for the possible reasons for the misunderstandings identified. These items were updated and added to after each viewing of the recording of the lesson until I was satisfied that all aspects had been included. Table 4.2 indicates the template used for summarising the recorded lessons.

**Table 4.2: Template for summaries of recorded lessons**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Grade:</b>	<b>Time of day:</b>
<b>Topic:</b>		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b>		<b>IELTS band:</b>
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b>		

The summary of each lesson observed is provided below. In each case my response to the lesson observed is provided after the lesson summary. It is prudent to note here that my comments in the "researcher response" section focused as much on content (correctness) and preparation as on identifying misunderstandings. This is perhaps a result of my role as assessor of students' teaching practice, but proved useful when interpreting the findings.

**Lesson 1: Participant 01/09**

<b>Subject:</b> English literature	<b>Grade:</b> 10	<b>Time of day:</b> 09:30
<b>Topic:</b> <i>Maru</i> by B Head (prescribed novel)		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Poor	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 4 (Limited user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
This lesson was one of a series on the prescribed novel, <i>Maru</i> . The student teacher started the lesson with an explanation of xenophobia and moved on to a discussion, using question and answer techniques, on race-related issues. This was a good attempt at linking the work dealt with in the instructional setting to an authentic, real-life context that the learners would be able to relate to. The student teacher spoke about the three different races represented in the book and discussed the important issues in the chapter they were dealing with.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student teacher asked a series of questions regarding the content of the book and tried to elicit answers from the learners.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was much talking among the learners. The student teacher had difficulty hearing when someone spoke or asked a question.</li> <li>A few learners provided good answers to most of the questions.</li> <li>Many learners did not speak at all, nor did they participate in the lesson.</li> <li>Blank stares and frowns were observed.</li> </ul>		



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### **Errors/communicative dissonance:**

- Pronunciation and particularly enunciation problems were evident. The student teacher tended to mumble when he spoke.
- Over use of continuous tense.
- Accent influenced fluency.
- When asking the question: "What questions do we have?" the learners responded with blank stares, frowns, and some asked (together) "What?"
- The student teacher rephrased his question by asking "What questions do we ask here?" Some learners looked around at their friends for help; some looked down at their desks.
- The student teacher gave an answer and a learner realised what he wanted to know and attempted to answer the question. It was also only then that I realised that the student teacher in actual fact wanted to know what the important themes or issues were in this particular chapter, but had used the wrong word. This was misunderstood by the learners.
- The student teacher became frustrated because the learners were unresponsive. He then said, "You've read the book, people", upon which the learners replied, "Yes, Sir". This speech act was also clearly misunderstood by the learners.

### **Reason for misunderstanding:**

- In the first two misunderstandings the student teacher used the wrong word in his question: "What **questions** do we have?" He rephrased the question, but made the same mistake again, using the wrong word again. The correct word would have been "**issues**" or "**themes**".
- In the second misunderstanding, speaker intent and hearer interpretation did not match. The learners interpreted the speech act as an interrogative, asking whether they had read the book. To this they replied affirmatively. The speech act used by the student teacher was in actual fact a command to provide answers to his questions and a reprimand. This was misunderstood by the learners.
- It is possible that the constant talking among the learners contributed to the misunderstandings.

### **Researcher response:**

I thought that the introduction to this lesson was very good and relevant to the context of both the prescribed book and the reality of the learners, as the lesson took place directly after South Africa had gone through a period of xenophobic incidents widely reported in the media. When dealing with the novel, however, the student teacher struggled to elicit a

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response from the learners. They spoke among each other continuously and ignored the student teacher. It was quite a while before they settled down and some began to answer the questions posed. I believe that the student teacher's enunciation caused the unruliness in the behaviour of the learners, as they had difficulty hearing and interpreting what he tried to say. The learners' lack of content knowledge could also have been a reason for their unresponsiveness.

## Lesson 2: Participant 02/09

<b>Subject:</b> Mathematics	<b>Grade:</b> 7	<b>Time of day:</b> 07:30
<b>Topic:</b> Fractions		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>This lesson was on multiplication of fractions. The student teacher did not introduce the topic in any way; she just started immediately with the lesson. She asked a few questions to demonstrate fractions, "What is half of the whole?" and the class chanted "Half". She repeated this a few times while folding a piece of paper into halves then asked, "What is half of half?" As she spoke quite timidly and softly, learners had difficulty hearing her. She demonstrated a few examples on the chalk board, and then gave the learners some exercises to do in class.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher asked questions to elicit answers to the fractions she had taught them. She repeated this a few times.</li> <li>• She asked, "What is <b>of</b>?" I understood this question to mean "What does the word "of" represent in Mathematics?" The student teacher rephrased her question to "What does <b>of</b> mean?" which they then understood and were able to answer "Multiply".</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners were well behaved and attentive.</li> <li>• The learners were confused during her general questioning, but were left to catch up with her on their own. In response to her question "What is <b>of</b>?" the learners did not understand the question and were confused. They gave no response.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronunciation was atypical and some errors were observed, such as "of" pronounced as "<b>off</b>"; "fractions" pronounced as "frecctions".</li> <li>• The student teacher made a number of language errors, such as concord errors, e.g. "<b>There's</b> more ones"; "...the other, the other, the others".</li> <li>• Enunciation and accent influenced fluency. The student teacher mumbled often and used half-formed sentences.</li> </ul>		

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- She was quite timid and soft-spoken.

**Reason for misunderstanding:**

- The misunderstanding in this lesson was the result of an ill-formed utterance which the learners could not interpret. The student teacher rephrased her question and repaired the misunderstanding.
- Further misunderstandings were incidents of non-understanding, because the student teacher failed to explain concepts to the learners.
- Her timidity and use of half formed sentences, as well as the expectation that learners respond in a chorus, irrespective of understanding, could have left the misunderstandings undetected.

**Researcher response:**

In this lesson the learners tended to respond to questions by chanting the answer in a chorus without thinking what the correct answer should be. I have observed this before and it would seem as if it is possibly cultural behaviour expected by certain schools where learners are expected to respond in a chorus to a question by the teacher as a sign of respect. Clearly this caused non-understanding and dissonance. The learners' conditioning to answer in this way was what caused them to provide the wrong answer. However, the student teacher did not stop to explain when the learners' answers were incorrect; she merely gave the correct answer ("a quarter") and went on with the lesson. Because the student teacher mumbled when talking and did not enunciate properly, the learners were confused and did not understand the work. Mispronunciation of words as well as influence of accent was evident.

**Lesson 3: Participant 03/09**

**Subject:** English

**Grade:** 5

**Time of day:** 08:20

**Topic:** Listening comprehension: Road safety

**Student teacher's oral proficiency:** Extremely poor **IELTS Band:** 2 (Intermittent user)

**Description of lesson content:**

The student teacher started the lesson by reading a short story to the class about a girl who dreamed of playing tennis. She would practise in her garden every day. Previously, her mother had taught her how one should look right, then left, then right again before crossing the road. On this particular day, she ran after her tennis ball into the road without looking and was hit by an oncoming car.

**Teacher initiates:**

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- The student teacher asked questions on the story she had read. She asked leading questions so as to drill the correct procedure when crossing the road.
- Learner reactions:**
- Learners had to retell the story to the student teacher in the correct chronological order.
  - The learners were distressed when they realized that the girl in the story had been killed. I heard many distressed sounds, e.g. "Ooh!", "No!", and sharp intakes of breath.
- Errors/communicative dissonance:**
- The student teacher's inaccurate language use was intrusive.
  - Her pronunciation of words was poor, e.g. "towards" was pronounced "**toowaddz**"; "imagined" pronounced "**eemaginead**"; tennis "bat" pronounced as "**budd**".
  - Enunciation and accent influenced accuracy and fluency.
  - She made glaring grammatical errors such as tense and concord errors and
  - sentence structure and word order errors were also observed, e.g. "**Why Zola not look before cross the road?**"; "**What Zola mother say every day?**"

**Researcher response:**

I found the lesson too easy for grade 5 level. The learners were merely required to retell the story in the correct order in which the events took place. No new vocabulary or structures were taught. No comprehension exercises were done. Influence of accent was strong. The actual lesson lasted 18 minutes and the learners were kept busy doing homework or drawing for the rest of the period. I felt that the student teacher had not prepared adequately for the lesson. Three or four very basic contextual questions were asked for comprehension, but the student teacher's language usage was so poor and pronunciation so weak, I believe it defeated the exercise.

**Lesson 4: Participant 04/09**

<b>Subject:</b> Mathematics	<b>Grade:</b> 10	<b>Time of day:</b> 11:25
<b>Topic:</b> Range and domain		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Poor	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 4 (Limited user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher had prepared no introduction to the lesson. He merely started the lesson by doing a short and quick explanation on range and domain, and how to determine the value of x. This was followed by five exercises done by five different learners on the chalk board.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student teacher asked five learners to do the exercises on the chalk board, using their answers as a point of departure to explain the work to the other learners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Learner reactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many of the learners did not understand the work; I observed frowns, confused looks and talking. However, the learners did not ask the student teacher to explain.</li> </ul> <p><b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many pronunciation errors were observed, e.g. "problem" was pronounced "<b>pro-blem</b>" (as in "row" the boat); "X is equals to two" was pronounced as "<b>xsqualstotwo</b>"; "domain" was pronounced "<b>domine</b>".</li> <li>Accent and enunciation were problematic, perhaps due to the fact that he spoke very fast.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misunderstandings in this lesson may be contributed to the fact that the student teacher lacked the mathematical content knowledge to explain the topic adequately to the learners. This led to non-understanding and not misunderstanding. The student teacher's level of language use was inadequate, so much so that the learners had difficulty in following his explanations.</li> </ul>
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**Researcher response:**

The student teacher's inadequate language use was intrusive. Not only mispronunciation, but also influence of marred English accent was evident. He also failed to explain the topic being dealt with adequately. The student teacher, however, contributed the misunderstandings to the learners' inadequate language use. Directly after the lesson the student teacher said to me: "Language is the problem. The teachers teach in their vernacular, so when I come and teach they don't understand me". He explained that the learners in this school were used to hearing (and being taught through) their vernacular. When they then hear the student teacher's "proficient" (in his opinion) language use it was unfamiliar to the learners and they struggled to follow him.

**Lesson 5: Participant 05/09**

<b>Subject:</b> Mathematics	<b>Grade:</b> 10	<b>Time of day:</b> 12:50
<b>Topic:</b> Exponents		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher presented no introduction to the lesson, he immediately started working		

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through the mathematical homework exercises.

**Teacher initiates:**

- He demonstrated all the sums on the chalk board.

**Learner reactions:**

- Many learners made interjections while the student teacher was explaining the sums on the chalk board, e.g. "huh"; "what?"
- Many learners showed blank stares and frowns.
- Some learners made challenging statements and asked challenging questions, e.g. "We did it just now!"; "Sir, you're wrong!".

**Errors/communicative dissonance:**

- Numerous language errors were made by the student teacher. Sentence structure and word order errors were observed. Some examples are: "I want you to read **careful** number two." and "What is your teacher calling you when you don't have your homework?"
- Grammar errors, e.g. "Ok, now listen careful"; "Why you **doing** nothing?"; "...she **have** one there".
- Pronunciation errors were observed, e.g. "a to the **por** 19" (a to the power of 19).
- Enunciation and accent influenced accuracy.
- He tended to mumble and learners couldn't always hear him.

**Researcher response:**

The student teacher's content knowledge was inadequate; he made mistakes and the learners thus challenged him. The lesson consisted of an explanation of the homework given the previous day. The student teacher failed to explain his mathematical processes on the chalk board. The class was very noisy which made it difficult to hear the student teacher. I found the learners quite disrespectful, possibly because some of the learners understood the work better than the student teacher did.

**Lesson 6: Participant 06/09**

**Subject:** Mathematics

**Grade:** 8

**Time of day:** 09:55

**Topic:** Exponents

**Student teacher's oral proficiency:** Extremely poor **IELTS Band:** 2 (Intermittent user)

**Description of lesson content:**

The student teacher presented no introduction to the topic of the lesson. He had the learners write down verbatim, definitions and sentences about mathematics in general. He then went on to explain some aspects of exponents.

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<p><b>Teacher initiates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student teacher attempted to provide explanations of the sums they were to do in class.</li> </ul> <p><b>Learner reactions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some learners asked questions to better understand the work, e.g. "Explain again, please, Sir".</li> <li>Some learners showed frowns, blank stares and confusion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student teacher's pronunciation and enunciation were so poor that learners could hardly hear him. This caused confusion.</li> <li>He tended to mumble and spoke inaudibly, which compounded the learners' confusion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The misunderstanding here was content related, thus non-understanding.</li> <li>The inaudibility of the student teacher's speech may have contributed to the misunderstanding.</li> </ul>
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**Researcher response:**

The student teacher's own content knowledge was lacking. His inability to explain concepts well or provide clear instructions added to the confusion. I was not convinced that any learning had taken place. Apart from mispronouncing words, his marred accent together with poor enunciation contributed to misunderstanding. Where frowns, blank stares and confusion were observed or where questions were asked, it was content related. No explanations were provided.

**Lesson 7: Participant 07/09**

<b>Subject:</b> Technical Drawing	<b>Grade:</b> 12	<b>Time of day:</b> 12:45
<b>Topic:</b> Flanges and couplings		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher explained the homework exercises on flanges, couplings, keys and shafts. He then illustrated two flanges coupled together with drawings on the chalk board. He systematically explained each of the steps in the drawings.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student teacher asked leading questions to elicit responses.</li> </ul>		

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- He invited active participation in the drawings on the chalk board.
- Learner reactions:**
- Some learners showed confusion because of pronunciation errors.
- Errors/communicative dissonance:**
- The student teacher made numerous errors and his pronunciation was inaccurate, e.g. "component" pronounced "**compinint**", "board" pronounced "**bore**" or "**bod**", "web" was pronounced "**weeb**" and "rib" was pronounced "**reeb**".
  - Enunciation and accent influenced accuracy.
  - A question he asked, which elicited no response was: "You're thinking the same thinking I'm thinking?"

**Researcher response:**

The student teacher's command of the language was very poor. His accent influenced accuracy and caused confusion. Apart from these errors, this was a successful lesson in terms of content delivery, as it was clear that the student teacher understood the content himself.

**Lesson 8: Participant 08/09**

<b>Subject:</b> Life Orientation	<b>Grade:</b> 8	<b>Time of day:</b> 11:15
<b>Topic:</b> Drug abuse		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
This lesson was an informal class discussion, using questioning and answering, on the types of drugs available and the reasons why people use drugs. The student teacher started by asking the learners what they thought the reasons were for people abusing drugs. This developed into a lengthy discussion of the topic.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher asked questions to gauge learners' prior knowledge of the topic.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners tended to all speak together, interrupting each other as well as the student teacher. They seemed excited about the topic.</li> <li>• They found the topic funny and made jokes about it, perhaps due to teenage nervousness.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of errors were made in language use, grammar and pronunciation, such as "The father is drinking, the mother is drinking, <b>the other</b> is drinking the <b>buzz</b>" (booze).</li> </ul>		



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- Pronunciation observed was marred, such as "obvious" pronounced "oviaas"; "homework" pronounced "homewhack".
  - At one point while the student teacher was speaking, a learner had his hand up, waiting to ask a question. The student teacher said, "Yes, I will come for you" (meaning she would give him an opportunity to speak in a moment). The learner, very shocked, asked, "Why?!" (interpreting her statement as a threat).
- Reason for misunderstanding:**
- The misunderstanding was caused because speaker intent and hearer interpretation did not match. The learner interpreted the speech act as a threat to punish her. The speech act was in actual fact intended to be a promise to give the learner a chance to ask her question later. This was misunderstood by the learner.

**Researcher response:**

This class was noisy and disruptive, everybody tended to speak together. There were many interruptions from outside, learners from other classes walking in and out of the classroom and learners standing in the corridors, talking very loudly. The student teacher did nothing about this, she allowed these interruptions and distractions. I was interested to hear that no warnings on the effects of drug abuse, nor were any issues of morality or ethics discussed. The learners were not told that using drugs is dangerous or illegal.

**Lesson 09: Participant 09/09**

<b>Subject:</b> Life Orientation	<b>Grade:</b> 8	<b>Time of day:</b> 10:00
<b>Topic:</b> Religion and culture		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher started the lesson by asking the learners to which culture they belonged. She used the words culture, religion and race interchangeably, as if they meant the same. She went on with an explanation of the Zulu and Pedi cultures. No discussion on tolerance or acceptance of others was observed. The student teacher merely talked with them informally about their cultures/religions.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher asked questions to initiate discussions on different religions and cultures.</li> <li>• She asked almost all the learners, "Which culture are you?" [IF]</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some learners were confused; they were not sure whether the student teacher was</li> </ul>		

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asking about religion or something else. This was evident in their answers. Some replied, "I'm a Hindu" to the question which culture they were and others "I'm a Zulu".

- Some learners did not know and could not answer. In order to help these learners, the student teacher then asked them to which church they belonged. This confused the learners even more.
- Learners showed their confusion by frowning and turning to their friends for help.

**Errors/communicative dissonance:**

- Concord errors were observed, e.g. "The religious **parts is** different" and "the **change** that **have** happened"; "...years back ago".
- Pronunciation errors, e.g. "**peepol**" (people)
- The student teacher confused the words "culture" and "religion".
- Accent influenced accuracy of speech.

**Reason for misunderstanding:**

- The student teacher's language proficiency was very poor and she displayed her lack of subject knowledge by confusing key terminology.
- Any misunderstanding that occurred here was because the student teacher used the terms "religion" and "culture" interchangeably as synonyms.

**Researcher response:**

The confusion and misunderstanding could have been avoided had the student teacher prepared better for the lesson. The student teacher seemed very familiar with the students, causing problems in discipline of the learners. Some learners could not hear the student teacher.

By this time in the data collection period, the second half of the pilot study, most of the technical difficulties in the recording of the lessons had been eliminated and only external factors such as light from the windows, interruptions and noise, played a role in the quality of the recordings. The summaries of the remaining 17 lessons observed are provided below.

**Lesson 10: Participant 10/09**

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 4	<b>Time of day:</b> 09:45
<b>Topic:</b> Listening comprehension: Trees		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Average to poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 5 (Modest user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		

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The student teacher started the lesson by engaging the learners in a discussion on trees, their roots and their leaves. New vocabulary was discussed, e.g. "evergreen" and "deciduous trees". This was followed by a listening comprehension passage which the student teacher read to the class. After each page a few questions were asked to test learners' comprehension.

**Teacher initiates:**

- Questions were asked to ensure that the learners followed the story in the comprehension passage.
- Directives to establish and uphold discipline, e.g. "Read in your own books!"

**Learner reactions:**

- Learners responded to the questions and were actively involved in the lesson.
- Learners were well behaved.

**Errors/communicative dissonance:**

- Some concord errors were observed, e.g. "There's two kinds of trees ..."; "... it always stay green"; "What is the two different kinds of trees?"
- Word order and sentence structure errors were made, e.g. "I'm gonna hand you out a paper".

**Reason for misunderstanding:**

- The misunderstanding was a result of speaker intent and hearer interpretation not matching. Speaker intent was a warning/threat not to cheat, hearers interpreted it as a directive/command to read in their books.

**Researcher response:**

Although the student teacher's language proficiency was average (IELTS band 5), the lesson was effective and presented in an interesting way. The speech acts observed in this lesson were understood by the learners, despite containing idiosyncrasies.

**Lesson 11: Participant 11/09**

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 4	<b>Time of day:</b> 10:40
<b>Topic:</b> Reported speech		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very good		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 7 (Good user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher started the lesson with a game called telegram, where learners had to repeat a phrase that had been whispered to one learner by the student teacher, to each other. The last learner reported the phrase as he had heard it, which was entirely different from the original phrase. She pointed out that one had to listen carefully and ensure that one passes on		

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information correctly. She then asked the learners to explain the difference between "gossip" and "indirect speech". This was a creative way of introducing the topic of the lesson. The student teacher then explained reported speech and its rules, guiding the learners in practising a few sample sentences.

**Teacher initiates:**

- The student teacher used a 5-point checklist to test the learners' knowledge.

**Learner reactions:**

- Learners responded well and most did the work correctly.
- Learners were well behaved and quiet.

**Errors/communicative dissonance:**

- Only a few minor concord errors were observed, e.g. "a **checklist** of 5 points **are**...".

**Researcher response:**

The student teacher had a good command of the second language. She pronounced words correctly and used correct grammar in most instances. She encouraged learners to participate in the question and answer sessions and seemed knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Overall, this was a successful lesson.

**Lesson 12: Participant 12/09**

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 5	<b>Time of day:</b> 10:40
<b>Topic:</b> Tenses		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Average		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 5 (Modest user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher started the lesson by explaining the various tenses, their rules and time words. This he did poorly as he made numerous errors in content, confusing the learners. It was clear that he did not have the necessary content knowledge to explain the work to the learners.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher asked leading questions relating to tenses, their structure and time words.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was very little participation from the learners.</li> <li>• Their responses to the student teacher's questions were correct, but he did not have the knowledge to know that they were correct, as explained below.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Errors in language usage consisted mostly of pronunciation errors.</li> </ul>		

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- Apart from mispronouncing some words, numerous errors in content and the delivery of content were observed.
- His explanation of the tenses was incorrect and he applied the wrong structure to the wrong time word.
- When explaining an exercise to the learners on providing the correct form of the words in brackets, he asked what one called the words in brackets. A learner correctly answered, "The infinitive form", to which the student teacher replied: "No, the verb, the verb that we are going to change". This confused the learners. Frowns were observed.
- A sample sentence in the exercise, taken from a passage on the tigers in South China was, "Usually a tiger (to be) born." The words in brackets had to be changed to its correct form. A learner offered "is born", and the student teacher said, "So is, ... **is** is continuous, err ... but ... yes that is correct." The student teacher's confusion and unfinished sentences caused confusion among the learners.

**Reason for misunderstanding:**

- His faulty content delivery and instruction led to non-understanding.

**Researcher response:**

The student teacher's content knowledge was inadequate. He was not sufficiently prepared for this lesson. Although he speaks English fairly well, he made numerous errors in his explanation of the various tenses; he spelt words incorrectly on the chalk board and his pronunciation at times was not accurate. He applied the wrong structure to the wrong time word. He seemed confused at times and subsequently confused the learners. I had the impression that the learners understood the various tenses fairly well and observed that they were able to do the exercises. It was the student teacher who made mistakes. Once or twice he did not accept learners' correct answers.

**Lesson 13: Participant 13/09**

<b>Subject:</b> Creative writing	<b>Grade:</b> 7	<b>Time of day:</b> 11:30
<b>Topic:</b> Products in the future		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The purpose of this lesson was to provide sufficient information for the learners to submit a written assignment on what a product would look like in the future. The student teacher discussed what various products looked like in the past, what products are available today, what they look like, what kinds of products we could expect in future and what they would		

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possibly look like. Examples of, among others, cell phones, cars, kitchen appliances and school desks were shown and discussed. Some very creative and innovative ideas were presented.

**Teacher initiates:**

- The chalk board was divided into sections under the headings past, present and future.
- Stimulating pictures were displayed to elicit discussion by the learners.
- Leading questions were asked about products in the past, present and the future.

**Learner reactions:**

- The learners found this lesson very interesting and seemed enthusiastic.
- Learners were able to provide creative ideas for products of the future.

**Errors/communicative dissonance:**

- The student teacher made pronunciation errors typically made by Afrikaans speakers of English, e.g. "apparently" was pronounced "appearantly".
- Errors in word order and sentence structure, and concord and tense errors were observed, e.g. "Some of the cars **has** sensors";  
"The first cell phones **is** ...";  
"Our car **have** a TV"  
"What **is** movies **gonna** be like in the future?";  
"What does your phone **had**, that this phone didn't **had**?";  
"Let's look at **quickly** some of the others";  
"Plug it in and put it **around**";  
"**Sit** on your phones" (meaning **switch** on your phones);  
"**build-in**-GPS" (instead of built-in)  
"taller **then** you"  
"You think cars **look** the way they do **for the last 40 years**?"
- The student teacher spoke very fast, in a shrill voice.

**Researcher response:**

I found this to be an interesting topic that could have worked well, unfortunately the student teacher made so many errors that it detracted from the success of the lesson as many learners became disinterested. The student teacher's proficiency in English was very poor. The tempo at which she spoke caused many errors that could otherwise have been avoided. It seems as if paralinguistic and other communicative skills were lacking; her fast speech left no time for recognition of errors or correction. The learners sat passively while the student teacher did most of the talking.

## Lesson 14: Participant 14/09

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 4	<b>Time of day:</b> 07:30
<b>Topic:</b> Poetry		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher chose a poem about a child day dreaming in class about her dinosaur. She read the poem and asked questions about the content, then went on to explain certain poetic devices. She had a poster on the chalk board containing definitions of all the poetic devices to be discussed in this lesson.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher asked a number of questions, both on the content of the poem and on poetic devices.</li> <li>• When she received no response from a learner she very quickly moved on to the next learner.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I observed a number of blank stares and frowns.</li> <li>• In some instances there was no reaction from the learners.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher made numerous pronunciation errors, e.g. "long <b>knack</b>" instead of "long <b>neck</b>"; "comp<b>pear</b>isons" in stead of "comparisons"; "<b>alteration</b>" instead of "alliteration"; "Little Miss Muffin" instead of "Little Miss Muffet".</li> <li>• Some words she could not pronounce at all (onomatopoeia) and deliberately left them out of her explanations on poetic devices.</li> <li>• She made word order and structure errors, e.g. "When you have <b>so big</b> animal, you ..." instead of "such a big animal"</li> <li>• She failed to explain some of the devices adequately.</li> <li>• She gave some incorrect answers to her own questions, e.g. she asked the learners to choose a word among three which would describe the tone of the poem. The answer was "playful", but she told the class it was "<b>sneaky</b>". This confused them, because most had chosen "playful".</li> <li>• She confused the tone of the poem with the rhythm of the poem.</li> </ul>		
<b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher did not have a good command of English, her proficiency was very poor.</li> <li>• Her errors in pronunciation were caused by lack of knowledge of correct pronunciation</li> </ul>		

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- in the target language as well as mispronunciations and slips of the tongue.
- She did not understand all the poetic devices, therefore was not able to explain them adequately.
  - Her inappropriate selection of content and learning material added to the misunderstanding.

**Researcher response:**

Based on my past experience as a secondary school teacher and my knowledge of the prescribed syllabi for language teaching, I felt that this lesson was too difficult for grade 4 level. This was confirmed by the blank stares and lack of learner response. At the end of the lesson the learners could answer content questions on the poem, but could not answer the questions on poetic devices. The student teacher's poor proficiency in English, her limited knowledge of the subject and her inadequate explanation of the poem compounded the difficulties that the learners experienced. Inadequate preparation also contributed to misunderstandings.

**Lesson 15: Participant 15/09**

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 7	<b>Time of day:</b> 10:00
<b>Topic:</b> Relative clauses: My hero		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very good		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 7 (Good user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher started the lesson with a discussion on heroes. The learners actively participated by naming their personal heroes and the reasons why they regarded them as heroes. The student teacher went on to explain how and when relative and reflexive clauses are used. He discussed a few examples written on the chalk board, then gave the learners an exercise, using information from a number of passages on heroes, to do in their groups. He then asked for feedback from the groups and discussed the answers to the exercise.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher explained the term "hero" adequately.</li> <li>• He discussed the rules when combining sentences using relative clauses.</li> <li>• The student teacher asked leading questions about the work.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learners did not respond; they were hesitant and reluctant to volunteer answers.</li> <li>• Answers offered were mostly incorrect.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		



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- The student teacher made virtually no language errors. His pronunciation was good and he had no marked accent.
- He did, however, make errors in content delivery. He was uncertain about this aspect of grammar, therefore was unable to adequately explain it to the learners.
- He did not accept correct answers from the learners, perhaps because he did not recognize them as correct.
- He became frustrated with the learners because in his view they had provided incorrect answers, or answers which were different to his.

**Researcher response:**

Relative pronouns/clauses is a difficult topic for second language speakers. Unfortunately, it was also difficult for the student teacher and he failed to explain it adequately. Although his command of English was good and his manner towards the learners was conducive to learning, his lesson failed because he himself did not understand this section of grammar. When a learner asked him "Sir, when do we use 'whom'?" he could not answer. Another learner offered a correct explanation, after which he just carried on with the lesson. By the end of the lesson, the learners still did not know when to use "whom". Learners would combine sentences in an acceptable way, but because it was not the same as the student teacher's answer, he said that it was wrong. This only served to confuse the learners more. The poster containing information on relative/reflexive clauses on the chalk board was much too small; the learners could not read the information, so it served no purpose but to add to the dissonance. The lack of response from the learners was perhaps due to the student teacher's inability to explain the work, but his impatience also played a role.

**Lesson 16: Participant 16/10**

<b>Subject:</b> English literature	<b>Grade:</b> 5	<b>Time of day:</b> 11:15
<b>Topic:</b> Short story		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Good	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 6 (Competent user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
This lesson was one of a series on a selected short story. The student teacher started the lesson by reviewing what had been discussed in previous lessons. She then discussed the main character of the story in terms of his internal and external characteristics, classifying them as "inside" or "outside".		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		

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- The student teacher asked leading questions about the story and the main character.
- She also discussed the meaning of new vocabulary.
- She switched to the learners' vernacular (Afrikaans) when it seemed that they did not understand her, but did not reinforce the concepts in the second language (English).
- She often asked routinely "Am I right?", to which learners answered in a chorus, "Yes, Ma'am!".

**Learner reactions:**

- Only a few learners tried to answer her questions, the rest were quiet.

**Errors/communicative dissonance:**

- The student teacher was proficient in English, only a few errors were noted.
- She made a spelling error on the chalk board: "disappointed" was spelled **dissapointed**
- She asked the learners what colour people were when they were ill. They did not know and she answered "white" instead of "pale".
- She said, "All his brothers **is** not nice **with** him."
- In determining "inside" and "outside" characteristics, the word "sad" was asked as a question: "Sad?". The student teacher's intention was to ask the learners to state into which category "sad" falls, inside or out, but the learners misunderstood and thought they had to provide a definition for sad. When they realised what had happened many of them were quite unhappy, but the student teacher failed to address the issue. She carried on with the lesson.

**Reason for misunderstanding:**

- The misunderstanding was caused by the student teacher not explaining the content adequately and not framing her question as a complete sentence.
- Speaker intent and hearer interpretation did not match.
- The fact that learners were expected to reply in a chorus as a form of respect was intrusive and contributed to misunderstandings.

**Researcher response:**

When the student teacher asked the learners what the meaning of the word "characteristics" was, they could not answer her. She gave an explanation which was not adequate and then asked them "Am I right?" and they replied in a chorus "Yes, Ma'am". I often saw this during my observations, where learners reply in chorus, possibly because they have been taught it to be polite, but it does not necessarily show evidence of understanding. The student teacher tended to repeat herself and answered her own questions before the learners could respond. This could be a reason for their

unresponsiveness. She tended to ask the same learners questions and not involve the others in the class. The learners' proficiency in English was good.

### Lesson 17: Participant 17/10

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 5	<b>Time of day:</b> 10:30
<b>Topic:</b> Prepositions		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Good	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 6 (Competent user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher introduced the lesson by asking learners to perform certain acts, depicting a particular preposition, e.g. climb <b>onto</b> your chairs. They did this with enthusiasm but remained well behaved. She followed this with another activity, placing the correct preposition with its relevant picture on the chalk board.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher gave instructions containing prepositions.</li> <li>• She folded a piece of paper and in the process made use of a number of prepositions.</li> <li>• She gave the learners the same activity to do in groups, naming the correct prepositions, which worked well.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learners performed the instructions, practising the various prepositions.</li> <li>• Learners were actively involved in group work activity.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some concord errors were observed, e.g. "There <b>is</b> many prepositions."</li> <li>• The three categories into which prepositions fall were not explained well.</li> </ul>		
<b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker intent and hearer interpretation did not match ("What preposition is 'over'?").</li> <li>• Careless and hasty delivery contributed to the misunderstandings.</li> </ul>		

### Researcher response:

The student teacher's proficiency was good, however, careless errors were made, perhaps because she spoke fast. When dealing with the preposition **over**, she asked the learners "What preposition is over?" Her intention was to have the learners place the preposition into its correct category of time, location or movement. The learners did not understand what she was asking them, as she had not yet explained these categories to them. She rectified this immediately by explaining the three categories and the learners were then

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able to answer her original question correctly. A few expressions leading to misunderstanding were observed, e.g.

"I can't hear you" (request to speak louder);

"X, you're not looking" (request/directive to look at the teacher and the chalk board);

"I'm hearing your voice" (directive to be quiet and not speak while the teacher is speaking, or perhaps persuading them to be quiet).

### Lesson 18: Participant 18/10

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 6	<b>Time of day:</b> 10:15
<b>Topic:</b> Advertisements		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Poor	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 4 (Limited user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher explained the use of advertisements to the learners. She showed them a few examples from magazines and displayed well made, large posters on the chalk board. She then explained why certain advertisements were effective or interesting to her.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pictures and posters on a variety of advertisements were displayed.</li> <li>• The student teacher gave an explanation of the effectiveness of advertisements.</li> <li>• She did most of the talking.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners were quiet; they listened to the student teacher's explanations.</li> <li>• A few learners made some comments about advertisements</li> <li>• During the group work activity, only the group leaders were involved, the rest talked about personal things.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Errors in concord were observed, e.g. "The group leaders <b>is</b> going to ..."</li> <li>• Pronunciation errors were observed, e.g. "Barbie doll" was pronounced "Barbie <b>dawl</b>" (as in "fall").</li> <li>• The student teacher confused the terms "slogan" and "jingle" and failed to explain these to the learners.</li> </ul>		

### Researcher response:

The student teacher's proficiency was poor. She was also inadequately prepared for the lesson. Not much discussion or communication took place after the initial introduction. She did most of the talking which added to learners' lack of response. Approximately 15

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minutes was spent on a written activity where no talking was allowed. I was not sure what the purpose of this lesson was. If the focus had been on advertisements, then information on why and how advertisements are used should have been provided. If the focus had been on language use through advertisements, then information on persuasive and manipulative language should have been included. This lack of focus could explain the lack of learner participation. The group work activity failed because the student teacher did not provide rules or regulations. She did not discipline the learners, but left them to their own devices. Task management and instructional skills need development.

### Lesson 19: Participant 19/10

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 6	<b>Time of day:</b> 12:15
<b>Topic:</b> Prepositions		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Poor	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 4 (Limited user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher started with a good introductory activity, but then asked learners to provide definitions of prepositions, nouns, verbs and adverbs. Only a limited number of learners were able to give the answers (they are not required to know this in the second language, definitely not at this age). The student teacher proceeded to give a definition of prepositions and explained their use. She then asked the learners to do an activity where they practised prepositions.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She gave unclear instructions about the activity.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners did not understand her instructions about the activity.</li> <li>• They were unsure what to do.</li> <li>• Some frowning and talking started as a result.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronunciation errors were observed, e.g. origin was pronounced "oreegin".</li> <li>• Numerous concord errors were made by the student teacher: "Look at <b>this</b> pictures on the board"; "Five of the eight pictures <b>is</b> ..."; "I will hand out <b>this</b> worksheets"; "There <b>is</b> not as many words".</li> <li>• Accent influenced fluency.</li> </ul>		
<b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her explanation of prepositions was not clear and most of the learners did not understand, because her explanation relied on knowledge of the position of the noun and the preposition in the sentence, which was unfamiliar to the learners. As a result</li> </ul>		

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the misunderstanding here was non-understanding.

- The student teacher's proficiency was poor, which might explain why the learners couldn't understand her instructions. Most learners only realised what to do halfway through the activity. One learner eventually put up his hand and said: "Ma'am, I don't understand what to do". She immediately went to the learner and explained what he should do.

**Researcher response:**

Although the student teacher was very comfortable in front of the class, her language proficiency was poor. This example of instructional dissonance is an aspect worthy of note; the student teacher was not aware of the fact that her proficiency caused dissonance in the communication. The learning activity took approximately 15 minutes where virtually no communication took place.

**Lesson 20: Participant 20/10**

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 11	<b>Time of day:</b> 12:25
<b>Topic:</b> Homonyms, puns and ambiguity		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Average	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 5 (Modest user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher started the lesson by providing a number of humorous examples of homophones and homonyms. The learners enjoyed this. Some sample sentences were dealt with and explained.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher interacted well with learners, engaging them in the lesson.</li> <li>• She gave instructions for an activity to the whole class.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners were actively involved in the lesson.</li> <li>• Most learners were eager to provide answers to the student teacher's questions.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some mispronounced words were observed, e.g. "homophones", pronounced as "home-o-phones".</li> <li>• The student teacher attempted to explain the difference in pronunciation with words like "object" (noun) and "object" (verb), but failed to do so adequately as she herself did not know the reason for this shift in pronunciation.</li> </ul>		
<b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of content knowledge was displayed.</li> </ul>		

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- Her incorrect explanation left the learners with the wrong information, thus the misunderstanding was actually non-understanding.

**Researcher response:**

The student teacher was enthusiastic and enjoyed teaching the lesson, which could explain why the learners were so actively involved, even though she made many language errors. Although this was an entertaining lesson on homophones, a few idiosyncrasies were observed. Some areas in subject content had not been mastered. The activity may have worked better if it had been group work.

**Lesson 21: Participant 21/10**

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 7	<b>Time of day:</b> 08:30
<b>Topic:</b> Prepositions		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Good	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 6 (Competent user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher started with an introductory exercise to demonstrate prepositions. He then gave a few definitions from various sources of the word "preposition". A brief explanation on nouns and verbs followed to show their relationship, as prepositions are generally used in combination with nouns and verbs. The student teacher guided the learners in a few exercises, practising prepositions and covering three categories, namely time, location and movement. When he was satisfied that the learners understood the work, he gave them instructions for another activity, using the Think-Pair-Share strategy. He would knock on the chalk board indicating that the learners should think of two sentences using prepositions, he would knock again indicating that they should share their sentences with their partner, and when he knocked for the third time, he would ask learners to share their information with the class.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher guided the learners in a few exercises to practise prepositions.</li> <li>• He gave them a follow-up activity to reinforce what they had learnt.</li> <li>• Instructions for Think-Pair-Share were given.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners shared their sentences with the class.</li> <li>• Learners did not follow his instructions correctly for the Think-Pair-Share activity.</li> <li>• They counted the prepositions in a particular paragraph in their books to practise their knowledge.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He spoke well, although a few pronunciation errors were made, e.g. "words" was</li> </ul>		





**Researcher response:**

This student teacher was inadequately prepared and the lesson failed as a learning opportunity. The student teacher did not possess adequate content knowledge. Basic instructional principles had not been mastered. She seemed uninterested and bored and the learners reacted to this in kind.

**Lesson 23: Participant 23/10**

<b>Subject:</b> English	<b>Grade:</b> 6	<b>Time of day:</b> 09:30
<b>Topic:</b> Agreeing/disagreeing: Disabilities		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Poor	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 4 (Limited user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher started the lesson by asking the learners to explain the word "disabled". She then explained and discussed causes of disabilities. She continued with an activity on agreeing/disagreeing, which worked well. The lesson was concluded with a final discussion with the learners on people with disabilities and the fact that they are the same as any other person and deserve to be treated with respect.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good, engaging questions were asked. When learners provided answers, she repeatedly asked "What else?" until there were no more answers forthcoming.</li> <li>• An activity on agreeing/disagreeing was given.</li> <li>• Flash cards were placed on the chalk board, but were too small and not clear enough.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners participated in a class discussion on disabled people, sharing their experiences and thoughts.</li> <li>• Learners used the structure for agreeing/disagreeing.</li> <li>• They realised that they did not always agree with each other, and could practise how to do this.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language errors observed were mostly errors in pronunciation, e.g. "disabled" was pronounced "<b>dees</b>abled".</li> <li>• Some grammar/structure errors were observed, e.g. "How <b>did</b> you feel if you are blind?" instead of "How <b>would</b> you feel?"</li> </ul>		

**Researcher response:**

The student teacher's oral proficiency was poor. Her lesson, however, was well prepared. When she wanted to consolidate the main goals of her lesson, the learners' beliefs

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regarding disabled people interfered and they missed the point of her lesson. The goal of teaching values and attitudes, specifically tolerance and respect for disabled people, therefore, failed. The attitudes of the learners were evident here, for example some learners had the following to say:

"I'll help them if I'm paid."

"A person can witch you and you will become disabled."

"If I help them and touch them, I will get infected, I will also be crippled."

"They should go to Bethesda, it's for crazy people."

In this regard, the student teacher's message of tolerance, acceptance and respect for disabled people did not seem to change attitudes, as many learners retained their preconceived beliefs.

### Lesson 24: Participant 24/10

<b>Subject:</b> English Literature	<b>Grade:</b> 11	<b>Time of day:</b> 11:25
<b>Topic:</b> <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> (W. Shakespeare)		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very good	<b>IELTS Band:</b> 7 (Good user)	
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
The student teacher started the lesson with a competition quiz, which learners had to answer in groups. They enjoyed the exercise and proved their knowledge of the content by answering correctly. The student teacher then worked through a PowerPoint presentation, reinforcing key terms and issues from Act I, Scene iii.		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher reinforced key terms and facts through the quiz.</li> <li>• PowerPoint presentation to illustrate difficult concepts.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners actively participated in the quiz.</li> <li>• They provided answers and asked questions.</li> <li>• Three learners read to the class from the play.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor grammar errors were observed, e.g. "<b>this</b> questions as well ...").</li> <li>• Wrong definition for "cut-throat dog" was given. When the student teacher explained the term "cut-throat dog" in reference to the character Shylock, her definition for this term was "a dead dog" instead of, for example, "ruthless creature".</li> </ul>		
<b>Reason for misunderstanding:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorrect information was provided, thus non-understanding, not misunderstanding.</li> </ul>		

### Researcher response:

The student teacher was well prepared and enthusiastic. She was knowledgeable about the subject. Despite an incorrect explanation, her lesson was successful. She was proficient in the second language, barring a few minor errors.

### Lesson 25: Participant 25/10

<b>Subject:</b> English Literature	<b>Grade:</b> 10	<b>Time of day:</b> 09:50
<b>Topic:</b> Short story		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 4 (Limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher started the lesson by providing some introductory information, reviewing what had been covered in previous lessons. She then spoke about the structure of the story, comparing it to a picture frame. She read definitions of literary terms, e.g. "frame narrator" to the learners and provided information about the plot of the story and the characters.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She asked a learner to draw a picture on the white board and placed it within a frame, explaining how the frame supports the picture within, with the focus on the picture itself. She explained that the frame represents the first part of the story where the scene is set for what is to follow and the narrator is introduced to the reader. The picture then represents the main story.</li> <li>• She provided all the answers to her own questions on the story; she did not provide opportunities for learners to suggest answers or to contribute to a discussion.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened to the presentation and the explanations.</li> <li>• Learners' non-verbal language indicated that they were bored.</li> <li>• They talked among themselves while the student teacher was presenting the lesson.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher made a number of pronunciation errors: "narrator" was pronounced "nár-rator"; "telepathy" was pronounced "tele-páthy".</li> <li>• Concord errors were observed, e.g. "Someone <b>and</b> Apis <b>is</b>..."</li> <li>• Vocabulary errors were noted, e.g. "You won't <b>expect</b> (suspect) him of murder."</li> <li>• In a discussion on the word "telepathy", a learner asked the student teacher what "tele-telepathy" meant, but she could not answer, she did not know. Interestingly, the learner was able to pronounce both "telepathy" and "tele-telepathy" correctly.</li> </ul>		

### Researcher response:

The student teacher's English proficiency was poor. She did not engage the learners in any form of discussion as they were not included in any aspect of the lesson. The student teacher did not understand the methodological or pedagogical principles that constitute a good lesson. She presented a lecture instead of teaching the learners.

### Lesson 26: Participant 26/11

<b>Subject:</b> English Literature	<b>Grade:</b> 9	<b>Time of day:</b> 13:15
<b>Topic:</b> Poetry		
<b>Student teacher's oral proficiency:</b> Very poor		<b>IELTS Band:</b> 3 (Extremely limited user)
<b>Description of lesson content:</b>		
<p>The student teacher started the lesson by showing a cartoon video clip to introduce comparisons and metaphors. He then reviewed literary devices which had been discussed in a previous lesson by having learners complete a worksheet. The poem was introduced and discussed by means of a PowerPoint presentation. New words were explained, the structure of the poem was discussed and learners were asked questions to determine their understanding of the poem and the poet's message.</p>		
<b>Teacher initiates:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He asked learners to provide definitions for literary devices, such as assonance, alliteration, simile, etc.</li> <li>• He initiated a class discussion on the vocabulary in the poem.</li> <li>• He explained the poem line by line.</li> </ul>		
<b>Learner reactions:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened to the presentation and the explanations.</li> <li>• Learners offered answers to questions, based on their experience and feelings.</li> <li>• They participated actively in the presentation.</li> </ul>		
<b>Errors/communicative dissonance:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student teacher made a number of pronunciation errors: "comparisons" pronounced "cômpereesons".</li> <li>• Concord errors were observed, e.g. "this are all animals"; "there is easy ones"; "if somebody ask you"; "the word 'but' indicate ..."</li> <li>• He sometimes spoke in half sentences, leaving out the verb, or using only half of the verb form.</li> <li>• His enunciation and accent influenced accuracy and fluency. He tended to mumble when he was unsure of the correct form of the verb and consequently left out the verb completely.</li> </ul>		

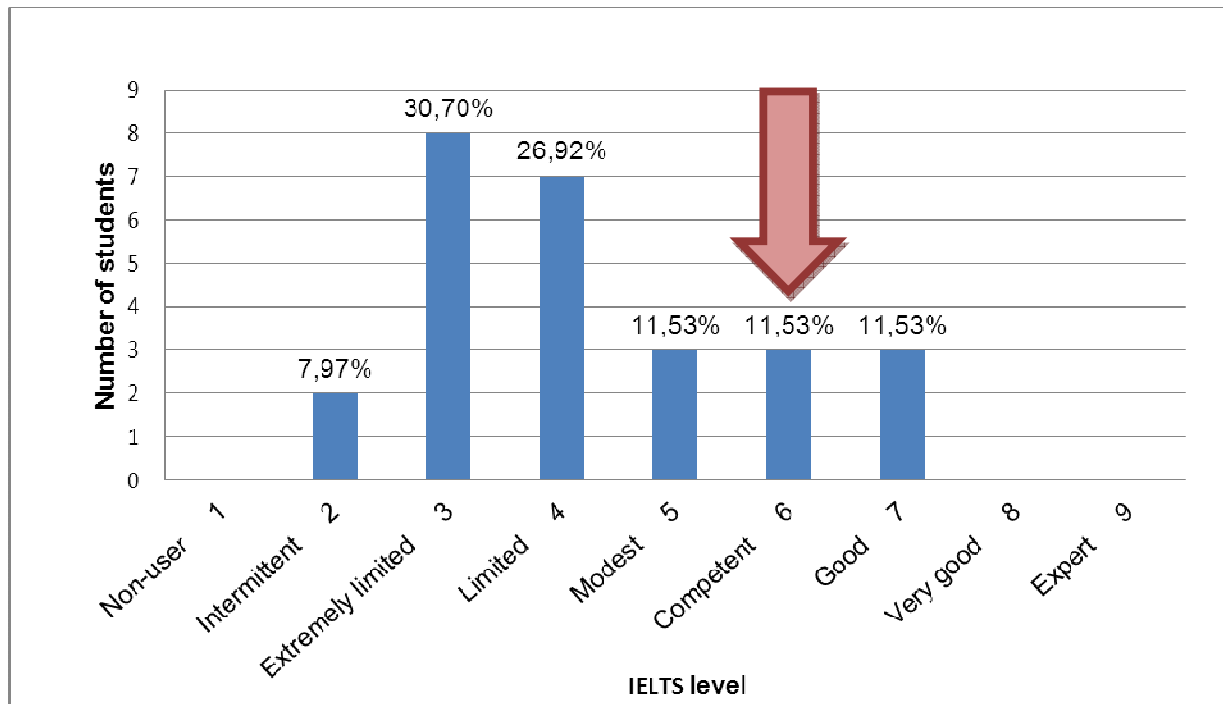
**Researcher response:**

The student teacher's proficiency in the second language was very poor. Learners had difficulty hearing what he said. Although the lesson was interesting, well planned and skilfully executed, language usage errors and poor enunciation detracted from its success. This concludes the summaries of each of the lessons observed. I attempted to provide detail of what I typically observed during the lessons to offer the reader a complete picture. The summaries were compiled only after I had viewed the video recordings repeatedly. In some instances I viewed the video recordings again for clarification. After multiple viewings, the video recordings were compared with my field notes to ensure that nothing was overlooked.

4.3.2 Presentation of data from student teachers' oral proficiency based on IELTS band descriptors

After the lesson observations had been summarised, the student teachers' oral proficiency was assessed and rated against the descriptors of the IELTS rubric. My assessment of the student teachers' oral proficiency indicated that the student teachers' proficiency was below average. Of the 26 student teachers, the language proficiency of eight lay on band 3 (31%) and seven on band 4 (27%), which is considered far below average. Ten (39%) student teachers' language proficiency lay below band 4, which is considered very poor. The language proficiency of only six students (23%), was considered good and lay on bands 6 (three or 12%) and band 7 (three or 12%). As band 6 is the internationally accepted average level for being able to study through the medium of English at universities in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand (Kaye 2009; Elder 1993), the implication is that only six of the 26 student teachers in this study qualify in this regard. Not one student teacher was rated at band 8 or 9. Figure 4.2 provides an indication of the student teachers' oral proficiency, with the accepted average at level 6 indicated by the arrow.

**Figure 4.2: Participants' oral proficiency (based on the IELTS descriptors)**



#### 4.3.3 Presentation of data from focus group interviews

During the focus group interviews the main question posed was whether participants perceived that learners had misunderstood them. This question was asked to initiate the interview and to help participants gather their thoughts, after which the interview was allowed to flow naturally. The key questions for the rest of the interview were based on determining the types and causes of misunderstandings. I also tried to determine whether participants actively sought to repair misunderstandings. All 26 participants answered affirmatively to the initial question, namely whether participants perceived that learners misunderstood them. They said that it was a common occurrence ("Often, at least two or three times in a lesson" [Participant 01/10]). The student teachers would know that misunderstandings had occurred because they would notice blank expressions, frowns, or learners would start playing with something, which indicated to them that the learners had lost interest in the lesson. The following statements are an indication of their responses to this question:

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"They have blank expressions, then you know they have lost you, and you can see it." (10/09)

"I can see it on their faces." (19/10)

"The brighter learner will frown and even challenge you. So you take your cue from them." (15/09)

"Learners all ask the same questions, over and over again, then I know they didn't understand." (14/09)

Sometimes learners would raise their hands to ask a question or in some cases shout out interjections such as "What?" or "Huh?", which indicated to the participants that the learners had not understood. All the participants said that they would consciously do something to repair the misunderstanding:

"I will change tack." (15/09)

"I will ask a strong learner to explain it, then ask a weak learner to repeat what he said." (15/09)

"I walk around a lot and pick up where there are problems, then I explain again." (12/09)

Many of the participants acknowledged that they would ask directly, "Do you understand?", and if necessary, they would then explain again or rephrase. Some participants mentioned that their own teaching strategies and assessment techniques were underdeveloped and might be the cause of misunderstanding. As with their inability to give clear instructions, I believe that these are the most significant reasons for misunderstandings occurring. One participant (10/09) mentioned that her planning and preparation were not always adequate, which made it difficult when explaining something to the learners. This also resulted in misunderstanding.

My observations of the lessons indicated that although the participants' language usage was below standard, this was not always the cause of misunderstanding. What did strike me, however, was the fact that in the focus group interviews, contrary to their acknowledgement that their methodological skills were poor, none of the participants

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perceived their own language usage as problematic. They responded to the question whether they perceived their own oral proficiency to be the cause of misunderstandings as follows:

"No, I don't think so." (17/09)

"Not at all." (15/09)

"I think my language is quite good, I take academic English." (12/09)

Participants did not believe that their own lack of proficiency in the second language caused misunderstandings. When asked what they perceived to be the reasons for misunderstandings, the participants blamed learners' inattention or learners' lack of proficiency in the target language. Another reason for misunderstandings mentioned by the participants was learners' failure to understand their instructions. When I probed deeper they said that learners misunderstood their instructions and that they had to repeat instructions a few times, sometimes three to four times:

"Instructions cause problems, they don't always understand instructions immediately."(18/10)

"No, only with tests and comprehension tests. They don't understand the questions. They'll ask 'What is question 3?'. "(12/09)

"Now when I give instructions, I code switch to Afrikaans to make sure they understand."(12/09)

"Yes, I will repeat the question, or say it differently." (17/10)

"My instructions aren't always clear." (14/09)

#### 4.3.4 Presentation of data from questionnaire

The first seven questions covered biographical information of the student teachers and the sites (cf. section 3.5.1; figure 3.2). Based on the answers provided to questions 8 to 17, it seemed as though participants, in general, encounter misunderstandings on a daily basis. In response to question 8, which asked whether they encountered misunderstandings in their classrooms, 83% of participants stated that they did. In response to question 9, which



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asked whether they tried to determine the source of the misunderstanding, all participants (100%), from 25 returned questionnaires, stated that they would try to determine the source of the misunderstanding. When participants were asked how they knew that misunderstandings had occurred, they stated that misunderstandings were evidenced in learners' non-verbal behaviour, such as blank stares and frowns (100%) (question 10), and shrugs (88%) (question 11), or when learners asked questions (83%) (question 12).

Question 13 sought to determine the extent to which student teachers believed the learners' lack of vocabulary contributed to misunderstandings. In response to the question, 98% responded that it did play a role. This confirmed what participants had claimed in the focus group interviews. They mentioned that learners' vocabulary was problematic and that learners did not have enough opportunity to use the target language at home. I found this interesting as I had not observed this to be a problem during the observation of lessons. On the contrary, my observations showed that it was the student teachers' language usage that was below standard and not that of the learners.

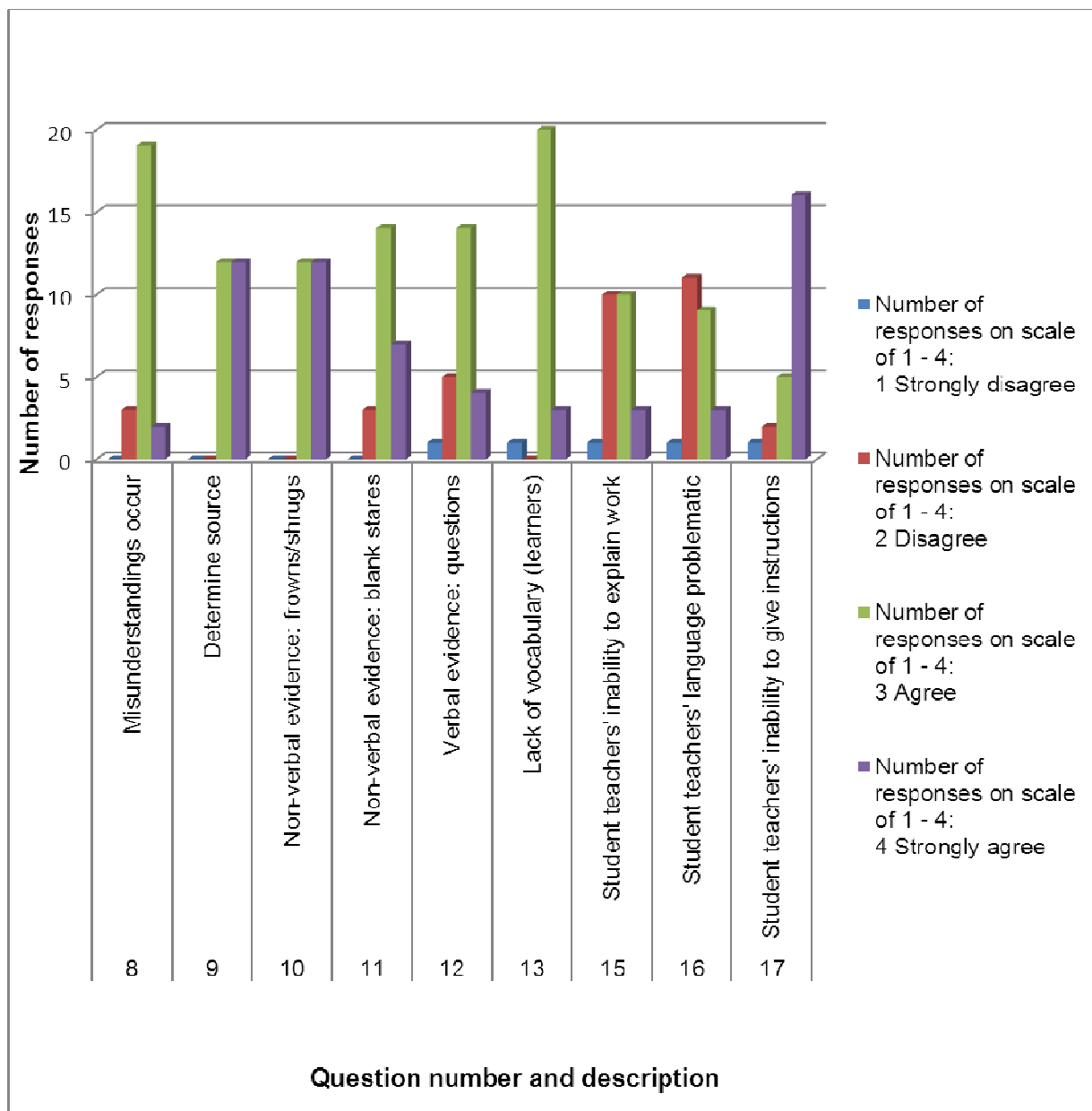
Question 14 asked whether or not the participants perceived differences in cultural norms or socio-linguistic competence, to play a role in learners' misunderstanding. Seven participants (29%) agreed, seven (29%) disagreed and 12 (48%) were uncertain. My assumption was that cultural differences between student teacher and learners could trigger misunderstandings, but the participants were not as aware of this aspect as I had assumed they would be. This was also confirmed in the focus group interviews, where participants stated that differences in cultures had not resulted in misunderstandings.

Questions 15 and 17 asked whether the student teachers' (in)ability to explain the work or to give instructions caused misunderstandings. Eighty percent of the participants agreed that it did. This was confirmed in the focus group interviews where 88% of participants felt that in many instances it was their own inability to give clear instructions or to explain content that caused misunderstanding. Although 96% of participants acknowledged that the teacher's own proficiency may play a role, they pointed out that it was the learners' lack of vocabulary and knowledge of idiomatic expressions in the target language that had caused many of the misunderstandings.

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Question 16 asked whether the student teachers' use of language was too advanced for the learners to comprehend. In this case, 56% of participants agreed, admitting that it might play a role in misunderstandings and 44% disagreed, saying that their language use was not too difficult and did not cause misunderstandings. Figure 4.3 indicates the responses for each question (questions 8 to 17, excluding questions 1–7 [as they covered biographical details only]) and question 14 [as it required a yes/no response].

**Figure 4.3: Data gleaned from the questionnaire**



In terms of oral proficiency, 44% of participants did not acknowledge that their own oral proficiency was inadequate. However, 98% of participants stated that the oral proficiency of the learners was poor and cited this as the reason for misunderstandings. The participants were, however, willing to acknowledge that poor methodology, such as inability to explain and give instructions played a role.

## 4.4 Data analysis – emerging categories

### 4.4.1 Emerging categories from observations

After each of the 26 summaries had been completed, they were carefully scrutinized. What follows next is an explanation of the initial categories that emerged from the first combing of the data. The summaries of the recorded lessons provided an overview of all the salient points which relate to the research questions. I was able to identify segments of texts which were noteworthy and which helped me gain an understanding of the possible categories that were emerging. I divided these categories into two sections. On one level, an indication of the idiosyncrasies relating to oral proficiency could be extracted, namely:

Pronunciation errors (**P**), which include:

- enunciation
- influence of L1 accent

Grammatical errors (**G**), which include:

- concord
- use of tense
- sentence structure

Direct translation from L1 errors (**DT**), which include:

- word order
- vocabulary
- sentence length

These categories conform closely to those identified in a study by Roberts, Moss, Wass, Sarangi and Jones (2005:465) where patients with limited English and culturally different communication styles consult with general practitioners in English. Their study showed that 20% of the patients who were video recorded presented major misunderstandings. Another study conducted by Nel and Swanepoel (2010:53) provides a similar classification of errors. Their study was a document analysis of student teacher portfolios by means of error analysis. Error analysis is commonly held as a good starting point when studying learner language and second language acquisition (Ellis 2002). The two classifications by Roberts et al (2005) and Nel and Swanepoel (2010) are shown in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Classification of errors**

Researchers	Roberts, Moss, Wass, Sarangi and Jones (2005:465)	Nel and Swanepoel (2010:53)
Type of study	Video recordings: speech	Portfolio: written
Categories	Pronunciation and word stress	Phonological errors
	Intonation and speech delivery	Syntactic errors
	Grammar, vocabulary and lack of contextual information	Grammatical errors
	Style of presentation	Tense errors
		Transfer errors
		Punctuation errors

Although I endorse the classification made by Nel and Swanepoel (2010), I am of the opinion that some of their categories could be collapsed as they cover the same type of error, e.g. grammatical errors and tense errors. I, therefore, adapted the classification made by Nel and Swanepoel (2010) to include the categories that I had identified (see previous page) and to group together all items that are seemingly of similar type. This adaptation led to the following personalised classification which was subsequently used to code the idiosyncrasies in my study:

- phonological errors (**P**) (including pronunciation, enunciation and influence of L1 accent)
- grammatical errors (**G**) (including concord, tense and syntax)
- transfer from L1 errors (**T**) (including word order and vocabulary errors)

It would seem that the above categorization could cover the most important language factors that influence proficiency and effective communication. At this point in the analysis procedure I also applied the second tool, the IELTS band descriptor evaluation (cf. section 3.5.4.2; 4.3.2) in tandem with this step. My evaluation of the student teachers' oral proficiency correlated with the type of language error made and which was observed in the lessons.

It became clear from my combings of the data that, contrary to what was initially anticipated, poor oral proficiency and inadequate speech act realization were not the only reasons for the misunderstandings that were observed. Based on my analysis of the

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observations, the following codes also emerged as contributing factors to the occurrence of misunderstandings in this study:

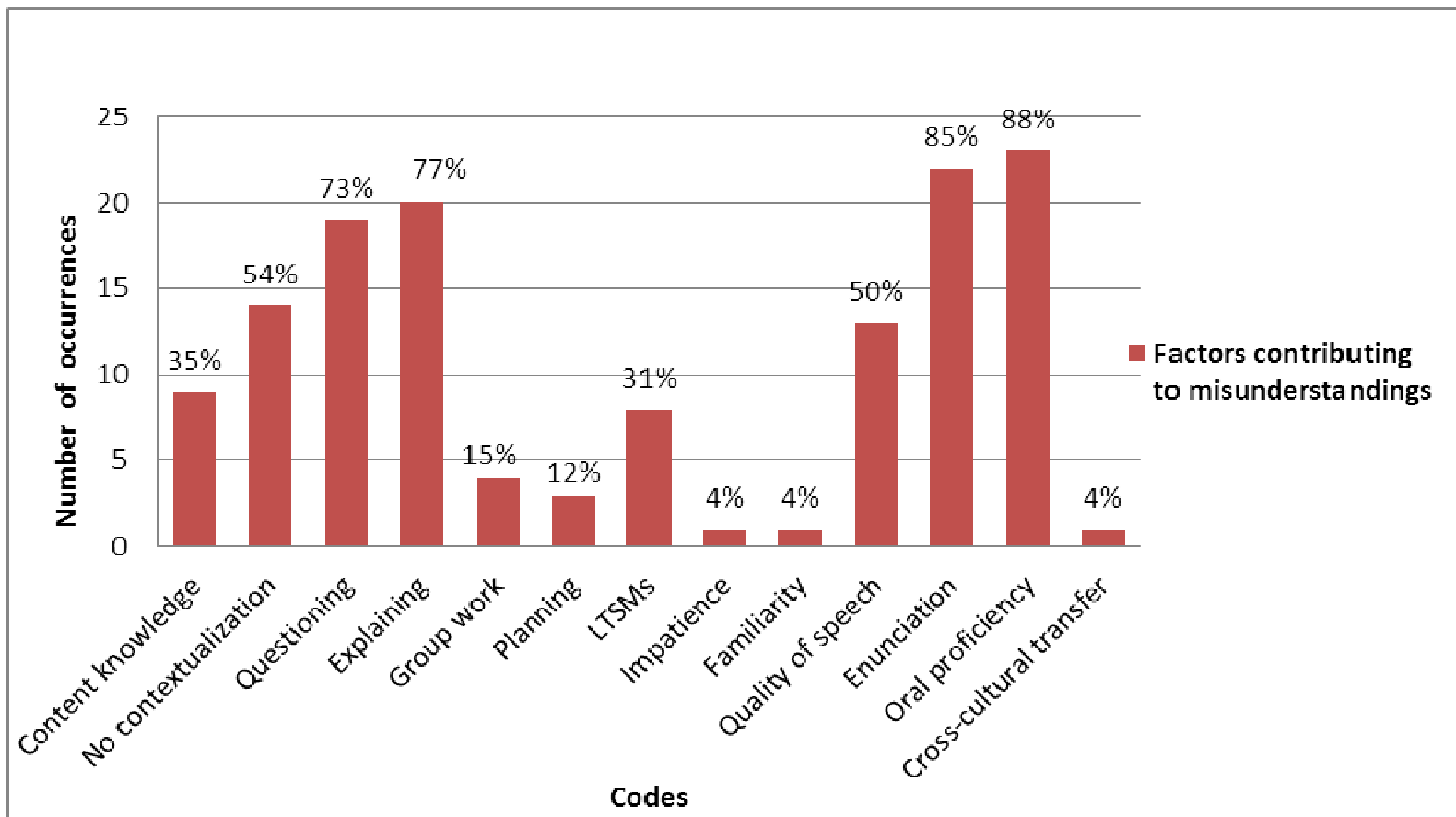
- content not mastered by student teacher
- no contextualizing of new content
- inadequate questioning techniques
- inadequate explaining of concepts and/or content
- inability to manage group work
- poor planning and lesson design
- inadequate quality and design of LTSMs<sup>10</sup>
- impatience with learners
- familiarity with learners
- timid speech and explanation
- quality of voice, e.g. shrill, loud
- speed of delivery
- quantity of teacher talk, verbosity
- problematic enunciation
- cross-cultural transfer problems, e.g. direct translations, poor vocabulary, context
- inadequate understanding of differences in cultural beliefs and traditions

Figure 4.4 on the next page offers a visual presentation of the codes emerging from the analysis of the recorded lessons and observations pertaining to the abovementioned aspects, related to oral proficiency and communication, methodological issues and teacher personality.

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<sup>10</sup> Learning and teaching support materials such as posters, pictures, flash cards, PowerPoint presentations

Figure 4.4: Presentation of codes obtained from recorded lessons



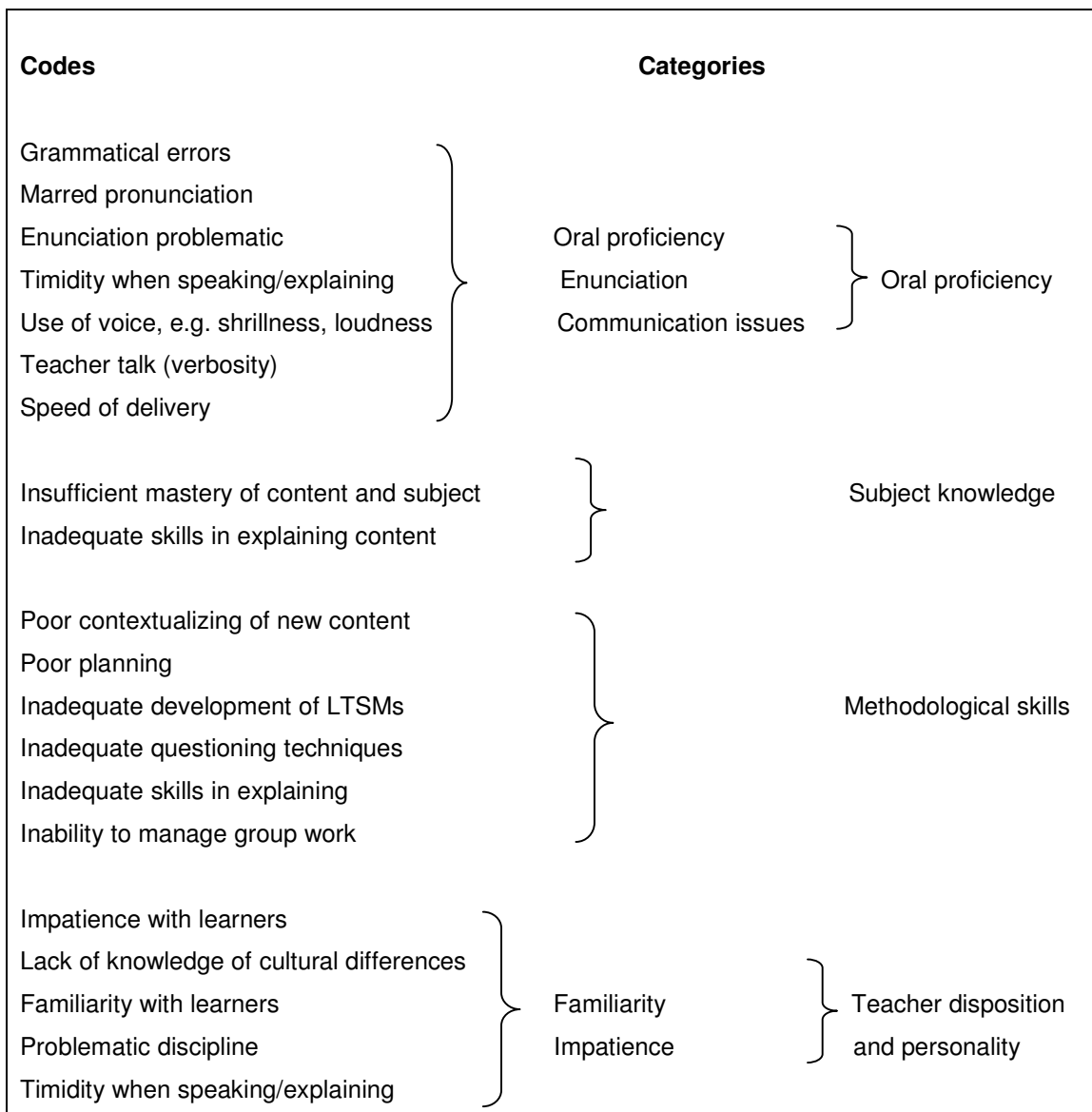
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The codes in table 4.2 were further collapsed into four main categories, namely:

- 1) communicative issues
- 2) methodological skills
- 3) subject knowledge
- 4) teacher disposition and personality

Figure 4.5 offers a visual presentation of the categories into which the codes were collapsed.

**Figure 4.5: Observation categories based on codes**





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Utterances made by the student teachers during lesson presentations contained notable idiosyncrasies. These idiosyncrasies contained the errors made as identified in section 4.3.1 and were grouped together and indicated on the template summary of the lessons. When employing SAT, the interest is usually with the illocutionary force of utterances, because this is mostly where evidence of speaker intent being incorrectly interpreted by the hearer is evident.

I, therefore, identified all of the illocutionary acts (**ILAs**), but added to this selection those locutionary acts (**LAs**) and perlocutionary acts (**PLAs**) where communication was thought to be problematic, or where misunderstandings (**MUs**) occurred. Although many more idiosyncratic utterances were evident,

I chose the following 26 from the data set for analysis, as they represent the most prominent idiosyncrasies. I included utterances which were idiosyncratic in one way or another, although they not necessarily caused misunderstandings. Table 4.4 on the next pages provides a list of the utterances identified as containing idiosyncrasies.

**Table 4.4: Idiosyncratic utterances produced by student teachers**

Identification	Utterance number	Function (speech act)	Hearer (learner) interpretation	Consequence	Repair
01/09	1. "What questions do we have?"	LA (IF) (wrong word)	Could not interpret	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Repaired by student teacher
01/09	2. "What questions do we ask here?"	LA (IF) (wrong word)	Could not interpret	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Repaired by student teacher
01/09	3. "You've read the book, people!"	ILA (command)	Interpreted incorrectly as an interrogative or question	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
02/09	4. "What is 'of'?" Rephrased as: "What does 'of' mean?"	LA (IF)  LA	1. Could not interpret  2. Interpreted correctly	<b>Misunderstanding</b>  Effective communication	Repaired by student teacher
03/09	5. "Why Zola did not look before cross the road?"	LA (IF)	Interpreted correctly	Effective communication	N/a
06/09	6. Incoherent mumbling when explaining sums.	LA (IF)	Could not interpret	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
08/09	7. "Yes, I will come for you."	ILA (promise)	Interpreted incorrectly by learner as a threat	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
09/09	8. "Which culture are you?"	LA (IF)	Confused terms "culture" and "religion"	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
10/09	9. "Keep your eyes on your own work."	ILA (command)	Interpreted incorrectly as command to read from their own books	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
10/09	10. "I'm going to do the second part."	ILA (warning)	Interpreted incorrectly as merely new information	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
12/09	11. Continuous tense incorrectly explained (content knowledge), mumbling, unfinished sentences.	LA	Interpreted correctly (but wrong information)	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair

Identification	Utterance number	Function (speech act)	Hearer (learner) interpretation	Consequence	Repair
12/09	12. "What do we call the word in brackets?"	LA	Interpreted correctly but wrong answer provided by student teacher	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
14/09	13. Poetic devices incorrectly explained.	LA	Interpreted correctly (but wrong information)	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
15/09	14. "Thank you."	ILA (agreeing)	Interpreted correctly as acknowledgement of correct answer	Effective communication	N/a
15/09	15. "There we go."	ILA (agreeing)	Interpreted correctly as acknowledgement of correct answer	Effective communication	N/a
15/09	16. "I think you should write this down."	ILA (request)	Interpreted correctly as request to write down information	Effective communication	N/a
16/10	17. "Sad?" (inside or outside - classification of character)	ILA (interrogative, question)	Interpreted incorrectly as directive, asking for definition of the word "sad"	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Repaired by student teacher
17/10	18. "What preposition is 'over'?"	LA (IF) (question)	Unable to interpret	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Repaired by student teacher
17/10	19. "I can't hear you."	ILA (request)	Interpreted correctly as request to speak louder	Effective communication	N/a
17/10	20. "X, you're not looking."	ILA (directive)	Interpreted correctly as directive to look at chalk board	Effective communication	N/a
17/10	21. "I'm hearing your voice."	ILA (directive)	Interpreted correctly as directive to be quiet	Effective communication	N/a
19/10	22. Unclear explanation of prepositions.	LA	Interpreted correctly but could not provide answers	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
19/10	23. Unclear/poor instructions for activity.	LA	Could not interpret	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Repaired by student teacher
20/10	24. Incorrect explanation for shift in pronunciation.	LA	Interpreted correctly (but wrong information)	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair
21/10	25. Instructions for "Think-Pair-Share".	ILA (directive)	Misinterpretation of instruction	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	Repaired by student teacher

Identification	Utterance number	Function (speech act)	Hearer (learner) interpretation	Consequence	Repair
24/10	26. Definition of "cut-throat dog".	LA (WF) but incorrect	Interpreted correctly (but incorrect information)	<b>Misunderstanding</b>	No repair

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The utterances were selected to represent the most prominent and typical idiosyncrasies made by the student teachers in this study. After scrutinizing the context in which these utterances were made, I identified possible reasons for the idiosyncrasies for each category. These reasons are provided in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Summary of idiosyncrasies and their reasons**

Type of idiosyncrasy	Reason errors are made
<b>Phonological errors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pronunciation</li> </ul>	The sound, stress, rhythm and intonation patterns of the L1 influence pronunciation in the L2; perpetuated in the instructional setting because student teachers are also L2 speakers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enunciation and accent</li> </ul>	L1 influence in accent; speed of delivery and mumbling influenced enunciation
<b>Grammatical errors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concord</li> </ul>	Inadequate understanding of singular and plural structures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenses</li> </ul>	Inadequate understanding of verb tenses; over use of continuous tense
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sentence structure</li> </ul>	These errors seem to be a result of transfer from L1 to L2 (although seemingly also belonging to the next category; "transfer errors", I placed these errors in this category as they correspond with grammatical errors)
<b>Transfer errors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Word order</li> </ul>	Interrogative pronouns ("which", "what") expressed incorrectly; word order transferred from L1 to L2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocabulary</li> </ul>	L1 influence to address lack of vocabulary in the target language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sentence length</li> </ul>	Sentence length is usually longer than native speaker's sentence length

The most prominent features identified in the student teachers' idiosyncratic utterances include the following:

- Non-use of the third person present tense -s ("He climb onto the chair")
- Use of uncountable nouns as countable ("equipments"; "our involvements")
- Finite form of verb **to be** completely omitted ("She very ill"; He in class today")
- Omission of obligatory definite and indefinite article
- Insertion of definite and indefinite article where they do not occur in native English
- Incorrect use of relative pronouns **who** and **which** (" the book who"; the boy which")

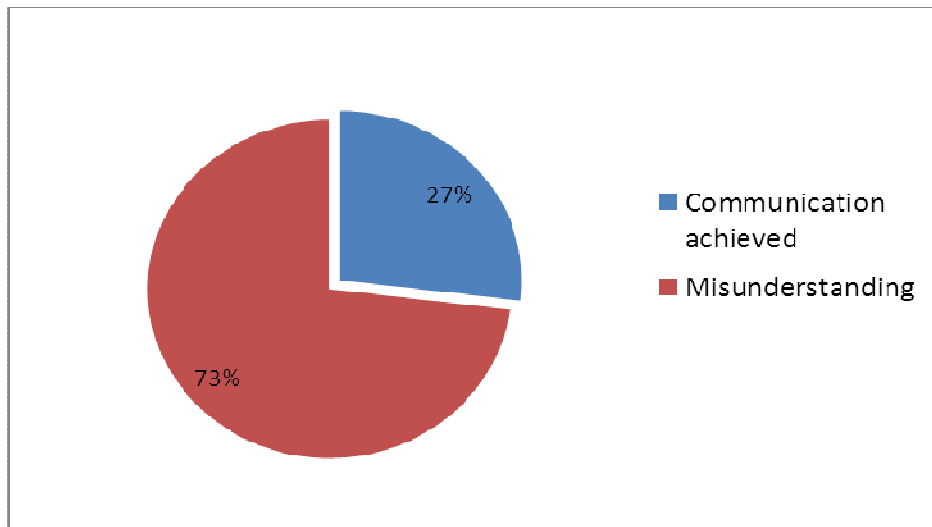
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- Use of question tag **is it?** or **isn't it** to form all question tags ("You should do homework regularly, isn't it?")
- Inserting redundant words such as prepositions ("You have to discuss about the simile")
- Using words to increase explicitness ("red colour" instead of "red"; "How long time?" instead of "How long")
- Use of that-clauses instead of infinitive constructions ("I want that we discuss the poem")
- Incorrect placement of stress, often with pronouns or at the end of sentence ("and HE has been in Durban for a week" "This is the correct WAY")
- Lack of/avoidance of reduced vowels where obligatory, in unstressed vowels, resulting in a full vowel rather than a schwa ("cQntinue" instead of "cintinue")

The above-mentioned features seem to correspond closely to Lowenberg's (2002) examples of English usage considered standard in its local context (Outer circle). However, even though the features mentioned above abounded in the utterances, it would seem as if these utterances did not necessarily lead to misunderstandings.

As stated earlier, effective communication is said to have been achieved if there is a match between speaker intent and hearer interpretation (cf. sections 2.3; 2.4). Of the 26 utterances noted as idiosyncratic (ill-formed [**IF**]) (cf. table 4.5), misunderstandings occurred in 19 utterances, or in 73%. Communication, although considered problematic, was nevertheless effective in the remaining seven utterances or in 27%, as indicated in figure 4.6.

**Figure 4.6: Misunderstandings due to idiosyncratic utterances**



In an effort to identify the occurrence, nature, frequency and consequence of misunderstandings, the 19 misunderstandings were analysed. I have already indicated possible reasons for the misunderstandings on the template summary of each lesson observed. The type of misunderstandings and the reasons for the misunderstandings will be presented together.

When scrutinising the 19 misunderstandings, I found that 12 of the 19 misunderstandings were the result of locutionary acts (**LAs**) of which six utterances were ill-formed (**IF**) (utterances 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 18). The learners in these instructional settings were unable to interpret speaker intent. In utterances 1 and 2 the misunderstanding occurred due to an inappropriate word choice and in utterances 4 and 18 misunderstanding was due to an error in the structure of the utterance. In utterance 6 the learners were unable to interpret the student teacher's incoherent and mumbled speech. In utterance 8 the student teacher confused the learners by using the words "culture" and "religion" incorrectly. The remaining six utterances, 11, 12, 13, 22, 23, and 24, were well-formed (**WF**) and interpreted correctly. The misunderstanding occurred because the student teacher provided incorrect information. The misunderstandings in utterances 1, 2, 4 and 18 were repaired by the student teachers within the next two turns. The misunderstanding in utterances 6 and 8 went unnoticed by the student teacher and the learners, but was clear to me as observer.

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Six more misunderstandings were the result of illocutionary acts (**ILA**). These are utterances 3, 7, 9, 10, 17 and 25. In these instances the speech acts employed were incorrectly interpreted and, therefore, misunderstood by the learners. In utterance 3 the speech act of commanding was used, which was incorrectly interpreted by the learners as an interrogative (question). In utterance 7 the speech act of promising was used, which was incorrectly interpreted by the learner as a threat. In utterance 9, the speech act of commanding was used as a warning for learners not to cheat, which learners incorrectly interpreted as a command to look at their own work. In utterance 10 the speech act of warning was used, which the learners incorrectly interpreted as a declarative (of new information). In utterance 17 the speech act of interrogative was incorrectly interpreted as a directive to provide a definition. Utterance 25 was not as a result of any error or ill-formed utterance, but of learners' incorrectly interpreting or mishearing the instructions from the student teacher. When the learners made a mistake in the activity set for them, the student teacher immediately repaired by saying: "No, you misunderstood. Let me explain again". In only one other instance was the misunderstanding repaired, namely in utterance 17. When the learners provided a definition for the word "sad", the student teacher realised that they had misunderstood and rephrased her question.

Where misunderstandings occurred, it was often when student teachers asked questions and learners did not understand for some reason. Usually, when questions are asked an answer is expected, so any misunderstanding would immediately be evident, either by long pauses before an answer was offered or by asking for clarification. Both were observed during the recorded lessons and often learners would just ask for the question to be repeated. It was clear to me, however, that in only a very few instances did the inadequate pronunciation or incorrect grammar usage of the student teachers cause the misunderstanding. Mostly, the cause was lexical. Student teachers would use an unusual word or an idiomatic expression which the learners did not understand, e.g. "What **questions** do we have here?" instead of "What **themes/issues** do we have?". Table 4.6, which differs from table 4.4 in that the **classification** of each misunderstanding is included, provides a summary of these misunderstandings as identified from the idiosyncratic utterances (cf. table 4.4).



**Table 4.6: Summary of misunderstandings identified from idiosyncratic utterances**

Participant number	Utterance number (cf. table 4.5)	MU	Function (Speech act)	Reason	Classification
01/09	1. "What questions do we have?"	MU 1	LA (IF)	Wrong choice of word	Oral proficiency
01/09	2. "What questions do we ask here?"	MU 2	LA (IF)	Wrong choice of word	Oral proficiency
01/09	3. "You've read the book, people!"	MU 3	ILA	Command interpreted as interrogative	Speech act realization
02/09	4. "What is 'of'?" Rephrased as: "What does 'of' mean?"	MU 4	LA (IF)	Incorrect sentence structure	Oral proficiency
06/09	6. Incoherent mumbling when explaining sums.	MU 5	LA (IF)	Incorrect information, content not mastered, mumbling	Methodological principles; communication
08/09	7. "Yes, I will come for you."	MU 6	ILA	Promising interpreted as threat	Speech act realization
09/09	8. "Which culture are you?"	MU 7	LA (IF)	Incorrect sentence structure	Oral proficiency
10/09	9. "Keep your eyes on your own work."	MU 8	ILA	Warning interpreted as command	Speech act realization
10/09	10. "I'm going to do the second part."	MU 9	ILA	Warning interpreted as merely new information	Speech act realization
12/09	11. Continuous tense incorrectly explained.	MU 10	LA	Incorrect information, content knowledge not mastered	Methodological principles
12/09	12. "What do we call the word in brackets?"	MU 11	LA	Incorrect information, content knowledge not mastered	Methodological principles
14/09	13. Poetic devices incorrectly explained.	MU 12	LA	Incorrect information, content knowledge not mastered	Methodological principles
16/10	17. "Sad?" (inside or outside	MU 13	ILA	Interrogative interpreted as	Speech act realization

Participant number	Utterance number (cf. table 4.5)	MU	Function (Speech act)	Reason	Classification
	- classification of character).			directive	
17/10	18. "What preposition is 'over'?"	MU 14	LA	Interrogative incorrectly interpreted	Speech act realization
19/10	22. No explanation of prepositions.	MU 15	LA	No explanation of information	Methodological principles
19/10	23. Unclear/poor instructions for activity.	MU 16	LA	Unclear instructions for activity	Methodological principles
20/10	24. Incorrect explanation for shift in pronunciation.	MU 17	LA	Incorrect information, content knowledge not mastered	Methodological principles
21/10	25. Instructions for "Think-Pair-Share".	MU 18	ILA	Mishearing/ misinterpreting instructions	Methodological principles
24/10	26. Definition of "cut-throat dog".	MU 19	LA (WF)	Incorrect information, content knowledge not mastered	Methodological principles

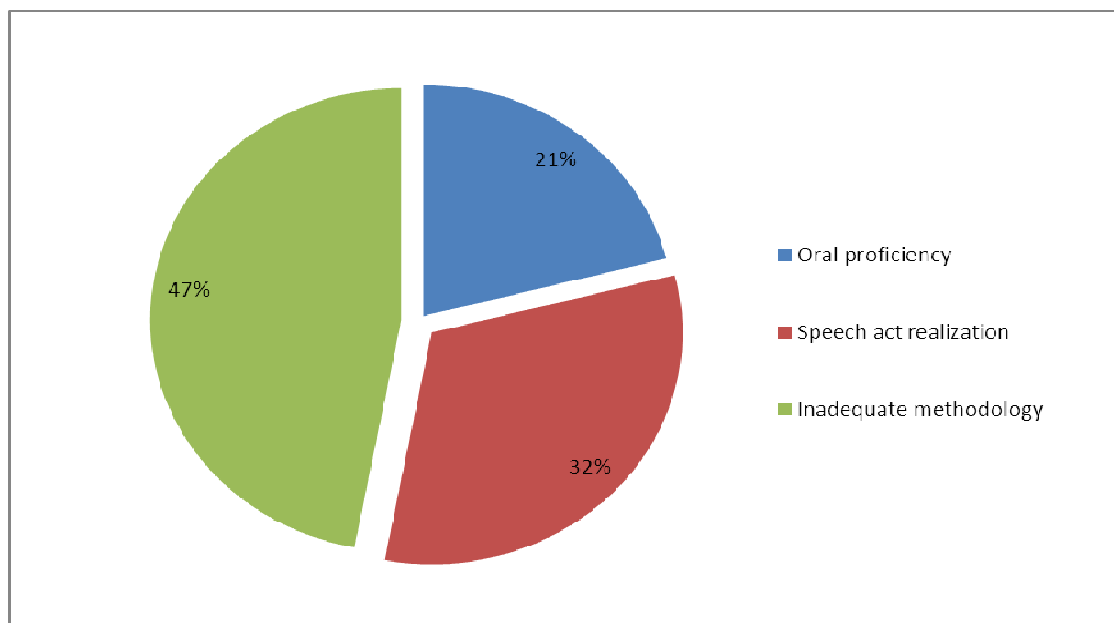
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4.4.2 Reasons for the identified misunderstandings

In this study 19 (73%) of the 26 idiosyncratic utterances selected resulted in misunderstandings. Of the 19 misunderstandings, 21% were a result of poor oral proficiency, 32% were a result of inadequate speech act realization patterns and 47% of misunderstandings were a result of inadequate methodological principles or skills.

This was contrary to what I had anticipated at the start of the study. My assumption was that poor oral proficiency and inadequate speech act realization patterns would be the cause of all misunderstanding. The fact that 47% of misunderstandings occurred as a result of inadequate methodological principles was not anticipated. In seven (37%) of the 19 instances of misunderstandings, the misunderstandings were recognised and repaired and the "status quo" (Hinnenkamp 1999) again achieved. This implies, however, that in 63% of the cases, the learners experienced ineffective communication and/or received unsatisfactory information, which is regarded as communicative dissonance which may have serious implications for teaching and learning in that setting. Figure 4.7 indicates the distribution of the reasons for the misunderstandings that were identified.

**Figure 4.7: Reasons for misunderstandings**



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4.4.3 Emerging categories from focus group interviews

The participants were all able to provide reasons for the misunderstandings that they had encountered and explained what strategies they would employ when addressing the misunderstandings. Table 4.7 indicates the possible reasons for misunderstandings as expressed by the participants.

**Table 4.7: Reasons for misunderstandings as expressed by participants**

Reason	Number of participants claiming this reason	Evidence	Strategies used by participants to address misunderstandings	Researcher response
Learners' lack of vocabulary in target language	26 (100%)	Non-verbal language: frowns, blank expressions, slumped shoulders	Code switch to vernacular; Ask directly: "Do you understand?"	Disagree: not observed
No opportunity for learners to speak target language	23 (89%)	Learners' lack of response to questions from the student teacher	None	Disagree: not observed
Student teacher's instructions not clear	14 (54%)	Learners raise their hands Learners ask questions Learners frown	Code switch to vernacular Explain again Rephrase instructions	Agree: observed in lessons of participants 06/09, 16/09, 19/10, 22/10 and 25/10
Student teacher's teaching strategies inadequate	6 (23%)	Learners shout out (interjections) Learners frown	Explain again Try a different approach	Agree: observed in lessons of participants 06/09, 16/09, 19/10, 22/10 and 25/10
Student teacher's subject knowledge lacking	20 (77%)	Learners start talking to friends Learners look bored	None	Agree: observed in lessons of participants 05/09, 06/09, 09/09, 12/09, 14/09, 15/09, 18/10, 20/10 and 22/10
Student teacher's assessment techniques inadequate	16 (62%)	Learners start playing with something	None	Agree: observed in lessons of participants 06/09, 16/09, 19/10, 22/10 and 25/10
Student teacher's content knowledge lacking (inadequately prepared)	7 (27%)	Learners challenge teacher with correct information	None	Agree: observed in lessons of participants 05/09, 06/09, 09/09, 12/09, 14/09, 15/09, 18/10, 20/10, 22/10

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From the data I compiled a list of codes representing the answers to each of the questions as related to the causes and occurrence of misunderstanding. Most (66%) of the causes of misunderstandings related to the student teachers' inadequacies as identified by the codes and 33% of the causes of misunderstandings related to the learners, but in each case the codes related to the learners, were directly in response to the inadequacies of the student teachers. For example, one of the codes is learner interjections. Although this relates to the learner and not the student teacher, it is directly in response to the student teachers' inadequate content knowledge or poor delivery that the interjection took place. The codes identified are listed below:

- learners' questions
- learners' interjections
- learners' inattention
- learners' lack of proficiency
- learners' failure to understand instructions
- student teachers' repeat explanation
- student teachers' rephrasing
- student teachers' teaching strategies poor
- student teachers' assessment techniques poor
- student teachers' content knowledge poor
- student teachers' inability to explain content
- student teachers' inability to give clear instructions
- student teachers' planning and preparation poor
- student teachers' strategies to repair
- student teachers code switch

I then scrutinized these codes to determine whether any categories were evident.

The following categories emerged:

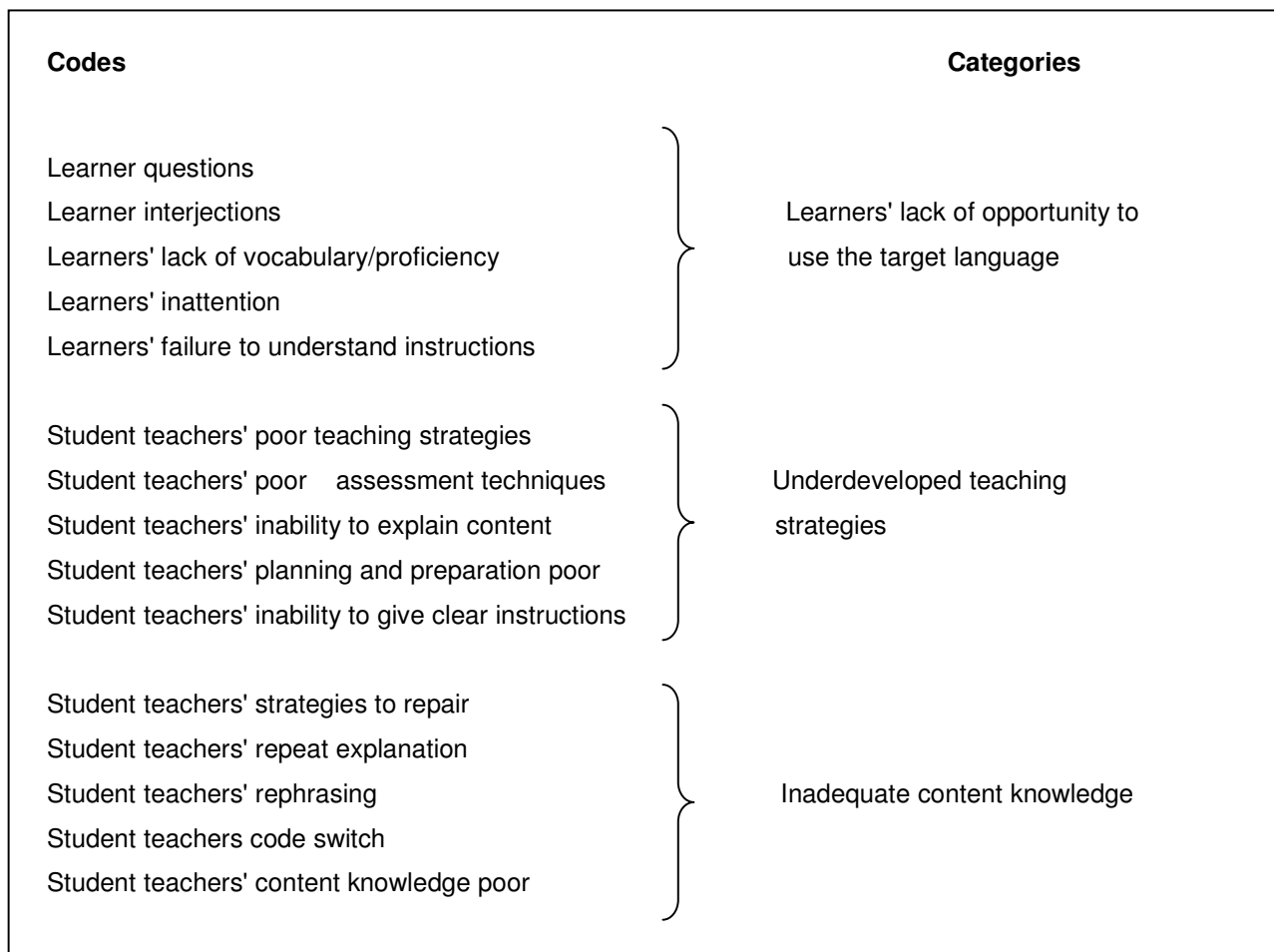
- student teachers' inadequate content knowledge
- student teachers' underdeveloped teaching strategies

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- learners' lack of opportunity to use the target language
- learners' lack of vocabulary in the target language

Figure 4.8 offers a visual presentation of the categories into which the codes were collapsed.

**Figure 4.8: Categories which emerged from the focus group interviews**



Although the participants were aware of misunderstandings, and could provide possible reasons for these misunderstandings, it was evident that they were not as aware that their own oral proficiency was inadequate, even though this was clear from the observations. The participants tended to blame the occurrence of misunderstandings on the learners' lacking oral proficiency or lack of vocabulary in the target language. Most were, however,

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willing to acknowledge that their own poor methodology played a role. They admitted that they did not always know how to explain concepts, or give clear instructions. They did not, however, offer any solutions to these problems. Although they were aware of the problem, they did nothing to address it. From my observations of the recorded lessons I came to the same conclusion, namely that the student teachers did not possess adequate methodological skills. It is thus safe to say that the information gathered from the focus group interviews corroborated the findings from the observations with regard to my impressions of participants' oral proficiency and methodological skills. However, the focus group interviews also revealed that contrary to what I had found, student teachers did not acknowledge that their own inadequate oral proficiency caused misunderstandings; some believed it was the learners' lack of language proficiency that caused the misunderstandings.

#### 4.4.4 Emerging categories from the questionnaire

Based on the data gleaned from the questionnaire, the following categories of the reason for misunderstandings emerged:

- inadequate content knowledge
- underdeveloped teaching strategies, especially the ability to provide clear instructions
- inability to explain content well

These categories conformed closely to those that had emerged from the focus group interviews (cf. section 4.4.3). The information gathered from the questionnaires thus corroborated the findings from the observations and focus group interviews. Table 4.8 on the next page offers a visual presentation of the data analysis of and findings gleaned from the four data sets.



**Table 4.8: Data analysis and findings**

Instrument	Analysis	Findings	Research question addressed
Observations (video recordings)  n = 26 lessons	Qualitative analysis to determine categories and themes	Idiosyncratic utterances and poor oral proficiency  Inadequate content knowledge  Underdeveloped teaching strategies Inadequate/inappropriate communication skills  Inability to address cultural differences and traditions	<b>How/when do misunderstandings occur?</b> Misunderstandings occur frequently, due to inadequate oral proficiency, inadequate realization of speech acts and inadequate methodological skills.  <b>What level of oral proficiency is required to ensure minimal understanding?</b> The level of oral proficiency required to ensure minimal understanding correlates with IELTS average level of band 6.
IELTS rubric  n = 26 students	Qualitative analysis to determine level of oral proficiency	Average to below average  Mostly levels 3–5 (small number on 2, small number on 6 & 7)	<b>What level of oral proficiency is required to ensure minimal understanding?</b> The level of oral proficiency required to ensure minimal understanding is band 6 on IELTS rubric.
Focus group interviews  n = 7 focus group interviews	Qualitative analysis to determine categories and themes	Inadequate content knowledge  Underdeveloped teaching strategies  Rephrase or repeat questions  Learners' lack of use of target language	<b>How/when do misunderstandings occur?</b> Misunderstandings occur frequently, due to inadequate content knowledge and methodological skills.  <b>What strategies do student teachers employ to compensate for distorted communication?</b> Student teachers rephrase, repeat and code switch to vernacular.
Questionnaire  n = 25 respondents	Quantitative analysis to determine categories and themes	Inadequate content knowledge  Underdeveloped teaching strategies/ inability to explain content	<b>How/when do misunderstandings occur?</b> Misunderstandings occur frequently, due to inadequate content knowledge and methodological skills.

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The data gleaned from the four data sets, namely the observations, IELTS assessment, the focus group interviews and the questionnaire, indicated some overlapping; in all data sets methodological skills and subject knowledge emerged as causes of misunderstanding. Tension was evident in student teachers' perceived oral proficiency and my assessment of their oral proficiency based on the IELTS rubric. Data from the questionnaire suggest that the participants believed learners' vocabulary to be the cause of misunderstanding. However, this was not corroborated by the observations. Only focus group interviews indicated that learners' opportunity to use L2 led to misunderstanding. The overlapping categories found in all four data sets are represented in figure 4.9.

**Figure 4.9: Categories from the four data sets**

<b>OBSERVATIONS AND IELTS</b>		Communication skills	<b>FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS</b>	
Oral proficiency	Teacher personality		Learners' opportunity to use L2	
	Non-verbal communication	Methodological skills	Learners' language use	
		Subject knowledge		
<b>QUESTIONNAIRE</b>				
Learners' vocabulary				

#### **4.5 Data analysis – discussion**

The data produced by the observations, IELTS rubric, focus group interviews and questionnaire provided evidence that misunderstandings were caused by the inadequate English oral proficiency of the student teachers. Moreover, content knowledge had not been adequately mastered and methodological aspects, such as inadequate instructional skills, acted as contributing factors to the occurrence of misunderstandings. In fact, 19 of the 26 utterances identified for analysis, caused misunderstandings, making up 73% of the time spent on teaching. The misunderstandings that were observed resulted in communication being distorted, and caused dissonance. Valuable time that should have been spent on teaching and learning was spent on repeating instructions and rephrasing statements, and in two instances on repairing misunderstandings. The utterances were misunderstood because the student teachers did not have the ability to convey messages adequately, or negotiate meaning within a given context – social or cultural (Hymes 1972b). As a result, learners were unable to interpret the student teachers' messages. In communication situations more than just a shared language is required, since the hearer must be able to interpret a speaker's intent. Failing to reach the intended meaning leads to misunderstandings, as is indicated in this study. In an instructional setting, the implications for practice and learning are serious.

Based on the utterances analysed, it would seem that misunderstandings occurred because of the surface structure of the utterances, the imperfection of words and the intersubjectivity of understanding. The student teachers' language use displayed some form of idiosyncrasy and their oral proficiency was inadequate, which was confirmed by the IELTS rating. The implication is that this aspect of communicative competence, namely grammatical competence, needs attention. This, however, was not the only cause of the misunderstandings.

On the one hand, 32% of the misunderstandings were caused by a mismatch between speaker intent and hearer interpretation, which points to a failure in the social aspect of communicative competence, of how and where to use utterances properly (cf. section 2.3).

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The utterances were misunderstood because the function of the utterance (or speaker intent) was misunderstood. When scrutinising discourse, attention should be paid to either the form or the function of an utterance. But the impression should not be created that paying attention to form implies meaning, particularly with a second language environment, such as the context of these utterances. Meaning is not possible with a formless utterance. In fact, stringing words together cannot be called an utterance unless it has some form recognisable to the users (cf. section 2.4). As was declared at the outset, the utterances used for analysis in this study contained structural flaws or idiosyncrasies (syntactically, semantically and pragmatically). The assumption would then be that these utterances should be incapable of creating meaning or understanding. The analysis showed, however, that despite these flaws, 27% of the utterances did in fact create meaning, to such an extent that they were interpreted correctly.

On the other hand, 47% of misunderstandings were caused by inadequate instructional skills or lack of knowledge in methodological principles. This number is considerably higher than those caused by a mismatch between speaker intent and hearer interpretation (32%). Furthermore, what seemed to be misunderstandings initially, were more likely to be what Weigand (1999:770) calls "non-understanding", i.e. not understanding or having difficulties in understanding, which is different from misunderstanding. Someone who is subject to non-understanding is aware of it, as opposed to someone who misunderstands, who is not always aware of having misunderstood. This study showed that 31% of the identified misunderstandings were in actual fact not misunderstandings (as the term is understood and applied in this study), but non-understanding. Usually this non-understanding was related to the student teacher's lack of content or subject knowledge and the poorly formulated instructions or questions, or inadequate or even incorrect explanations given to learners. Although this was something I had not expected, it represents a major reason for possible misunderstandings which may impact learning. It would seem, therefore, that a range of instructional skills had not been adequately mastered by the student teachers and aspects of the subject content had not been adequately developed, which increased instructional dissonance and cannot be overlooked.

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From the observations, focus group interviews and questionnaire, the categories that emerged were reviewed and regrouped to eliminate overlapping. These categories can be linked to the manifestation of misunderstanding and non-understanding in the instructional settings of the participants and relate to inadequate

- oral proficiency and frequent idiosyncratic utterances
- subject or content knowledge
- instructional skills and strategies (methodological skills)
- teacher disposition and personality

The abovementioned categories will each be explained in detail.

##### 4.5.1 Oral proficiency, idiosyncratic utterances and speech act realization

Based on my observations, it is evident that the utterances made by the student teachers in this study contain idiosyncrasies. The idiosyncrasies noted were divided into three broad categories (as adapted from Nel and Swanepoel [2010]), namely pronunciation, grammar and direct translation errors (cf. section 4.4.1), which provided an indication of the oral proficiency of the participants. The student teachers' oral proficiency was then measured against the IELTS band descriptors, which indicated that 58% of student teachers' oral proficiency lay on bands 3 and 4, which is considered far below the average band 6. In total, the oral proficiency of 77% of student teachers was considered poor to very poor, while only 23% lay on bands 6 and 7, and was considered good to very good. The deduction made is that the idiosyncratic language usage of the student teachers could point to the multiple competences inherent in communicative competence (cf. section 2.3), of which oral proficiency is one.

As explained in chapter 2 (cf. section 2.3), communicative competence entails four competencies, which are commonly referred to as grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, strategic competence and discourse competence, (Canale 1983). The student teachers in this study displayed grammatical flaws in their choices of words and sentences. They also used mainly code-switching to promote grammatical competence. Often the code-switching was to make up for their lack of vocabulary or lack

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of knowledge of the correct structure to be used. In only one instance did the code-switching assist in enhancing learners' knowledge of the L2. For example, Participant 17/10, when explaining prepositions, reverted to the learner's L1 to ensure understanding:

"Ja, in Afrikaans sê ons kom kyk na my prentjie, but in English it's look at..."

Participant 01/09, 10/09, 14/09 and 26/11 reverted to the vernacular to explain difficult literary concepts. However, since the participants' own grammatical competence was inadequate, they were unable to use carefully chosen words and well-formulated sentences.

Appropriate use of the language requires attention to socio-linguistic constructs such as the culture-specific context embedding the norms, values, beliefs and behaviour patterns of a culture. This competence was not observed with some participants of this study. In certain instances, the opportunity to explain socio-linguistic appropriateness arose, but the participants failed to follow up with an explanation. For example, in the grammar lesson of Participant 20/10, the appropriate use of idioms was drilled and not explained.

Strategic competence requires knowledge of communication strategies that one can use to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules, or for factors such as fatigue, inattention and distraction, which limit the application of such rules. From the observations it seemed as if the participants had not acquired this level of competence, since few attempts were made to determine whether the learners had actually understood, other than asking "Do you understand?" Even in instances where student teachers recognised a problem, they ignored it and went on with the lesson. Strategic competence is crucial in understanding communication because it is the way in which we "manipulate language in order to meet communicative goals" (Brown 1994:228). The participants in this study failed in this regard.

Discourse competence is the ability to deal with the extended use of language in context and is often implicit. This level of competence was not mastered as many (in fact 53%) of the misunderstandings observed were on this level.

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Poor communication skills which influenced learners' behaviour and contributed to misunderstandings were identified. This is different to communicative competence as applied in this study, but refers to personal communication skills that are inadequate or inappropriate in an instructional setting, as they contribute to communicative dissonance. Participants used clumsy expressions (Participant 17/10) or spoke carelessly or too fast, or spoke too much (Participant 18/10). These behaviours caused dissonance and misunderstanding or non-understanding. Three participants, (Participants 12/09, 16/10, 25/10), often repeated themselves, not because of any misunderstanding that had to be repaired, but as part of their communication skills. They also tended to answer their own questions, not giving enough opportunity for the learners to provide answers. Four participants (Participants 14/09, 18/10, 22/10, 25/10) did most of the talking, resulting in teacher talk dominating, with learner talk restricted to the minimum. Two participants (Participant 13/09, 19/10), spoke in a shrill voice which caused aural discomfort. Often coupled with very fast speech it contributed to misunderstandings. Three more participants (Participants 04/09, 13/09 and 17/10) also spoke too fast and caused misunderstandings. Two participants mumbled when they spoke (Participants 05/09, 06/09) and spoke inaudibly. This left the learners confused. I also observed discomfort in the learners' body language caused by participants becoming easily frustrated (Participant 01/09, 15/09) when the learners failed to provide a correct answer. The frustration was evident in the student teachers' communication with the learners. The learners were sensitive to this and tended to be unresponsive, which exacerbated the problem.

Interestingly, the participants did not perceive their own oral proficiency to be inadequate. They were convinced that their oral proficiency was adequate and claimed that the reason for misunderstanding occurring was the learners' inadequate proficiency. Tension, therefore, existed between my observations and the student teachers' perceptions regarding their own oral proficiency in English. This points to the existence of different conceptions of the "successful English second language speaker" (Coetzee-Van Rooy & Verhoef 2000). Educators might be informed about Cummins' theory of BICS and CALP, and as a result distinguish between different types of proficiency, while students do not. Students might only be aware of one type of English proficiency and might regard this as

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sufficient (Coetzee-Van Rooy & Verhoef 2000), explaining their high perceptions of their oral proficiency.

#### 4.5.2 Inadequate content knowledge

Lack of content knowledge was a variable that was evident in the observations. During the focus group interviews the student teachers mentioned that this aspect played a role in their teaching strategies, although they agreed that this was something that could be rectified with proper planning. I disagree because in my observations I came across instances where fundamental content had not been mastered and would not be easily rectified through planning alone. This knowledge should already have been internalised early in the participants' academic training and in my mind could only be rectified through a concerted intervention of some sort. The recent spate of mergers in Higher Education with former teacher training colleges and the problems related specifically to the depth and quality of content as well as the limited cognitive demand made on students could be causal in this regard. It is possible that current restructuring of undergraduate programmes, could be regarded as an intervention that may address this problem. However, this would require further investigation, as it is still too soon to evaluate the effects of the new programmes. The lack of content or subject knowledge was particularly evident in the lessons of Participants 05/09, 06/09, 09/09, 12/09, 14/09, 15/09, 18/10, 20/10 and 22/10. As the student teachers were not aware that they had made mistakes or imparted incorrect knowledge, the misunderstandings caused by inadequate subject or content knowledge were not repaired. This lack of content or subject knowledge caused some student teachers to, among others, choose a poem too difficult for the learners' level of understanding, choose to teach difficult poetic and literary devices inappropriate for learners at the particular level (grade 4 in this case), and explain difficult grammatical structures, such as relative clauses and tenses, incorrectly. McCroskey (1992) suggests three primary dimensions of credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and perceived caring. Competence involves teachers' knowledge or expertise of a particular subject. If teachers are perceived as competent, they are perceived to know what they are talking about. Competent teachers explain complex material well, have good classroom management



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skills, have the ability to answer learner questions, and communicate effectively (Teven & Hanson 2004). The student teachers in this study failed in this regard, as they did not display the requisite content knowledge to be perceived as credible, which contributed to instructional dissonance

#### 4.5.3 Inadequate instructional (methodological) skills

The inadequate instructional skills observed included, among others, aspects such as poor planning and preparation, the inability to formulate clear questions, to explain new concepts, to give instructions about activities, or to give feedback. While the participants were reluctant to admit that their oral proficiency was below par and could possibly be the reason for misunderstandings, they readily admitted that their instructional skills were inadequate. Participants claimed that their ability to provide instructions was poor and that they did not always impart knowledge correctly. They often had to rephrase or repeat something they had said. Participants failed to contextualise their lessons, often starting the lesson without any appropriate introduction or link to prior knowledge. In some instances, inadequate planning (Participant 18/10) was also evident and could have contributed to the misunderstandings. Inadequate instructional skills were particularly evident in the lessons of Participants 06/09, 16/09, 19/10, 22/10 and 25/10. In my observations, these poor instructional skills were the cause of non-understanding and not misunderstanding. Added to this, I observed instances of inability to discipline learners and failure in task management (Participant 18/10), which also contributed to instructional dissonance.

#### 4.5.4 Teacher disposition and personality

In the initial combings of the data this category seemed to be important and therefore needs to be mentioned, but on careful scrutiny teacher disposition and personality seemed to influence understanding of utterances in only three instances. From the observations it seemed as if a few participants had not acquired the level of competence to deal with their own emotions, since limited attempts were made to counter impulsive reactions to stress

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factors. In three of the lessons observed, factors such as impatience (Participant 15/09), frustration (Participant 01/10) and even boredom (Participant 22/10), contributed to misunderstandings.

Teacher disposition and personality would need further investigation, however, as teachers are expected to cope in instructional communication situations and the responsibility to keep the communication channel open lies with them (Alptekin 2002). This requires being emotionally mature and to compensate for factors such as fatigue, distraction, and irritation that may influence their ability to cope. The second dimension of McCroskey's (1992) credibility is trustworthiness. Within the instructional environment, trustworthiness is the degree to which learners trust a teacher. A teacher high in trustworthiness offers rational explanations for marking, treats learners fairly, gives immediate feedback, and never embarrasses learners or is verbally abusive towards learners. If learners perceive that their teacher is not being truthful, that teacher would likely be regarded as less credible (Teven & Hanson 2004).

Perceived caring is the third component of McCroskey's (1992) credibility of teachers. Perceived caring is seen as a means of opening communication channels more widely (McCroskey & Teven 1999). Teachers must be able to communicate to their learners that they do care about them in order for learners to perceive them as caring. A teacher who relates well with learners is more likely to be perceived as a credible source.

Communication is the process by which teachers employ verbal and nonverbal messages to stimulate meaning in the minds of their learners (McCroskey 1992). While communicating in class, teachers also send messages about their level of competence, trustworthiness, and caring for those learners. The verbal and nonverbal behaviour of teachers provides information to learners that generate meaning within the context of an interpersonal relationship. Teachers will generate more positive learner perceptions of credibility by being more nonverbally immediate in the classroom and using more explicit, verbally caring messages directed towards their learners (Teven & Hanson 2004). It is a reasonable assumption that most teachers attempt to create environments that enhance

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and encourage learners and learning. However, if they do not have the pedagogical disposition or the literacies required, whether it is competence, trustworthiness or caring, they will fail in their endeavours.

To summarise, this study showed that misunderstandings were primarily caused by student teachers' inadequate content knowledge and methodological skills. If one were to map the misunderstandings identified onto the existing models of Hinnenkamp (1999), it would seem that five types of misunderstandings (MU 11, 12, 13, 22 and 24) did not fit a corresponding category from Hinnenkamp's classification (cf. section 2.6). These misunderstandings were locutionary acts where incorrect information was provided to the learners or information was incorrectly explained. Table 4.9 provides a repeat of table 4.6 but with an indication of correspondence with Dascal's (1999) four categories and the non-correspondence with Hinnenkamp's (1999) seven categories of misunderstandings (cf. section 2.6).

**Table 4.9: Summary of misunderstandings identified from idiosyncratic utterances with an indication of correspondence to the classifications of Hinnenkamp (1999) and Dascal (1999)**

MU	Utterance number	Participant number	Speech act	Source (P/R): Dascal's categories of MU (1999:754)	Type (T): Hinnenkamp's categories of MU (1999:3)
MU 1	1	01/09	LA (IF) wrong choice of word	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	MU 2 (Immediate recognition of MU, repaired, but no return to the <i>status quo</i> )
MU 2	2	01/09	LA (IF) wrong choice of word	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	MU 2 (Immediate recognition of MU, repaired, but no return to the <i>status quo</i> )
MU 3	3	01/09	ILA command interpreted as interrogative	Reception (R) (MU was a result of hearer's interpretation)	MU 6 (No obvious recognition of MU, although outside observer will regard it as a MU)
MU 4	4	02/09	LA (IF) incorrect structure	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	MU 1 (Immediate recognition of MU, repaired and returned to <i>status quo</i> )
MU 5	6	06/09	LA (IF) incorrect information, mumbling	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	MU 4 (Gradual recognition of MU, indicated by disturbances in communication, but not treated as in MU1 and MU2)
MU 6	7	08/09	ILA promising interpreted as threat	Reception (R) (MU was a result of hearer's interpretation)	MU 6 (No obvious recognition of MU, although outside observer will regard it as a MU)
MU 7	8	09/09	LA (IF) incorrect structure	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	MU 6 (No obvious recognition of MU, although outside observer will regard it as a MU)
MU 8	9	10/09	ILA warning interpreted as command	Reception (R) (MU was a result of hearer's interpretation)	MU 6 (No obvious recognition of MU, although outside observer will regard it as a MU)
MU 9	10	10/09	ILA warning interpreted as merely new information	Reception (R) (MU was a result of hearer's interpretation)	MU 6 (No obvious recognition of MU, although outside observer will regard it as a MU)

MU	Utterance number	Participant number	Speech act	Source (P/R): Dascal's categories of MU (1999:754)	Type (T): Hinnenkamp's categories of MU (1999:3)
MU 10	11	12/09	LA incorrect information	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	<b>No match</b>
MU 11	12	12/09	LA incorrect information	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	<b>No match</b>
MU 12	13	14/09	LA incorrect information	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	<b>No match</b>
MU 13	17	16/10	ILA interrogative interpreted as directive	Reception (R) (MU was a result of hearer's interpretation)	MU 2 (Immediate recognition of MU, repaired, but no return to the <i>status quo</i> )
MU 14	18	17/10	LA interrogative incorrectly interpreted	Reception (R) (MU was a result of hearer's interpretation)	MU 3 (Gradual recognition of MU, repaired)
MU 15	22	19/10	LA no explanation of information	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	<b>No match</b>
MU 16	23	19/10	LA unclear instructions for activity	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	MU 3 (Gradual recognition of MU, repaired)
MU 17	24	20/10	LA incorrect information	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	<b>No match</b>
MU 18	25	21/10	ILA mishearing/ misinterpreting instructions	Reception (R) (MU was a result of hearer's interpretation)	MU 1 (Immediate recognition of MU, repaired and returned to <i>status quo</i> )
MU 19	26	24/10	LA (WF) incorrect information	Production (P) (MU was caused by speaker)	MU 6 (No obvious recognition of MU, although outside observer will regard it as a MU)

The five misunderstandings that did not fit any of the categories in Hinnenkamp's classification were examples of non-understanding. Although it can be argued that non-understanding should not be classified as misunderstandings, in the instructional context the effect is the same as if it were a misunderstanding. The learners experience confusion and the teacher has to initiate repair.

#### 4.5.5 New knowledge: extending Hinnenkamp's (1999) model of classifications of misunderstandings

Hinnenkamp's model does not adequately present the classification of misunderstandings in an instructional setting, since it does not provide for instances of misunderstanding due to transfer of incorrect content leading to non-understanding. A new model for the classification of misunderstandings in the instructional context proposed by this study will adequately provide for the categories identified that do not fit Hinnenkamp's classification. Table 4.10 offers additions and changes proposed by this study to propose a new model for the classifications of misunderstandings in an instructional setting.

**Table 4.10: New model: changes to Hinnenkamp's (1999) classification of misunderstandings**

	Hinnenkamp (1993:3)	New model
MU8		No obvious recognition of misunderstanding, although an outside observer will regard it as non-understanding.
MU9		No obvious recognition of misunderstanding, either to interlocutors or outside observers, but when knowledge is tested, non-understanding is evident.

Teachers tasked with developing learners' oral proficiency and communication skills may wish to apply the proposed model of this study in an effort to avoid not only misunderstandings but also non-understandings.

#### 4.5.6 Consolidation of discussion

The above-mentioned four broad categories, namely oral proficiency (including idiosyncratic utterances and speech act realization patterns [cf. section 4.5.1]); inadequate content knowledge (cf. section 4.5.2), inadequate instructional (methodological) skills (cf. section 4.5.3); and teacher disposition and personality (cf. section 4.5.4) were the key factors that contributed to misunderstandings in an instructional setting. These four categories were evident from all the data sets, the observations, the IELTS rating, the focus group interviews and the questionnaire.

I had anticipated that inadequate oral proficiency and speech act realization would play a role in the occurrence of misunderstandings. Although this was confirmed in the study, it had only marginal influence on the misunderstandings identified; 21% of misunderstandings were as a result of inadequate oral proficiency and 32% as a result of inadequate speech act realization patterns. The reason why student teachers' idiosyncratic utterances and speech act realization patterns did not necessarily lead to misunderstandings could possibly be found in the multilingual nature of the South African school context and particularly the unique position of English in the mix of languages in this context. As explained in chapter 2, the majority of English users in the country do not speak English as a home language and they have no aspirations to learn to speak English as a native speaker would (cf. section 2.2). They use English merely as a communication tool and as a vehicle for academic learning, as English is the LoLT in most schools in South Africa. The various accents of, and dialects used in the English language have served as enrichment and have made understanding of each other easier. It would seem as if the L2 speakers of English in multilingual contexts may actually be at an advantage precisely because of their knowledge of the multicultural social conventions. The view that communicative competence (cf. section 2.3) is a prerequisite for appropriate use is, therefore, not applicable in this context, as the findings of this study have shown. It may not be a question of finding out how non-native speakers of English should be appropriately equipped with the skills to teach through this medium, but rather how we activate the

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multilingual benefits brought by student teachers and learners to enhance learning through the medium of English in South Africa.

Much more evident in the cause of misunderstandings in this study were inadequate content knowledge and inadequate methodological skills (47%). This very important finding points to the possibility that the transition from theory to practice has not been adequately mastered or that institutions of higher education do not pay adequate attention to knowledge generation in the various subjects taught. Student teachers are, therefore, not equipped to deal with learner questions or explanations of key concepts or theories. As discussed in chapter 2 (cf. section 2.1) the majority of teachers in South Africa are under-qualified or not qualified to teach (Hofmeyr and Hall 1996). If newly qualified teachers lack the skills or the content knowledge to teach, as this study seems to indicate, then the dire situation in the country cannot be addressed and the problem will be perpetuated. As discussed in chapter 2 (cf. section 2.4), Dwyer (1991) mentions four domains in which good teachers excel, namely content knowledge; teaching for learning; creating a classroom community and teacher professionalism. Excelling in these domains would provide the learner with optimal chances of success. The student teachers in this study failed in two of these areas, namely content knowledge and teaching for learning. Following Vygotsky's (1986) theory of the ZPD (cf. section 2.2), the teacher is supposed to assist the learner in achieving a level of performance within the ZPD which the learner would be incapable of whilst acting independently. This implies that learners need to be supported in their complex task of learning as they interact with the teacher, but can only be possible if the teacher fulfils the role of more competent adult. If the teacher does not have the required skills or content knowledge, as is the case with the participants in this study, the complex task of learning cannot take place. In identifying the misunderstandings, I saw learners often using non-verbal gestures which conveyed their misunderstanding and confusion, however, in most cases the student teachers did not act on these cues. There are three possible reasons I can suggest for student teachers not following up on these non-verbal clues, namely, they just didn't see or recognise them, they did not know what to do or how to intervene, and they did not have the knowledge or skills required to intervene.



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It would thus seem that not only poor oral proficiency and inadequate communication skills, but also poor methodological principles, such as inadequate instructional skills and content knowledge, as well as socio-linguistic and cross-cultural differences contribute to the manifestation of misunderstanding (and non-understanding) in instructional settings. When the teacher is not sufficiently in command of the LoLT, communication between teacher and learner is seriously hampered to such an extent that teachers cannot develop their learners' basic communicative skills or their cognitive ability because they themselves do not have the required oral proficiency (Evans and Cleghorn 2010).

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

From the lessons presented by student teachers, utterances analysed indicated successful communication in 27% of the utterances. The analysis showed that 73% of the utterances resulted in misunderstandings. The key findings point to three distinct areas of failure. On the one hand the misunderstandings identified point to a lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge, or pragmatic failure (as the utterances were misunderstood because speaker intent and hearer interpretation did not match). Student teachers did not display adequate skill in speech act realization skills or communicative competence. Their oral proficiency was below par and contained many idiosyncrasies and their communication skills (including speaking too fast, speaking too much, speaking unclearly, and repeating themselves) were inadequate. Even though most participants were not aware of the fact that their own oral proficiency was below par, they did admit that their lack of the necessary pedagogic strategies could have possibly contributed to the misunderstandings that had occurred. They were aware of problems in their teaching, but since no efforts were made to solve these problems, as a consequence misunderstandings ensued. This area of failure is inherent in the student teacher, however, with self teaching and practise through available developmental programmes, including software programmes, the student teachers should be able to improve.

Secondly, the misunderstandings point to inadequate mastery of content knowledge. Student teachers were unable to explain terminology or major aspects related to the

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subject such as use of tense, relative clauses or poetry. This area of failure cannot be contributed solely to the student teacher.

If an increased cognitive demand is executed by lecturers and content delivery sharpened, and if appropriate development and packaging of undergraduate programmes are implemented, this failure could be addressed.

Lastly, the misunderstandings point to inadequate mastery of methodological principles, such as instructional skills (including asking questions, explaining new concepts, giving instructions, giving feedback, planning and preparation), and content knowledge. In the few instances where misunderstandings were avoided (especially by Participants 21/10, 24/10), it was due to the participants being well prepared and enthusiastic, knowledgeable about the subject and proficient in the second language.

The different interpretations of the term "culture" and the difference in opinion as to its role in misunderstandings were in itself a form of misunderstanding. This aspect, namely cross-cultural transfer problems, may have played a role in some instances of misunderstandings, but was not exploited in of this study. Aspects such as the time of day of the lesson, the subject content and prior learning were taken into account when analysing the data, but no obvious relation to the occurrence of misunderstandings was found. These could, however, be avenues for further research.

In this chapter the procedure for analysing the data produced by each protocol, as well as a presentation of the findings, was provided. The key findings were interpreted and discussed and the extent to which the research questions were addressed was provided. My initial proposition, that misunderstandings in instructional settings may be caused by poor oral proficiency, was affirmed by this study to a limited extent. However, misunderstandings were also caused by unanticipated variables namely, the inadequate application of sound methodological principles and surface content knowledge. In the next chapter the implications of this study are examined, recommendations are made and possible avenues for further research are suggested.