

Abstract

The intention of this study was to attempt to study the classroom discourse events in a sample of Kenyan chemistry classrooms. Special interest was particularly directed towards the verbal discourse patterns which were studied and described. The teaching styles, and the questioning practices of the teachers of the sample were examined. The study sample consisted of 14 chemistry teachers with their 560 Form III pupils. A total of 77 lessons were audio-recorded. Classroom observation notes were also made to supplement the tape recorded data. Out of the 77 lessons 56 'ideal' lessons were chosen, 14 of them were analysed following the procedures of Eggleston et al. (1976). The Teachers' Observation Schedule (STOS) was used for the analysis. The data was used to study and describe the teaching styles of the teachers of the sample. Generally the teaching practices reflected a factual teacher directed presentation with some experimental approach. Three teaching styles were identified: K1, K2 and K3. Their verbal discourse patterns were compared with those from other cultures. The Kenyan teaching styles had some similarities with the two styles of the Nigerian Science Teachers' Sample. Cultural factors and situational constraints seemed to account for the similarities. The same reasons were used to account for the differences between the African teaching styles and those of the British and the Canadian western culture styles. The three Kenyan styles and the two Nigerian ones had very little in common with the British styles I and the Canadian style B. The only thing which they had in common was teacher dominance in the talk. However the Kenyan style K2 which had the majority of the teachers has some commonnesses with the British styles II, the Canadian style A and the two Nigerian styles F and G. The questioning styles of the Kenyan sample were also studied. The teaching practices were dominated by questions of the lowest cognitive level, recall of knowledge. The pre and post heuristic patterns of events were characterised by heuristic cycles. The cycles had common sequential patterns (generally). The main variations were in the structuring (initiatory stage) and the reaction components of the cycles. The implications of the study for teacher training, classroom discourse research, the limitations, recommendations and the areas of future research were suggested.