

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**MAXIM OF ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: A CASE OF  
ZABZUGU SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**




**2023**

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**BAWA AMADU**

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The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central lamp with a flame, set against a background of a sunburst or starburst pattern. The emblem is surrounded by a decorative border.

**A Dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign  
Languages Education, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Education  
(Teaching of English as a Second Language)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**JUNE, 2023**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

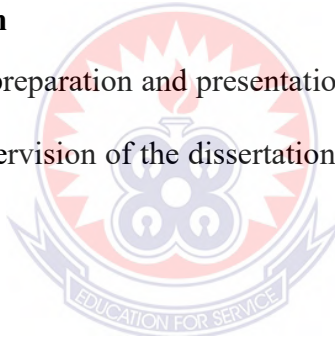
I, Bawa Amadu (220015973), declare that this dissertation, except for quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised by the guidelines for the supervision of the dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. SEFA OWUSU

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my father.



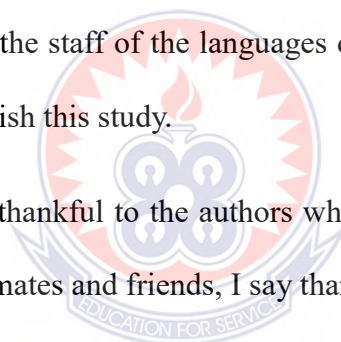
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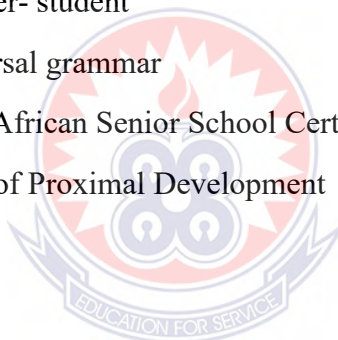
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## ABBREVIATIONS

CLT	Communicative language teaching
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as a second language
HOD	Head of department
ICT	Information communication technology
L <sub>2</sub>	Second language
NaCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NTS	National teaching standards
SHS	Senior high school
SL	Second language
SLA	Second language acquisition
T-S	Teacher- student
UG	Universal grammar
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

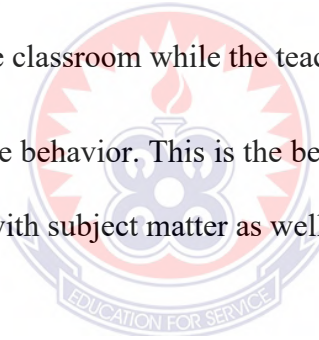
**Atmosphere:** The feeling or mood in a particular situation or a feeling in a group of people. This is the environment during the teaching period; whether it is a flexible (friendly) or authoritative environment.

**Classroom:** A room or designated space dedicated primarily to teaching and or learning activities. The classroom creates a safe environment where teaching and or learning takes place uninterrupted by other distractions.

**Encouragement:** The act of inspiring somebody to do something. This is a way of motivation used by teachers to inspire the learner to be involved in learning.

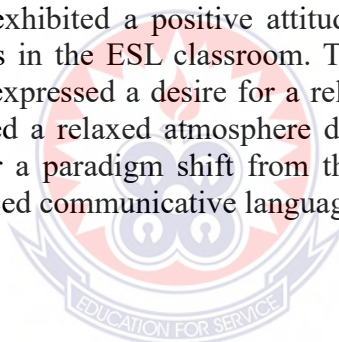
**Environment:** The conditions that affect the behavioral development of somebody. This is the condition of the classroom while the teaching-learning process is ongoing.

**Maxim:** A rule for sensible behavior. This is the behavior of the teacher shaped by his way of teaching, dealing with subject matter as well as with the learners.



## ABSTRACT

It is important to listen to instructor's voice to be able to understand classroom practice. This is especially crucial in the SLA. Teachers' mental images, thoughts, and processes employed when teaching are believed to provide interpretative frameworks or principles that they use to understand and approach their teaching. These principles, technically termed maxims; range from order, conformity, efficiency, involvement, planning, empowerment, accuracy, to encouragement. This work aims to explore the role of the maxim of encouragement. The primary focus is on the teacher as an extrinsic factor in the ESL classroom because s/he is reflected as the most noteworthy figure in second language acquisition. Specifically, the work seeks to identify how and what impact does encouragement has on learner's participation in the ESL class in the form of student-teacher relationship in the ESL classroom, and the teacher's role in the ESL classroom. Being a case study (Zabzugu Senior High School), this work opted for a qualitative approach. To attain the objectives of the study, ten (10) professional English language teachers were purposively selected. Responses were gathered through interviews, questionnaires, and observation checklists. Findings were grouped into two themes; student-teacher relationship in the ESL classroom and classroom atmosphere during ESL lesson. The study generally revealed that positive encouragement plays a vital role in teaching and learning as it enhances effective learner participation which eventually improves learner performance. This was because most of the teachers this understudy wanted and exhibited a positive attitude towards a friendly but formal relationship with students in the ESL classroom. The data equally revealed that the majority of the teachers expressed a desire for a relaxed atmosphere but a little over half of them demonstrated a relaxed atmosphere during their teaching periods. The study, therefore, calls for a paradigm shift from the 'traditional angle' of language teaching to the all-embraced communicative language teaching (CLT).



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This introductory part of the research work involves general background, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, delimitations, organization of the study, and operational definitions of key terms.

#### 1.1 General Background

As opposed to understanding teaching from the outside, recent research on teaching has sought to understand teaching from the inside (Cochran- Smith & Lytle, 1990). It has been stressed in both general research on teaching (Cortazzi, 1991), and research on teaching L<sub>2</sub> (Bailey & Nunan, 1995) that, it is important to listen to instructors' voices to understand classroom practice.

A classroom is a place dedicated primarily to teaching and or learning activities. Classrooms are found in educational institutions of all kinds, including public and private schools, homeschools, corporations, and religious and humanitarian organizations. The classroom attempts to provide a safe space where teaching and learning can take place uninterrupted by other distractions. In a classroom, teaching and learning is a complex, multilayered, and social experience. Many things happen at the same time, and students and teachers must interpret and process these events with considerable rapidity.

Of late, there has been an increased interest in teachers in general as well as L<sub>2</sub> teachers in particular, on their mental images, thoughts, and processes they employ while they teach (Richards, 1996). These mental processes are believed to provide interpretative frames that teachers use to understand and approach their teaching.

Observations of teachers and conversations with them about how they conduct their lessons suggest that they develop personal principles which inform their approaches to teaching (Richards, 1996). According to Richards (1996, p. 1):

These principles function like rules for best behavior, or maxims, and guide many of the teachers' instructional decisions. The nature of teachers' maxims is discussed through analysis of teachers' accounts of their teaching and lesson protocols. Teachers' maxims appear to reflect cultural factors, belief systems, experience, and training, and the understanding of which maxims teachers give priority to and how they influence teachers' practices is an important goal in teacher development.

Teaching as a profession does not simply refer to the science of imparting knowledge. Of course, it is not a one-way transmission of information either. Teaching involves helping learners to modify their behavior. Following Sthapit (2000, as cited in Khadka 2007, p. 48), "The objective of teaching is to help the learners in learning it. Teaching, therefore, should be geared to facilitating the learning on the part of the learner"

Teaching is not a simple task; it involves different aspects. It is a skill that is difficult to master. In this case, William (1995, as cited in Naidu 2009, p. 2) comments "Teaching is an art . . . so great and so difficult to master that a man or a woman can spend a long life at it, without realizing much his limitations and mistakes and his distance from the detail"

Teaching is the reflection of the teacher's belief system. As Richards and Lockhart (2005, p. 29) state, "What teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe, and that teacher knowledge and teaching thinking provide and believe framework or schema which guides the teacher's classroom action".

Different teachers have different belief systems which is why we see different ways of teaching in the same classroom. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that teachers are highly influenced by their belief systems. According to Borg (2001, p. 186), “Beliefs play an important role in many aspects of teaching as well as in life.” Beliefs inform how we teach what we teach. Borg (2001, p. 186) defines belief as “A proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and therefore imbued with commitment; farther, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior.” Similarly, Wenden (1999, p. 517 as cited in Kalaja, et al, 2006) says “Beliefs are viewed as individual subjective understandings, idiosyncratic truths which are often value related and characterized by a commitment not present in knowledge...” Thus, beliefs are conceptual subjective philosophies that guide the teachers in their path. Pajares (1992, as cited in William & Burden 2007 p.56) says “These had a greater influence than teachers’ knowledge on the way they planned their lesson, on the kind of decision they made and on their general classroom practice.”

The belief and thinking process underline teachers’ classroom actions (Richards, 1996). Teachers’ beliefs about what learning is affect everything that they do in the classroom, whether these beliefs are implicit or explicit. The belief systems given in William and Burden (2007, pp.57-64) are; beliefs about learners, beliefs about learning, and teachers’ beliefs about themselves. Similarly, Richard and Lockhart (2005, pp.32-41) mention the following beliefs: beliefs about English, beliefs about learning, beliefs about teaching, beliefs about the program and the curriculum, and beliefs about language teaching as a profession. What and how the teacher presents himself/herself in the classroom is the reflection of what beliefs he/she has about learning, teaching, curriculum, and the teaching profession. Teachers’ belief system serves as the background to much of teachers’ decision-making and action and hence



constitutes the culture of teaching. Teachers' value system or belief system constitutes the principle of teaching or teachers' maxims in language teaching.

Following Cobuild English language dictionary, as given in Richards (1994, p.286) Maxim refers to "A rule for good or sensible behavior, especially one which is in the form of a proverb or short saying." These maxims inform the teachers' actions and inactions. So, these maxims are personal working principles that reflect teachers' philosophies of teaching, developed from their own beliefs and value systems (Kandel, 2018). To justify the influence of beliefs on teaching, Woods (1996; as cited in Nguyen, 2013) mentions that teachers' beliefs and knowledge are strongly intertwined and this affects the decisions teachers undertake during lessons. This is why Johnson (1992, p.69; as cited in Nguyen, 2013) says that "teachers interpret a teaching situation in the light of their beliefs about the learning and teaching of what they consider second language learning consist of; the result of this interpretation is what the teacher plans for and attempts to create in the classroom". Elbez (1981, in Richards 1996, p.293) mentions "Principles of practice" which directly corresponds with maxim. Therefore, these maxims can also be equated to principles of practice (Kandel, 2018).

Different types of maxims are constructed based on personal beliefs or value systems which are not fixed or static, Kandel (2018). According to Rajeev (2017), prominent teachers' maxims include; from *known to unknown*, from *simple to complex*, from *concrete to abstract*, from *analysis to synthesis*, from *psychological to logic*, from *actual to representation*, and from *empirical to rational*. However, some teachers try to maintain discipline throughout their stay in class; the *maxim of order* (Richards, 1996). In such conditions, tendencies are, learners can be deprived of interaction with the teacher and teaching-learning processes are more likely to become teacher-centred. Some too may work for accurate student output; the *maxim of accuracy* (Richards,

1996). Others may be guided by the *maxim of efficiency, conformity, and empowerment* (Richards, 1996) among others. However, and most appropriately, the *maxim of encouragement* always seeks a way to encourage the learners (Richards, 1996). Under this condition, the role of the teacher is to encourage the students. Students feel easy and comfortable interacting with the teacher. This makes the teaching and learning process learner-centred and the teacher has every opportunity to study the psychology of the students, and guide and facilitate them. This maxim is propelled by motivational factors that make learners want to learn (Manyasi, 2015). Indeed, encouragement affects efforts, which, in turn, affects results and ultimately, students' abilities, (lesly.edu). Also, by encouraging learners, their learning abilities are nourished helping them become more skillful in English. This work will focus on the role of maxim of encouragement during ESL lessons.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Over the years, the various governments of Ghana have engaged in designing and redesigning curricula including the English language to be taught right from kindergarten as a second language to make learners successful in communicating with other English speakers. As enshrined in the 1992 Constitution, all persons in Ghana have the right to education, (Chap. 5, Art. 25). In this regard, both past and present governments of Ghana have always remained committed to quality education at local, national, and international levels. The Government of Ghana's policies are also directed towards providing quality education for the people to be settled easily in the world. For this reason, the English language plays a vital role. As a result, this language is taught in schools; both public and private. Indeed, it is used as a medium of instruction right from the upper primary. So, the learners have to get mastery over the English language; a foreign language. However, the acquisition of a foreign language is not an easy task.

This is why Brown (1994, p. 62) says, "Second language learning or the process of acquisition is not a set of easy steps that can be programmed in a quick do-it-yourself style". The process of learning a second language or a foreign language is difficult and involves what seems like an infinite number of variables, which creates interference; positive and negative as maintained by contrastive analysts (e.g., Fries – 1945, Lado – 1957, James – 1980, Barathy, Trager, and Waddle – 1966, etc.).

As a result of the difficulties in SLA, teachers of ESL must exhibit appropriate maxims in consonant with appropriate language teaching approaches. The well-embraced language teaching approach of late is the Integrated Approach which stems from communicative language teaching (Owusu, 2022). Similarly, Brown's (2000, p. 42) response "The answer is a qualified "yes" to the question "Is there a currently recognized approach that is a generally accepted norm in the field? (Brown, 2000, p.42) confirms the position of CLT. Brown (2000, p.42) explains "The qualified "yes" can be captured in the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)". Brown (2000, p.43) identified six characteristics underscoring this approach. Critical and of much concern to this work are:

- (a) The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not all-knowing bestower of knowledge.
- (b) Students are given opportunities to focus on their learning process through an understanding of their own styles of learning and through the development of appropriate strategies for autonomous learning.
- (c) Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use. Brown (2000, p.43)

These three principles require cooperative learning, interactive teaching, and student-centred lessons; all of which are dependent upon the classroom environment, or climate (Brown, 2000). In this case, the student-teacher relationship and the role of the teacher in the class are paramount. In this direction, Hughes (2012, as cited in Meng, 2021, p. 2) confirms “As a component of classroom climate, the teacher-student relationship has been confirmed to be imperative significance for learners’ education”.

Teachers of ESL in Ghana are recommended to adopt the CLT (NaCCA, 2020). Teachers of this category are expected to serve as guides and facilitators, to create a classroom climate conducive enough for learners to practice the language, and to encourage learners to collaborate in learning (NaCCA, 2020). But, is this the case in the Ghanaian context? How does encouraging learners influence their participation in the ESL classroom? What is the student-teacher relationship during ESL lessons? What is the role of the teacher of English in the ESL classroom? What perception does the teacher has about encouragement in the ESL classroom? To find answers to the questions above informed the choice of this topic: Maxim of Encouragement in the ESL Classroom using Zabzugu Senior High School as a case study.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out the role of the maxim of encouragement during ESL lessons in Zabzugu Senior High School.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

- i. To find out the impact of encouragement on learner’s participation in the ESL classroom.

- ii. To establish how encouragement influences learner's participation in the ESL classroom.
- iii. To identify the perceptions teachers of the English language have about the maxim of encouragement.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study contributed to addressing the following questions:

- i. What impact does encouragement have on learner's participation in the ESL classroom?
- ii. How does encouragement influence learners' participation in the ESL classroom?
- iii. How do English language teachers perceive the maxim of encouraging students?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Maxim of Encouragement in ESL Classroom is a very recent piece of ELT research. The results of this study will be important for all teachers, not only English language teachers. The study will clarify the significance of the maxim of encouragement in teaching, particularly in ESL lessons, and aids in introducing some fresh ideas to the teaching profession. This activity will help to spread knowledge among English language teachers in particular and all teachers, in general, to establish a welcoming environment in their teaching.

This study can equally function as a main tool to inspire and empower the students to be friendly and open with their teachers to take up the centre stage of the teaching and learning process; thus, student-centeredness. It would help alleviate the fears learners have in learning ESL.

It can also be beneficial to new researchers interested in this field. In this direction, this study can help broaden their knowledge base.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the Study**

The proposed study has the following delimitations:

- i. This study was limited to only one school, Zabzugu Senior High School of Zabzugu district in the Northern region.
- ii. This study was limited to 1 female and 9 male teachers of the languages department in the school.
- iii. This study was mainly centred on the maxim of encouragement.
- iv. The study was restricted to the ESL classroom.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

The work was hindered by the following limitations:

- i. Limited financial resources for the data collection and analysis.
- ii. Insufficient sample size.
- iii. The data collection instruments were to only questionnaire, interview guide, and observation checklist.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

The work consists of the following chapters:

*Chapter one* provides outlines of the work, including the background of the topic, problem statement, research objectives, guiding questions, purpose, significance, and delimitations.

*Chapter two* explores the relevant material from extensive bodies of literature on teachers' maxim during their classroom showmanship.

*Chapter three* outlines the research methods for the study. This section provides a brief description of the study area, the data collection method, tools, and analysis.

*Chapter four* presents the findings of the work.

*Chapter five* presents a summary of the findings of the work, connections of findings to previous research and theories, conclusion, and recommendations.

## **10 Conclusion**

This part of the work captured the general outline of the work. It identifies the background of the study, the specific problem of the study, objectives, and questions of the study. It further identified the purpose and significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, organization of the study, abbreviations, and finally, operational definitions of key terms.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

A research study's literature review is essentially a must. According to Kumar (2009, p. 30), "the literature review is an integral part of the entire research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step".

This section incorporates a review of different research carried out in the Department of English Education and English as Second Language Education and discusses the implication of this literature. Different theoretical aspects are discussed under the theoretical framework. And finally, a conceptual framework is developed to carry out the present study. The literature review is done under two headings:

#### 2.1 Review of Related Theoretical Literature

Here, I have attempted to explore the theoretical areas of my study. Some relevant theories that contribute to my study have been discussed below:

##### 2.1.1 Teachers' Maxim

Teachers being thinking humans and not robots, do not just implement the curriculum as designed (Manyasi, 2015). As a result, every teacher is unique in the classroom because of his/her belief and value systems about different aspects of ELT. We can find different ways of teaching if we observe the same class taught by different teachers. Borg (2001, p.186) says "Beliefs play an important role in many aspects of teaching as well as in life". How teachers teach what they teach is a factor in their belief system. Borg (2001) defines belief as a proposition that may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and therefore imbued with commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and



behavior. Similarly, Wenden (1999, p.517; as cited by Barcelos et al., 2008) says “Beliefs are viewed as individual subjective understandings, idiosyncratic truths which are often value related and characterized by a commitment not present in knowledge...”. Teachers' belief systems are found in the goals and values they hold about the content and process of teaching and their understanding of the system in which they work and their roles within it. That is why Kimoga (2014, p.229) says “*Teachers are required to make decisions for their practice. Good decisions create successful learning. Decisions depend on their perception of the learners, learning environment, subject content, and teaching approach all of which are influenced by the teachers’ beliefs*”. These types of beliefs and value systems constitute the teachers' maxims.

Indeed, the teachers’ maxim is an abstract concept, and this is a clear reflection of their classroom behavior, Kandel (2018). Richards (1996, p.284) opines "These beliefs and values serve as the background to much of the teachers' decision making and action and hence constitute what has been termed the culture of teaching". The Cobuild English Language Dictionary as given in Richards (1996, p. 286) refers to maxim as “A rule for good or sensible behavior, especially one which is in the form of a proverb or short saying”. In the same vein, Rajeev (2017, p.89) sees teachers’ maxim as “Those general ideas and methods of doing the work which prove helpful in the task of teaching”. These maxims function like rules for best behavior in that they guide the teachers' selection of choices from among a range of alternatives as Rajeev (2017, p.8979) puts it “Maxims of teaching act as the springboard which catalyse the momentum of teaching-learning process and thus helps the teacher in achieving the pre-determined objectives of education besides providing contentment to both the learners as well as the teacher”. Maxims are personal working principles that reflect teachers' individual philosophies of teaching, developed from their experiences of teaching and

learning, their education, experience, and their own personal belief and value systems. Elebz (1981, in Richards 1996, p.293) talks about principles of practice that correspond with the maxim. So, these maxims can also be termed principles of practice.

Some people think that maxims and images are the same things. In this case (Clandinan, 1984 & 1985; Johnstone, 1990 & 1992) as given in Richards (1996, p.293) view "The maxims as more specific and practical than the images". Maxims are images that have been transformed into models for practical action (Richards, 1996). So, teachers' maxims are the working principles that are more specific and practical. These practical working principles function like rules for the best behavior. Teachers conduct their teaching in accordance with their maxims. Teachers' maxim is always personal and bottom-up. These types of maxims are self-guiding which are not borrowed from somebody else but are evolved from one's own beliefs or values. Different types of maxims are constructed based on personal beliefs or value systems that are not fixed or static. That's why maxims are dynamic and flexible rather than static or fixed.

### **2.1.2 Types of Teachers' Maxim**

Several types of teachers' maxims exist. According to Rajeev (2017), prominent teacher's maxims are;

- i. From Known to Unknown - new knowledge to be given to learners must be logically linked with their previous knowledge.
- ii. From Simple to Complex - difficulty should follow ease in teaching.
- iii. From Concrete to Abstract - teaching should proceed from tangible to intangible,
- iv. From Analysis to Synthesis - difficult or complex topic or subject matter be logically and systematically broken into different components.

- v. From Psychological to Logical – the sequence of the teaching process should be from psychological followed by logical.
- vi. From Actual to Representative - effective display of actual teaching aids instead of artificial ones.
- vii. From Empirical to Rational -empirical knowledge of a student should be made rational so that it becomes true and definite.

Richards (1996) identifies the following as teacher's maxims;

- i. The Maxim of Involvement: Follow the learners' interests to maintain student involvement. In this maxim, teachers try to involve their students as much as possible. The teacher may abandon structure of lesson plan and go for students' questions/ideas if there is something exciting that engages learners in interaction.
- ii. The Maxim of Planning: Plan your teaching and try to follow your plan. With this maxim, teachers make the plan of their teaching and follow the plan in the classroom. The teacher thinks that any information emanating from learners during lesson lead the lesson towards 'unexpected' directions. The focus of this maxim is on preplanned curriculum and the follow of it in the classroom.
- iii. The Maxim of Order: Maintain order and discipline throughout the lesson. This maxim is in favour of formal relation between teachers and students. It embraces formal teacher-centered classroom rather than student-centered classroom.
- iv. The Maxim of Encouragement: Seek ways to encourage student learning. With this, classroom atmosphere is relaxed and more learner-centered. This

maxim believes in the informal student-teacher relations and given the teacher the role of inspiring and encouraging learners.

- v. The Maxim of Accuracy: Work for accurate student output.
- vi. The Maxim of Efficiency: Make the most efficient use of class time.
- vii. The Maxim of Conformity: Make sure your teaching follows the prescribed method.
- viii. The Maxim of Empowerment: Give the learners control.

This study adopts Richard's category of the maxim as explicit distinctions are drawn among the various categories.

### **2.1.3 The Maxim of Encouragement**

Talking about the maxim of encouragement, especially in English as a Second Language class, the assertion of Manyasi (2015, p.270) is worth mentioning:

Teachers need to be aware of a variety of strategies that can help them attain a high standard of motivated students. This can be achieved through praise and reward. Genuine praise and encouragement instill self-confidence and achievements. Teachers should make students know that they value their contributions. Always praise or punish the behavior, not the learner.

The principle of the enthymeme (maxim of encouragement) strives for a friendly environment. Thus, it is diametrically contrary to the maxim of order which holds strict adherence to total discipline and order throughout lessons. Inspiring your classroom does not have to be intimidating.

The maxim of encouragement is propelled by motivational factors that make learners want to learn (Manyasi, 2015). Most of these motivational factors breed informal

relationships between teachers and students. In this regard, Tsui (1995, p.357) comments:

Students did not have to stand up to greet him, and they did not have to raise their hands or stand up when they answered questions. The classroom atmosphere was very relaxed. The students were noisier in the sense that they volunteered answers from their seats, and there was a lot more laughter. George was quite happy to accept whatever contributions they made, whether they raised their hands or not.

Applying this maxim in teaching makes learners much more confident as Richards (1996, p.290) put it: “In comparison to the students in May Ling's class, George's students were much more confident and outspoken. When asking questions, he would give students time to discuss the question among themselves before answering because he felt it made responding in front of the class less threatening. He encouraged an informal relationship with his students. He felt he was not obliged to follow conventional seating arrangements with students in single rows but did whatever he felt was necessary to promote student-student interaction.”

In conclusion, the maxim of encouragement plays a significant role in the teaching-learning process because its core emphasis is to inspire the students in learning. This maxim also creates a friendly environment between teachers and learners. So, students do not hesitate to interact with the teacher. Even a poor student can benefit due to the friendly nature of the ‘environment’. This type of environment develops confidence in students and learning becomes less threatening.

A flexible environment promotes the active participation of the learners. They can ask about their problems freely. Teachers can also get a good opportunity to study and guide

the students accordingly. This process makes the classroom environment lively and learner-centered which is beneficial for the professional development of the teacher.

#### **2.1.4 Profession and Professionalism**

The Australian Council of Professionals (2003) states:

A Profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognized body of learning derived from research, education, and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.

The definition of a profession is indeed an occupation that calls for knowledge of some sort of advanced education or training. As a result, a person receives specialized training in their field of choice and is governed by an acknowledged professional body.

Distinguishing profession from occupation, Cheetham and Chivers (2005, as cited in Beaton, 2010, p.4) compile a list of a profession's characteristics though neither exhaustive nor definitive of all professions:

A profession, they say:

- confers status within society
- organizes itself into some sort of professional body
- is learned—i.e., requires prolonged and specialized training and education
- is altruistic (orientated towards service rather than profit)
- offers autonomy within the job role
- is informed by an ethical code of some kind

- is non-commercial
- has collective influence within society
- is self-regulatory
- is collegial
- is client-focused.

Craft and trade guilds and their contemporary equivalents do not fit the professional mode according to these criteria. Simply put, all professions are occupations but not all occupations are professions.

A significant competence or ability to perform a task competently is professionalism. According to Beaton (2010), professionalism is a combination of the knowledge, skills, reliability, and altruism present in those who dedicate their lives to serving others. In a similar line, according to Freidson (2001), professionalism can be said to exist when an organized vocation acquires the authority to choose who is qualified to carry out a certain set of responsibilities, to stop anybody else from doing so, and to regulate the standards used to judge performance. Ur (2005 as cited in Richards and Renandya 2010, p. 389) says 'Professionalism means preparing oneself to do a competent job through learning. This learning may take the form of pre-service or in-service course, reflection on experience, reading, and observation, discussion with colleagues, writing, and research'. Therefore, to become professional, one needs to acquire a special kind of knowledge and a high standard of professional conduct. Wallace (2010, p.6) describes three models for acquiring professionalism to the professionals. The models are:

### **(a)The Craft Model**

The Craft Model is the oldest form of professional education, and it is still used in today's ESL teacher education. This model is also known as "Sitting with Nellie".

This model believes that the knowledge or wisdom of the profession resides in an experienced professional practitioner. The practitioner is someone who is expert in the practice of the craft. The novice teachers or the young trainees have to learn by imitating the expert's techniques, and by following the expert's instructions and advice. In this model, hopefully, what the expert says and does will not be in conflict. Stones and Morris (1972, as cited in Wallace, 2010) state that this teaching practice was traditionally organized until the end of the second world war in 1945. In this model, 'the master teacher told the students what to do, showed them how to do it and the students imitate the master'. Likewise, Wallace (2010, p. 6) views "In this model, the wisdom of the profession resides in an experienced professional practitioner, someone who is expert in the practice of the craft". Watson (1987, as cited in Wallace, 2010) believe that the underlying educational philosophy of this craft notions imply conceptions of training and skills acquisition. Thus, the belief, that teaching skills can be predetermined. In its most basic form, the Craft Model consists of the trainee or the beginner working closely with the expert teacher.

According to Wallace (2010), the basic assumptions underlying this model are;

- i. it consists of trainee and expert teacher,
- ii. imitation is a crucial basic element during the teaching process,
- iii. the popular elements include observation, instruction, and practice.

The Craft Model of second language teaching allows the learners to develop an experiential knowledge, since the primary responsibilities of the learner are in the



classroom (Wallace, 2010). It is also believed to be one of the quickest model of ESL teacher education.

However, the model suffers from several shortcomings. The most relevant strategies of training are provide by experts, thus the student teachers play a passive role (Wallace, 2010). The model is also described as essentially conservative, it does not account for any kind of change, it depends merely on imitation (Wallace, 2010). With this model, there is no scope for developing ones creativity since it does not allow suggesting new theories (Wallace, 2010).

### **(b)The Applied Science Model**

The applied science model, also known as the “technical rationality” model, is the traditional and probably still the most prevalent model underlying most training or education programs for the professions, be it medicine, architecture, teaching, or whatever (Wallace, 2010). In this model, the trainees study theoretical courses in applied linguistics and other related subjects, which are then, through the construction of an appropriate methodology, applied to classroom practice (Ur, 1996). This model, brought into the scene as a result of the criticisms of the craft model, derives its authority from the achievements of empirical science (Wallace, 2010). “The findings of scientific knowledge and experimentation are conveyed to the trainee by those who are experts in the relevant areas" (Wallace, 2010, p.9). It is therefore the responsibility of the trainees to put the conclusions drawn from the various theoretical courses into practice by the time they come to the actual teaching.

The basic assumption of this model is that as professional science develops, it brings about changes in the practice element. However, most often these scientific changes are brought about by experts and not by practitioners (by those actually

engaged in the day-to-day practice of the profession). Hence, in the teaching profession where experts are well removed from the day-to-day working scene, teachers are likely to look to others for professional updating (Wallace, 2010).

The applied science model treats theory and practice separately. As Ur (1992) argues, in this model, there are two groups of individuals: the academics and the professionals engaged in theory and practice respectively. Ur, criticizing the applied science model, puts the division between theory and practice.

Its treatment of theory and practice at two different levels and the fact that teaching is not a mere application of pre-ordained techniques and principles, made it necessary to question the conceptions of the applied science model. As a result, a model that is believed to give answers to the problems noticed in the applied science model has come into the scene.

### **(c) The Reflective Model**

This model is taken to compensate for the weaknesses seen in the craft and the applied science model. This can be proved through Wallace's words. Wallace (2010, p. 17) says "I have supported the 'reflective' model as a compromise solution which gives due weight both to experience and to the scientific basis of the professions". Similarly, Ferraro (2000) has observed that over the past two decades, research has shown that effective teaching practice is linked to inquiry, reflection, and continuous professional growth; and has argued that reflective practice can be a beneficial form of professional development at both pre-service and in-service levels of teaching. The model has become popular after the influential writings of the American sociologist Donald, A. Schön (1983; 1987); though the very concept of reflection has a long history dating back to the time of John Dewey in the 1930s (Hatton and Smith, 1994; Florez, 2001). Pennington (1992:47) quoted in Farrel (1998) defines reflective teaching as

"deliberating on experience, and that of mirroring experience." She also proposes a reflective/developmental orientation "as a means for (1) improving classroom processes and outcomes, and (2) developing confident, self-motivated teachers" (Pennington, 1992, p.51 as cited in Farrell, 1998, p.10)

In the reflective model, as Ur (1996:5) puts it, "the trainee teaches or observes lessons, or recalls past experience; then reflects, alone or in discussion with others, in order to work out theories about teaching; then tries these out again in practice." In this model, practitioners are involved in a continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation so as to understand their own actions and the reactions they prompt in themselves and in learners (Brookfield, 1995; Thiel, 1991, cited in Florez, 2001). The goal is not necessarily to address specific problem or question at the outset, as in the applied science model, but to observe and refine practice in general on an ongoing basis (Florez, 2001).

The reflective model comprises, 'received knowledge' and 'experiential knowledge' as its basic elements (Wallace, 2010). The received knowledge refers to the knowledge that the trainee possesses about the research findings, theories and skills, which are widely accepted as being part of the necessary intellectual content of the profession. In addition to the received knowledge, in the experiential knowledge, the trainee will have developed knowledge in action by practice of the profession, and will have had the opportunity to reflect on that knowledge in-action (Wallace, 2010).

The above models of teacher education can be reflected at two levels: at the methodology coursework level, and at a microteaching and/or teaching practice level. The way in which a given methodology course is prepared and offered to trainees may be based more on one of the models than the other. In a supervised practicum

experience, the kind of help rendered to the student-teachers can also be dictated more by one than the others. This latter component of a teacher education programme is even more crucial than the former in that it is the first time when trainees are encouraged to ascertain themselves as real teachers and become engaged in real teaching.

Experiential knowledge as one the knowledge components of this model, is more important for professional development and reflection helps teachers to become self-evaluators of their teaching.

Professionalism requires more to a profession rather than an occupation. The Standard of professionalism improves professional commitment and increases professional development. Professional describes something that has been well done and needs special training, skills, and a high level of education. Only a professional teacher can demonstrate his personal activities in a competent manner or high standard of professional conduct.

#### **2.1.4.1 The Teacher of English as a Professional**

Teaching is regarded as both an art and a science. As an art, it lays stress on the imaginative and artistic abilities of the teacher in creating a worthwhile situation in the classroom to enable students to learn (Rajagopalan, 2019). As a science, it sheds light on the logical, mechanical, or procedural steps to be followed to attain an effective achievement of goals (Rajagopalan, 2019). In the words of Brubacher (1939, as cited in Rajagopalan, p.5), “Teaching is arrangement and manipulation of a situation in which there are gaps or obstructions which an individual will seek to overcome and from which he will learn in the course of doing so”. Teachers have the greatest potential for influencing students in ways that can last a lifetime. The professional teacher must understand and be responsive to others' needs. Naidu (2009, p.5) says, "Teaching is

considered to be a profession along with other professions like medicine, law, and engineering".

Professionalism is a recurring concern of language teachers and language teaching organizations in particular and the teaching profession in general. Ideally, a professional teacher possesses the necessary academic qualifications, training, and licensing from recognized bodies. They belong to a regulating body that issues these licenses which can be revoked on breach of any specified regulation. However, the availability of the internet has led various individuals irrespective of their academic knowledge or professional training to create courses and provide instructions to students. Even in offline environments, people provide various forms of training to people without any real qualification. This leads to the debate on whether teaching should be considered a profession or not. Sharing a similar sentiment, Richards and Lockhart (2005, p. 40) say, "Language teaching is not universally regarded as a profession". Due to this double stand, the professionalization of teaching needed to define a knowledge based upon which to predicate policy actions such as teacher licensure, for example (McKeon, 2001). The teaching profession is contentious.

Professional teachers of English must constantly upgrade their knowledge and understanding of the language. This is done through workshops, seminars, and self-monitoring. Their professional interests and needs are to be changed over some time and the way they carry out their professional activities in line with their 'National Teaching Standards'. As captured in the Professional Learning Community Handbook 1 (2022, p. iii) "The NTS provides the foundations upon which Ghana's reforms are being built as they specify the three things needed to be an effective teacher:

1. Professional Values and Attitudes

2. Professional Knowledge, and
3. Professional Practice.

#### **2.1.4.2 Teacher Professional Development**

Teachers are the persons who teach, instruct, educate or train students. The term 'development' refers to the orderly, durable changes resulting from learning experiences and maturation. Hence, teacher development is a kind of development of the teacher. Impey and Underhill (1994, p. IV) define teacher development as "the process of becoming the best kind of teacher that you personally can be". It means teacher development begins from self-query. Teacher development is a self-reflective process that can enhance through personal awareness. In the same vein, Richards and Farrel (2010) define teachers' development as the growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and themselves as teachers. Head and Taylor (1997, p. 1) view "Teacher development . . . draws on the teachers' own inner resources for change. It is centred on personal awareness of the possibilities for change . . . It builds on the past . . . for change in present and future . . . It is a self-reflective process". Avalos (2011; as cited in Postholm, 2014, p.425) says, "Teacher professional development means teachers' learning, how they learn to learn and how they apply their knowledge in practice to support pupil learning".

Therefore, as professionals in their field, teachers are expected to process and evaluate new knowledge relevant to their core professional practice and to regularly update their knowledge base to improve their practice and meet new teaching demands.

#### **2.1.4.3 Teacher Professional Development in Ghana**

A Framework for Professional Development of Teachers by NTC (2020, p.13) has the following on teacher development in Ghana:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) refers to the process by which teachers maintain and enhance their knowledge, skills and experiences gained as they work, beyond any initial training. Furthermore, it is a record of what teachers' experience, learn and apply. Consequently, PD activities involve the development of those qualities that are required by teachers for carrying out their professional and technical duties during their teaching career.

PD is an integral component of teacher development. This includes training and education programmes organized within or outside the school environment which NTC approves as being relevant to the teaching profession and meeting prescribed standards.

#### **2.1.4.3.1 Rationale for Introducing PD Activities among Teachers in Ghana**

The reason for introducing PD activities in the country is to provide guidance for teachers to continue to improve their competencies to maintain the integrity of the teaching profession and improve their professional status (NTC, 2020). It was also envisaged that going through the prescribed PD activities would help maintain and enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences gained after the initial training (NTC, 2020). It is therefore essential for teachers as professionals to preserve their professional integrity by regularly updating their knowledge and skills to keep them abreast of contemporary issues and approaches in education.

According to the NTC (2020, p.13), the PD sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Provide a forum for harnessing ideas and experiences to improve professional competence and commitment.

- ii. Offer intellectual, emotional and social engagements for the teachers to enrich their experiences. To teach for better understanding, teachers must be intellectually engaged in their discipline and work regularly with others in their field.
- iii. Maintain high competence that is results from life-long learning.
- iv. Demonstrate the social responsiveness by encouraging members of the teaching profession to collaborate as community of experts (Professional Learning Community- PLC), be current, skillful and knowledgeable in their practice.
- v. Keep teachers in good standing and be abreast of time.
- vi. Maintain professional excellence.
- vii. Make available prospect to supplement the initial training of teachers and improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices to meet diverse learners' learning needs.
- viii. Assist teachers to adapt, contribute, think critically and participate actively in addressing challenges associated with teaching and learning and implement recommendations.
- ix. Augment teachers' commitment to their chosen profession.

#### **2.1.4.4 Teachers' Competence**

Competency is a term used extensively by different people in different contexts; hence, it is defined in different ways. Competencies are the requirements of “competency-based” teacher education. It involves more than just knowledge. Skills, attitudes, and motivational variables also contribute to the mastery of teaching and learning. Blömeke and Delaney (2012) proposed a model that identifies cognitive



abilities and affective-motivational characteristics as the two main components of teachers' professional competence.

#### **2.1.4.4.1 Characteristics of Teachers' Competence**

In the words of Shmelev et al. (2002, p.149), features of teacher's competence include:

1. A competency consists of one or more skills whose mastery would enable the attainment of the competency.
2. A competency is linked to all three of the domains under which performance can be assessed: knowledge, skills and attitude.
3. Possessing a performance dimension, competencies are observable and demonstrable.
4. Since competencies are observable, they are also measurable. It is possible to assess a competency from a teacher's performance. Teaching competencies may require equal amounts of knowledge, skills and attitude, but some will not. Some competencies may involve more knowledge than skills or attitude, whereas, some competencies may be more skill or performance based.

Some scholars see competence as a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviour used to improve performance, or as the state or quality of being adequately qualified and capable of performing a given role. The Occupational Competency movement initiated by David McClelland in the 1960s sought to move away from traditional attempts to describe competency in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes and to focus instead on those specific values, traits, and motivations (i.e. relatively enduring characteristics of people) that are found to consistently distinguish

outstanding from typical performance in a given job or role. The term "competence" first appeared in an article authored by Craig C. Lundberg in 1970 (Shmelev, 2002) titled "Planning the Executive Development Program", and then in David McClelland's seminal 1973 treatise entitled, "Testing for Competence Rather than for Intelligence" (Shmelev, 2002). The term has since been popularized by Richard Boyatzis and many others.

The teaching skills and life-long learning competencies of professional teachers comprise;

to perform complex pedagogical duties; to be well-spoken, in good mental and physical health, stable and tolerant; to have a propensity to work with the younger generation, good communicative and observational skills, tact, a vivid imagination, and leadership (Shmelev, 2002).

#### **2.14.4.2 21st Century teaching Competencies**

Shmelev, et al. (2002, p.152) identified the following 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching competencies:

##### **1. Teachers demonstrate leadership**

*a. Teachers lead in the classroom by:* - evaluating student progress using a variety of assessment-data measuring goals;

- drawing on appropriate data to develop classroom and instructional plans;

- maintaining a safe and orderly classroom that facilitates student learning; and

- positive management of student behavior, effective communication to defuse and deescalate disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate seclusion and restraint techniques.

*b. Teachers demonstrate leadership in the school by:* - engaging in collaborative and collegial professional learning activities;

- identifying the characteristics or critical elements of a school improvement plan; and
- displaying an ability to use appropriate data to identify areas of need that should be addressed in a school improvement plan.

*c. Teachers lead the teaching profession by:* - participating in professional development and growth activities; and

- developing professional relationships and networks.

*d. Teachers advocate for schools and students by:*

- implementing and adhering to policies and practices positively affecting students' learning.

*e. Teachers demonstrate high ethical standards.*

## **2. Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students**

*a. Teachers provide an environment in which each child has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults by:*

- maintaining a positive and nurturing learning environment.

*b. Teachers embrace diversity in the school community and in the world by:*

- using materials or lessons that counteract stereotypes and acknowledge the contributions of all cultures;
- incorporating different points of view in instruction; and
- understanding the influence of diversity and planning instruction accordingly.

*c. Teachers treat students as individuals by:*

- maintaining a learning environment that conveys high expectations of every student.

*d. Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of students with special needs by:*

- cooperating with specialists and using resources to support the special learning needs of all students; and

- using research-verified strategies to provide effective learning activities for students with special needs.

*e. Teachers work collaboratively with families of students and other significant adults by:*

- communicating and collaborating with the home and community for the benefit of students.

### **3. Teachers know the content they teach**

*a. Teachers develop and apply lessons based on an effective course of study by:*

- integrating effective literacy instruction throughout the curriculum and across content areas to enhance student learning.

*b. Teachers honor the content appropriate to their teaching specialty by:*

- demonstrating an appropriate level of content knowledge in their specialty; and
- encouraging students to investigate the content area to expand their knowledge and satisfy their natural curiosity.

*c. Teachers show they recognize the interconnectedness of content areas/discipline by:*

- demonstrating a knowledge of their subject by relating it to other disciplines; and
- relating global awareness of the subject.

*d. Teachers make their instructions relevant to students by:*

- integrating 21st-century skills and content in instruction.

### **4. Teachers facilitate learning for their students**

*a. Teachers show they know the ways in which learning takes place and the appropriate levels of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of their students by:*

- identifying developmental levels of individual students and planning instruction accordingly; and

- assessing and using those resources needed to address the strengths and weaknesses of students.

*b. Teachers plan instruction appropriate to their students by:*

- collaborating with colleagues to monitor student performance and making instruction responsive to cultural differences and individual learning needs.

*c. Teachers show their acumen and versatility by:*

- using a variety of methods and materials suited to the needs of all students.

*d. Teachers display their awareness of technology's potential to enhance learning by:*

- integrating technology into their instruction to maximize student learning.

*e. Teachers help students grow as thinking individuals by:*

- integrating specific instruction that helps students develop the ability to apply processes and strategies for critical thinking and problem solving.

*f. Teachers help students to work in teams and develop leadership qualities by:*

- organizing learning teams for the purpose of developing cooperation and student leadership.

*g. Teachers reach their students best by:*

- using a variety of methods to communicate effectively with all pupils; and
- Consistently encouraging and supporting students to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively.

*h. Teachers best assess what students have learned by:*

- using multiple indicators, both formative and summative, to monitor and evaluate student progress and to inform instruction; and
- providing evidence that students are attaining 21st-century knowledge, skills and dispositions.

## 5. Teachers reflect on their practice

a. *Teachers analyze student learning by:*

- using data to provide ideas about what can be done to improve student learning.

b. *Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals by:*

- participating in recommended activities for professional learning and development. c.

*Teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment by:*

- using a variety of research-verified approaches to improve teaching and learning

### 2.1.4.5 Teachers' Knowledge

Conceptualizing teacher knowledge is a complex issue that involves understanding the key underlying phenomenon of the process of teaching and learning.

#### ▪ **Process of Teaching and Learning**

Several models exist that capture the complex process of teaching and learning. Some models see learning as a change in the learner's experience or knowledge that results from a change in the learner's environment. Some approaches consider the teaching-learning process only from the perspective of teaching, while others take into account the student's input to the process as well. The latest models indicate that student factors are part of, and interdependent with, the teaching-learning process. These models imply that a teacher's knowledge goes beyond mere knowledge of content and classroom management, and should also include knowledge of learners and learning.

Freeman (2002) mentions three views of teachers' knowledge. They are, *teaching as doing things, teaching as thinking and doing, and teaching as what to do.*

### **a. Teaching as Doing Things**

This view considers the teacher as a passive technician (Freeman, 2002). Behaviours and actions lead hopefully to other people learning. Teaching is based on others' suggestions about content and methodologies (Freeman, 2002).

### **b. Teaching as Thinking and Doing**

According to Freeman (2002), teaching is affected by cognitive and affective dimensions. Thinking refers to brainstorming about a lesson. While planning lessons, we just think about teachers' performance but never think about all possibilities (Freeman, 2002). This view takes into account not only what teachers do, but also what they think about (Freeman, 2002).

### **c. Teaching as Knowing What to do**

This perspective views teaching from different angles. Teachers' knowledge depends on the view of teachers towards teaching (Freeman, 2002). Teaching is not simply thinking and doing, it also involves teachers' knowledge and experiences as well (Freeman, 2002).

#### **2.1.4.6 Types of Teachers' Knowledge**

Teachers' beliefs are guided by the type of knowledge that is reflected in their practice of teaching. In the words of Shulman (1987, p. 8; as cited by Mulholland, 2014):

If teacher knowledge were to be organized into a handbook, an encyclopedia, or some other format for arraying knowledge, what would the category headings look like? At a minimum, they would include;

- Content knowledge;
- General pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter;
- Curriculum knowledge, with a particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as “tools of the trade” for teachers;
- Pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;
- Knowledge of learners and their characteristics;
- Knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of schools, districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and
- Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds.

Among those categories, pedagogical content knowledge is of special interest because it identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching (Shulman, 1987; as cited in Mulholland, 2014).

Also, Richards (1996, p. 284) summarizes teachers’ knowledge as:

Two different kinds of knowledge influence teacher understandings and practice of teaching: one relates to subject matter and curricular issues... The other kind of knowledge relates to teachers' personal and subject philosophy of teaching and the teacher's view of what constituted good teaching.



Wallace (2010) categorized teachers' knowledge into two; the received and experiential knowledge.

The received knowledge comprises the subject matter of teaching, pedagogical content, reasoning, and methodological content.

Under experiential knowledge, teachers' experience is paramount. Teachers acquire powerful influence for teaching for their teaching experiences. Teachers can develop their conceptual philosophy of what constitutes a good teaching from their experiences.

Buabeng et al. (2020) categorized teachers' professional knowledge into knowledge of educational framework and curriculum and knowledge of learners.

## **2.2 Review of the Related Empirical Literature**

Different research studies and write-ups are carried out on teachers' maxims under the Department of English Education. Some of the related works are reviewed as follows:

Manyasi (2015) researched "Teachers' Maxims in English Language Teaching; A Challenge in Education for Social Transformation in Kenya". His work's primary contribution was finding that teachers' mental processes that provide interpretive frames which guide their approach to teaching are influenced by contextual factors and the maxim of value addition. The work identified the following as teachers' maxims in English Language teaching; the maxim of planning, the maxim of order, maxim of conformity, maxim of accuracy, and maxim of encouragement. The work indicates that teachers' maxims are influenced by a number of contextual factors such as: the school administration, external examinations and Quality Assurance and Standards Officers.

Kandel (2018) wrote on “The Maxim of Order from Teachers’ Perspective”. The paper revealed that teachers’ maxims are reflected in their teaching behaviours. That teachers feel comfortable in the peaceful and calm environment inside their classrooms. That they appreciate well-mannered and disciplined classrooms where they can play the role of all-in-all in the classes. Finally, the paper identified maxims of involvement and encouragement as effective.

Rajeev (2017) wrote on “Application of Maxims of Teaching in Teaching Education Programme with special reference to Indian Teacher Education Scenario”. The paper identified the following as maxims of teaching; from known to unknown, from simple to complex, from concrete to abstract, from analysis to synthesis, from psychology to logical, from actual to representative, and from empirical to rational. The paper concludes that it is a misconception that maxims of teaching fall under the purview of teacher education programmes only. The maxims of teaching are psychological principles of teaching that have a universal appeal, be it any field.

Richards (1996) wrote on "Teachers' Maxims in Language Teaching". He showed the relationship between teachers' knowledge and beliefs and their teaching maxims. The work explained that the cultures of teaching are guided by their maxims.

Richards et al. (2001) researched on "Exploring Teachers' Beliefs and the Process of Change". Their objective was to find out what core beliefs language teachers hold about teaching and learning.

Megh (2015) researched on “Teachers’ Perception on Maxim of Planning and Its Use in the Classroom”. Under this study, attempt was made to find out teachers’ view towards maxim of planning in their teaching profession and the use of this maxim in the classroom. The study adopted the survey design and mixed approach. 16

secondary level English language teachers who were purposively selected constituted the sample size of the study. Findings of the work showed that the maxim of planning was applied by majority of the teachers as most of them clearly demonstrated their awareness of this maxim.

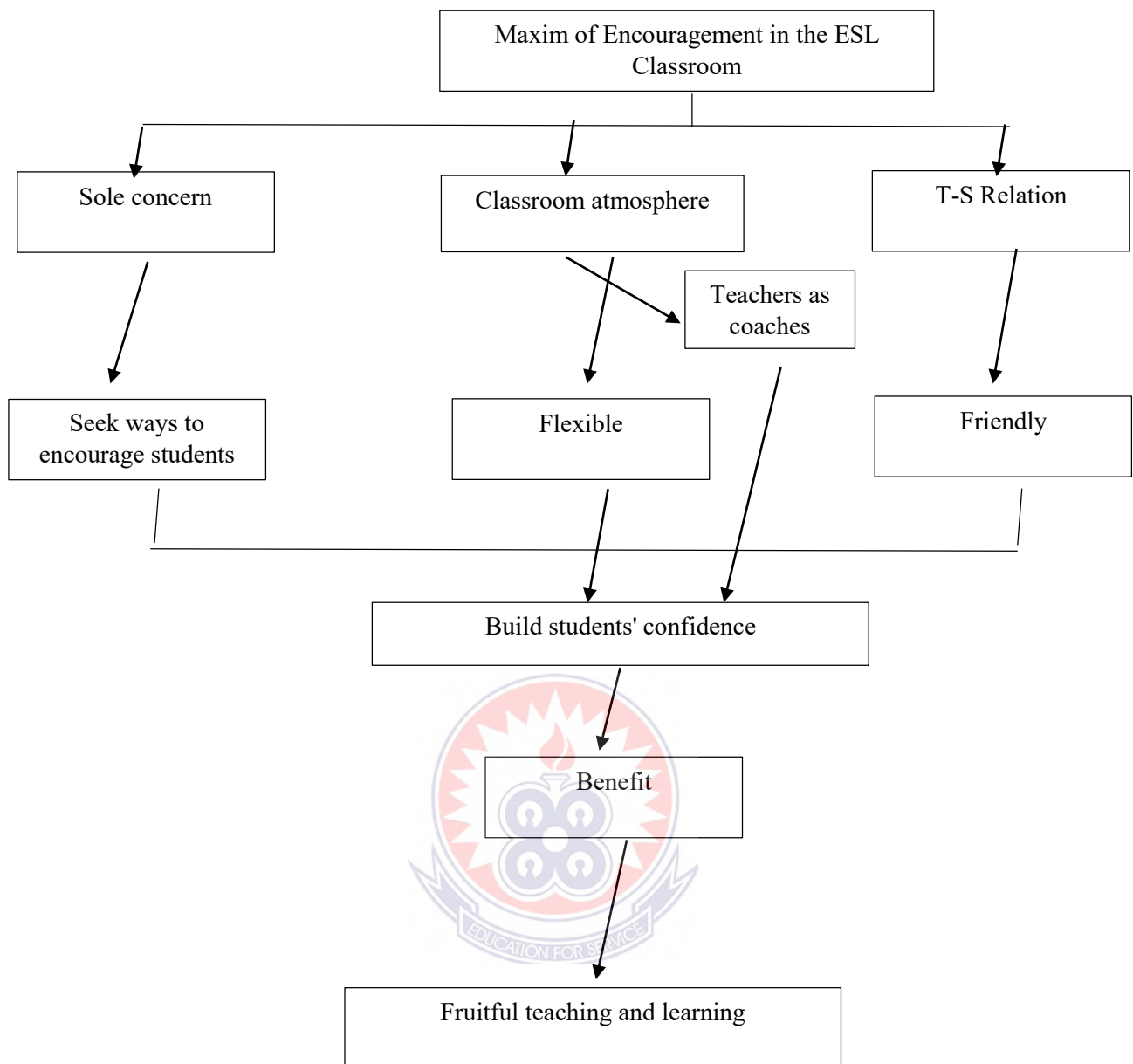
Bidhan (2014) worked on “Teachers’ Perceptions on Implementing the Maxim of Involvement in Language Classes. The primary goal of this piece was to explore the teachers’ perceptions towards implementing the maxim of involvement in the language classroom. To fulfill the objectives of the study, 40 secondary level English language teachers were purposively picked as sample for the study. Required data were collected using questionnaire. His work revealed that the teachers had positive belief to implement the maxim of involvement and mostly, they conducted their classroom depending on this maxim.

### **2.3 Implications of the Review for the Study**

Research work takes advantage of the knowledge which was explored in the past. The review of the research provides theoretical and practical ideas for carrying out the research in the present context. For my study, the review of literature helped me in a number of ways. First, it helped me to develop the theoretical knowledge of teachers' maxims which brought clarity to my research problem. Secondly, it helped me to improve my research methodology. It also helped me to broaden my knowledge based on the maxim of encouragement and to contextualize my findings; thus, the role of the maxim of encouragement in English as a Second Language classroom.

### **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

Based on the ideas gathered from the review of the theoretical and empirical literature, I developed the following conceptual framework to carry out this research;



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

**Source: Adopted from Raj and Nepal (2019)**

From **Figure 1**, the conceptual framework shows the importance of maxim of encouragement in the ESL classroom. Encouraging learners during ESL lesson should be the **sole concern** of the teacher. Learners' encouragement in the ESL classroom takes the form of **classroom atmosphere** and **student-teacher relationship**. **Flexible** classroom atmosphere and **friendly T-S relationship** build learners' confidence.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/ MATERIALS AND METHODS

The approach that researchers must use to perform their study is called research methodology, according to Sileyew (2019). It demonstrates the process by which different researchers outline their goals and objectives and then explain how the findings they have drawn from the information gathered over the course of their investigation. Research methodology, which is covered in this chapter, also explains how the study's goal will be accomplished by the research findings in the conclusion. I emphasize the approach, study design, the researcher's role, site and sample selection, data collection methods, data management and recording practices, and data analysis processes in this chapter.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

Generally, researchers approach their studies from one of three perspectives: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), the research approach refers to the plans and procedures for doing research and that range from general hypotheses to specific techniques for gathering, analysing, and interpreting data. Similarly, Kirti (2022) sees the approach as the collection of procedures and plans that decide the overall process of research. This study adopts the qualitative approach to understand the unique role of the maxim of encouragement in the ESL classroom.

#### 3.2 Design of the Study

Research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework for a study. It refers to the model that any researcher follows while doing his/her research. Kumar (2005, p.84) sees research design as “.... a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems”. Sellitz et al

(1962, as given in Kumar 2005) see research design as a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions objectively, accurately, and economically. According to Mishra and Alok (2017, p.8), “There are several research designs, such as Descriptive (e.g., case-study, naturalistic observation, survey), Correlational (e.g., case-control study, observational study), Semi-experimental (e.g., field experiment, quasi-experiment), Experimental (experiment with the random assignment), Review (literature review, systematic review) and Meta-analytic (meta-analysis) out of which the researcher should select one for his task.”

The case study research methodology was used for this project. A case study is a type of research that must be conducted, typically on a small scale (Kumar, 2005). It is a thorough examination of one incident in which it takes place. The case study researcher often pays attention to the traits of a single unit (Kumar, 2005). A case in this context might be a person, a group, a class, a school, or a community. A case study is frequently used in various fields of psychology as an empirical investigation, such as clinical psychology, which investigates and seeks to treat abnormalities (Kumar, 2005). A case study has also shown to be effective primarily in the educational setting, particularly when it comes to teaching second languages. To be more precise, it is the examination of a situation in its real context (Nunan, et al, 1992). In the words of Nunan, et al (1992, p.79) “case study is the investigation of that single instance in the context in which it occurs”. To Nunan and co, this design type is a methodologically hybrid study since it utilizes a range of methods for data collection and analysis of them. Similarly, Kumar (2005, p.113) sees a case study as “.... an approach to studying a social phenomenon through a thorough analysis of an individual case.” For him, a case study is an intensive analysis of a social phenomenon by minutely observing a case in the natural setting.

Investigating the role of the maxim of encouragement in ESL classrooms demands intensive, detailed, factual, and qualitative data in its natural environment. As Yin (2003, p.13) states, “You would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study”. Therefore, there was a profound need for a case study as an appropriate research design.

### **3.3 Researcher’s Role**

The study was interpretative in nature and being a teacher myself, I was typically involved right from start to end. As a staff of the site of the study and a member of the department under study, I purposefully left out the non-professional members within the department for an obvious reason – professionalism is key in the teaching fraternity. In the teaching-learning process, the atmosphere within which this is done influences learners’ participation. For this reason, I selected this topic (maxim of encouragement in the ESL classroom) to determine its relevance and to what extent/how this maxim is the best in the teaching profession in general and in the ESL classroom in particular.

### **3.4 Site and Sample Selections**

The site of this study was Zabzugu Senior High School in the Zabzugu district in the Northern Region of Ghana. On Wednesday, January 24, 1991, the school had its official opening as a community day school (YellGhB, 2021). It was established to increase local residents’ access to secondary education (YellGhB, 2021). This was a component of the then government’s overall plan to provide secondary education to the entire nation (YellGhB, 2021). The school is located in Tuvugu which is in the northeastern part of Zabzugu (YellGhB, 2021). The vision of the school is to become “A disciplined, high performing Senior High School in Ghana” with its mission

statement as “To offer sound, quality and integrated education to all students through quality teaching, learning, discipline and shared leadership” (Headmistress, 2022). The core values of the school include; discipline among staff and students, integrity, inclusiveness, excellence, hard work, teamwork, regularity and punctuality, and creativity and innovation (Headmistress, 2022). The school being mixed-gender operates both day and boarding statuses (YellGhB, 2021).

With 72% passing in all subjects in 2011 and 2012, the school has excellent results in the WASSCE (YellGhB, 2021). The Science and Mathematics club successfully competed in 2014 and 2015 by defeating all of the schools in its zone to qualify for inter-zonal (YellGhB, 2021). The school is renowned for being a regional sports hero. As an illustration, the school excelled in sports in 2015 and won the inter-zonal soccer championship (YellGhB, 2021).

The school has Science and ICT laboratories.

The school runs the following courses;

- a. General Science,
- b. General Arts,
- c. Home Economics,
- d. General Agriculture, and
- e. Business.

The current student population stands at two-thousand, four-hundred and thirty-four (2,434) with seventy-one (71) teaching staff (Headmistress, 2022).

In this study, I opted for the non-random purposive sampling technique. I chose this sampling technique because the study specifically targeted the teachers of English from the Languages Department of the Zabzugu Senior High School. Thus, my target sample



was predefined. Generally, all the teaching staff of the Zabzugu Senior High School was the population of this study. Only ten English language professional teachers in the school contributed to the sample of this research; nine males, and one female.

**Table 1: Languages Dept. (Zabsec)**

Languages Department		
Professional English language teachers	Female	1
	Male	9
Professional French teachers	Female	0
	Male	2
Professional Dagbani teachers	Female	0
	Male	3
Non-professional English language teachers	Female	1
	Male	1
Total	Female	2
	Male	15

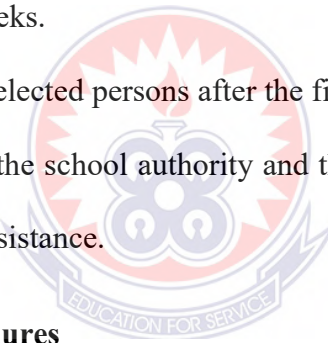
### 3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Research tools are the key elements of any research work. Interviews, questionnaire, and observation were the chief tools of my study for data collection. The observation was prepared in line with the objectives of my study. The observation checklist was to elicit in-depth factual information by observing the English Language lessons of the selected teachers for two weeks. The selected teachers were also engaged in face-to-face interviews. The interviews involved unstructured and open-ended questions. The selected teachers were made to administer a prepared questionnaire to ascertain their level of professionalism in the teaching sphere and years of experience among others.

### **3.6 Managing and Recording Data**

I followed the following procedures to record data for my research purpose:

1. Firstly, I sought permission from the school authority (Headmistress) and explained to her the purpose of the study.
2. After obtaining permission from the head, I subsequently briefed the HOD of the Languages Department and the selected professional teachers of the English Language for the study.
3. Thence, I guided the selected teachers to administer the questionnaire that I prepared.
4. Thereafter, with the observation checklist, I observed the selected teachers' lessons for two weeks.
5. I interviewed the selected persons after the final observation session.
6. Finally, I thanked the school authority and the selected teachers for their kind cooperation and assistance.



### **3.7 Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis according to Marshall and Rossman (1999, p.150) "...is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed linearly; it is not neat. ....is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data." In this study, data analysis involved breaking the data into manageable themes and patterns to comprehend the diverse range of elements of the raw data collected during the study period. The prime focus of the analysis of raw data obtained was to gain insight into the maxim of encouragement in the ESL classroom. In this study, there were three types of research tools used to collect data viz. observation, questionnaire, and interviews.

Keeping all the question items presented in the observation checklist were individually dealt with as they carried a single thematic idea. The major categorizations of the data were done into groups according to the question items in the observation checklist. The raw data were intensively processed, put in a tabular form, tallied, and converted into percentages. I applied mix method for the analysis of information collected during the class observation. Also, since responses from interviews are enormous in terms of text and also dense and rich, I winnowed the data. Finally, I generally applied descriptive and statistical approaches to analyze the collected data.

### **3.8. Ethical Consideration**

Research ethics refers to the type of agreement that the researcher enters into with his or her research participants. Ethical considerations play a role in all research studies, and all researchers must be aware of and attend to the ethical considerations related to their studies. Therefore, a number of ethical considerations were made during the study. Voluntary participation of respondents was encouraged. Responding to interviews and filling of questionnaires required significant time and energy and its participation was disrupting the respondents' regular activity. For this reason, the researcher was explaining the objectives and significance of the study to the respondents and allows them to exercise their right to voluntary participation. To avoid any psychological harm, questions were framed in manners that were not offensive and did not disturb their personality. They were assured that the information they provided was kept confidential. To ensure this, the researcher removed information that requires identification of names of respondents. Furthermore, the first page of the questionnaire displayed an opening introductory letter requesting the respondents' cooperation to provide the required information for the study.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The overall technique used in this investigation was described in this chapter. The research approach adopted, the sort of design used, the study's location, and the researcher's position were all mentioned. The chapter also discusses the sample size, sample selection process, and data collection instruments. The chapter concluded by demonstrating data management and analysis processes.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS/FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the findings, and the interpretation (discussion) made after analyzing obtained data. The chapter is mainly divided into two. The first part is dedicated to the findings (results) of the study and the second part deals with the interpretation (discussion) made based on the analysis of the collected data.

#### 4.1 Results

This section of the study deals extensively with the findings (results) obtained from the field. The findings have been enumerated based on two main cornerstones: student–teacher relationship during ESL class and the classroom atmosphere during ESL class.

##### 4.1.1 Student-Teacher Relationship in the ESL Classroom

This area of the results captured the kind and degree of affinity between students and their teachers during ESL class – formal, informal, authoritative, or friendly. Question numbers 5, 11, 14, 18, and 19 of the questionnaire and items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 11 on the observation checklist come under this category. Under this category, the major findings are presented below:

- a. Ninety percent of the teachers wanted and exhibited a positive attitude towards a friendly but formal relationship with students during the lessons (in the ESL classroom).
- b. Ninety percent of the teachers in this study expected teachers to be liberal during lessons but eighty percent actually showed liberalism during their lessons.
- c. Sixty percent of the teachers believed in three-fold teacher responsibility in class; thus, to guide, encourage, and empower learners. Thirty percent expressed

and showed their role in class as guides and motivators and ten percent saw themselves as mainly motivators during their lessons.

- d. Hundred percent of the teachers as obtained from the data believed that students should be active participants during lessons. However, only sixty percent of the lessons observed made students active participants.

#### **4.1.2 Classroom Atmosphere during ESL Lesson**

This area of the results captured the expected atmosphere by teachers and the actual atmosphere they demonstrated during their lessons. Under this category, question numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, and 20 of the questionnaire and items 5, 8, and 9 on the lesson observation checklist are relevant. In this category, the main findings are enumerated below:

- a. Ninety percent of the teachers expressed that they wanted a relaxed atmosphere during their lessons. Of this, sixty percent demonstrated a relaxed atmosphere during their teaching periods.
- b. About ninety-nine percent of the teachers wanted their classroom atmosphere to look formal and actually demonstrated that during their lessons.
- c. Sixty percent of the teachers were observed to have allowed students to discuss among themselves queries before responding especially when in groups.
- d. Ninety percent of the teachers encouraged students to ask questions formally and about the topic at hand. 'Formal' in the sense that a hundred percent of the teachers required students to raise their hands for permission to be granted before asking and eighty percent required students to raise their hands before answering.

- e. Ninety percent of the teachers from the data gathered did not only condemn an authoritative environment as the only way of enforcing discipline in class but also as a source of creating timidity among students.

## **4.2 Discussion**

This heading is mainly concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the results. The data obtained from the use of questionnaire, unstructured interviews, and intensive observation checklists were analyzed and interpreted to identify the role of the maxim of encouragement by teachers in the ESL classroom.

For this study, premium was placed on data obtained from the questionnaire and the lesson observations. Through the questionnaire, respondents were made to express themselves on the classroom environment they expected during their lessons and the relationship that they would exhibit with their students during their teaching periods. The class observations on the other hand were conducted for two consecutive weeks to obtain data on the actual classroom atmosphere and the student-teacher relationship during ESL lessons. The analysis of the data has been carried out as fairly as possible. In the same vein, the analysis and interpretation have been carried out mostly descriptively and to some extent statistically.

Since the study is geared towards the role of the maxim of encouragement in the ESL classroom, the analysis and interpretation have been presented based on the following headings:

### **4.2.1 Classroom Atmosphere**

Generally speaking, a good number of teachers want their classroom environment to be relaxed during lessons. Thus, from the data, ninety percent of the teachers expect their classrooms to be relaxed during their teaching periods. However,

sixty percent of the teachers observed had actually demonstrated a relaxed atmosphere during their lessons. Thus, thirty percent of the teachers saw the need for a relaxed atmosphere during their lessons but were unable to create such due to inadequate experience (they represent the least years of experience in the profession), hence the adoption of an inappropriate maxim of teaching. According to the data, a relaxed atmosphere not only intensifies student-teacher bondage but also offers teachers the opportunity to study and guide students accordingly. Ten percent of the teachers opted for a strict atmosphere believing that it is a better learning environment since students' behaviour is controlled and discipline is maintained.

Query No. 1. **Is it necessary for a student to stand up before answering questions in class? (yes/no).** Regarding this question, eighty percent of the teachers responded in the affirmative, and twenty percent saw no reason for such an act. Closely related to this is item eight (8) on the observation checklist (i. e. Demanded a required posture to be assumed before answering questions). Upon observation, seventy percent of the teachers demanded their students to be in a certain posture before answering questions in class and the remaining thirty percent allowed students to answer regardless of any posture they assume.

Query No. 2. **Sir, what type of environment do you expect in your classroom? (relaxed/strict).** Ninety percent of the teachers favoured a relaxed environment while ten percent opted for a strict environment during teaching.

Query No. 3. **Is it essential for students to raise their hands if they want to answer questions in class? (Not essential/simply yes).** A hundred percent of the teachers responded that it was essential. However, upon their lesson observations,



seventy percent of the teachers requested students to assume a prescribed posture before answering questions in class, including raising their hands.

Query No. 4. **There are different ways of answering students' questions. Which of the following do you like most?** {simply answer the raised question/give them (students) the chance to discuss}. Hundred percent of the teachers wanted to offer students the chance to answer raised questions in class. Similarly, a hundred percent of the teachers responded appropriately to raised questions in class. Thus, depending upon the strength of the question raised, the students were either allowed to answer the question or were guided to come out with the answers.

Query No. 6. **Students can ask unnecessary questions if they are given freedom so they should not be given freedom. (Yes, they should not/no, they should).** Eighty percent of the teachers agreed to offer students freedom while twenty percent declined to offer students freedom.

Query No. 7. **Interaction among students during lessons should be (encouraged/discouraged).** Here, seventy percent of the teachers were seen in favour of interaction among students during lessons but thirty percent of the teachers were seen against interaction among students during lessons.

Query No. 8. **Students should be encouraged to share their ideas, feelings, and experiences because it helps learning outcomes last longer. (yes/no).** A hundred percent of the teachers responded in the affirmative.

Query No. 9. **Students' questions should not be entertained because they make the classroom environment noisier (yes/no).** Ninety percent of the teachers expressed their views that students' questions should be entertained. Similarly, eighty percent of the teachers were observed to have actively encouraged students' questions.

Query No. 10 expected respondents to identify ways of encouraging students in the classroom. Seventy percent of the teachers indicated that the best ways of encouraging students in the classroom are behaving in a friendly manner towards students, and motivating students' responses but not the students themselves.

Query No. 13. **The involvement of students is necessary for learning because it makes learning easy (agree/disagree/strongly agree/strongly disagree).** Eighty percent of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement. Ten percent each agreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively.

Query No. 15. **Students should be encouraged for asking questions in class (yes/no, why?).** This particular query was meant to confirm responses under queries 6 and 9. A hundred percent of the teachers expressed their views in favour of encouraging students for asking questions. Similarly, eighty percent of the teachers were observed to have actively encouraged students' questions in class. Fifty percent of the teachers (R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>6</sub>, R<sub>7</sub>, and R<sub>10</sub>) expressed similar reasons for encouraging students' questions. They believed it enhanced the students' understanding of lessons. Supporting this view, R<sub>1</sub> added, "Students' questions give direction to the topic. That is, as to whether they are following the lesson or not. Questions make the lesson interactive". R<sub>2</sub> equally added "...also, it helps them to build their confidence in class." R<sub>7</sub> said, "...it improves his/her communication skills".

Students should be encouraged to ask questions in class for it is a major assessment tool. This view was expressed by twenty percent of the teachers i. e. R<sub>5</sub> and R<sub>9</sub>. R<sub>5</sub> added, "It serves as a source of motivation and it retains their interest in class".

R<sub>4</sub> and R<sub>3</sub> expressed closely related but slightly different views. R<sub>4</sub> mentioned;

*It makes the students be more active in class and also gives them the moral boost to speak in public.* R<sub>3</sub> on the other hand said;

*Asking questions for clarification helps students direct their learning by combining their relevant prior knowledge and the new information. Besides, when students are encouraged to ask questions, it builds their communication competence.*

Likewise, R<sub>8</sub> pointed out reasons for encouraging students' questions differently;

*It broadens their imaginations. It creates healthy competition among students, and it makes students feel that they are part of the lesson.*

Query No. 17. **Do you believe that only an authoritative environment is helpful for maintaining discipline in class, and why?** Regarding this, only ten percent of the teachers responded in the affirmative. As many as ninety percent of the teachers did not agree that only an authoritative environment is helpful for maintaining discipline in class.

Teachers who expressed their disappointment over the authoritative atmosphere offered the following reasons:

R<sub>1</sub> said;

*Being authoritative will not encourage learners' participation in the lesson thereby dampening their interest in the class.*

In the same direction, R<sub>3</sub> believed that discipline does not necessarily prevail in an authoritative environment. That it rather frightens students and sometimes makes them aggressive. Likewise, R<sub>8</sub> said, "authoritative environment makes learners, especially extroverts feel threatened by the teacher. It creates a state of insecurity in the

classroom”. R<sub>5</sub>, R<sub>10</sub>, and R<sub>6</sub> supported this view as they said “authoritative environment makes students timid” and “.... demotivates learners” as well as “discourage the timid learner from taking active part in the lesson” respectively.

However, just ten percent of teachers adored an authoritative environment. R<sub>7</sub> said, “This is because when there is no by-law to regulate the students and the rules are relaxed, there will be no discipline”.

Query No. 20. **Authoritative classroom environment is (helpful for better learning/helpful to maintain discipline).** On this, sixty percent of the teachers believed that an authoritative classroom environment helps maintain discipline in class, twenty percent saw it as useful for better learning, and twenty percent were indifferent.

#### 4. 2.2 Student-Teacher Relationship in the ESL Classroom

Generally, the majority of the respondents wanted to maintain a friendly relationship with their students during lessons. Behind this, they believed this type of relationship lessens the hesitations of learners and motivates them to relate their problems to teachers without fear during and after lessons.

Query No. 14. **The behaviour of the teacher should be (liberal/authoritative).** Concerning the behaviour of teachers with their students during lessons, ninety percent of the teachers expressed their interest in favour of liberal (friendly) behaviour.

Query No. 18. **Some teachers believe that friendly relationships with students create problems to manage the classroom environment. Do you think so? (yes/no, why?).** Ninety percent of the teachers responded to this query negatively. Thus, they expressed their views that the friendly relationship between teachers and

students during lessons is not problematic. Instead, it facilitates the teaching-learn process.

*R<sub>1</sub>: Being moderately friendly rather helps in classroom management because no student will like to earn your anger.*

Thirty percent of the teachers (R<sub>7</sub>, R<sub>9</sub>, and R<sub>5</sub>) viewed the friendly relationship between students and teachers during lessons as a great platform for making students open and frank in their responses. This they believed provides a solid opportunity for teachers to study and guide students appropriately.

*R<sub>8</sub>: It rather promotes a healthy learning environment in the classroom.*

R<sub>6</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, and R<sub>4</sub> though supported the friendly relationship between teachers and students during lessons; they called for limits/boundaries of friendliness.

However, ten percent of the teachers saw the friendly relationship between teachers and students during lessons as a great stumbling block when it comes to classroom management. In this direction, R<sub>3</sub> maintained:

*Because, a friendly relationship with students limits teachers from instructing and enforcing certain rules and practices in the classroom.*

Query No. 5. **In the classroom, the role of the students should be (active participant/ passive participant).** Hundred percent of the teachers considered students as active participants during lessons. This view buttresses the importance of the student-centred approach to language teaching.

Query No. 19. **In your opinion, the role of the teacher should be ...**

On the role of a teacher, ninety percent of the teachers expressed that the teacher should serve as a guide, facilitator, motivator, and encourager. In addition to the above, R<sub>9</sub> added: *“A teacher has a role of managing a classroom,..... understand the subject content for proper delivery and to identify learning different levels of learners’ abilities”*. Similarly, R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>3</sub> added *“....to discipline and to serve as a role model”* and *“support and mentor students with varied learning needs”* respectively.

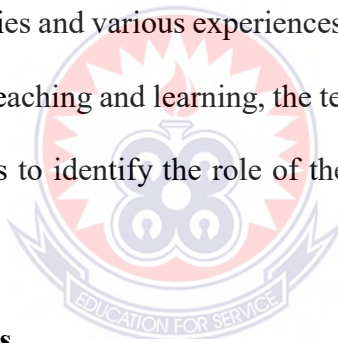


## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONNECTIONS TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH/THEORIES, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter deals primarily with a summary of the main findings, connections of the work to previous research and theories, conclusions, implications/recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

Generally, teaching is a task and learning is an achievement (Rajeev, 2017). Learning objectives can be realized by properly organizing teaching skillfully, effectively, and carefully. Therefore, the role of the teacher is considered paramount in the classroom. He is responsible for creating such an ambience as gives rise to maximum learning activities and various experiences that may be achieved. To achieve the ultimate objective of teaching and learning, the teachers' maxim is of great interest. The task of this work was to identify the role of the maxim of encouragement in the ESL classroom.



#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

Generally speaking, L<sub>2</sub> teachers and for that matter, ESL teachers demonstrated a democratic classroom climate during lessons. Methodologically, most teachers adopted student-centred approaches as lessons were conducted in a more relaxed way. Most teachers were committed to the communicative approach to teaching and saw their role as facilitators aimed at creating an optimum learning environment. However, few teachers made use of accuracy-focused activities because those were necessary to prepare students for various display activities (examinations including WASSCE).

Observed L<sub>2</sub> teachers motivated learners to express themselves in class to elicit potential errors for appropriate remedies. However, for discipline's sake, teachers were observed to have insisted on the adoption of certain postures (by students) on asking or answering questions in classroom. Yet, they condemned authoritarianism in class as it “is one of the major causes of timidity among learners” in the classroom.

The work revealed a friendly relationship between teachers of ESL and their learners during lessons. In the ESL classroom, learners were seen as active participants and teachers mostly created scaffolds by guiding, encouraging, and empowering students to learn the language.

## **5.2 Connections to Previous Research and Theories**

Many researches and theories on second language acquisition in general and ESL in particular, have been carried out and developed respectively by numerous scholars. This sub-section of the work entails related theories of ESL acquisition about teachers' belief systems (maxims of teaching) and previous research on teachers' maxims.

Many scholars such as John Schumann, Avram Chomsky, Stephen Krashen, and Vygotsky among others have propounded various theories on how one acquires a second language to the degree of proficiency. These theories include the acculturation model, sociocultural theory, universal grammar hypothesis, interlanguage theory, Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, and complexity theory (Menezes, 2013). Understanding how second language acquisition occurs and applying appropriate teaching maxims will assist teachers in helping students achieve success in second language acquisition.



### 5.2.1 Acculturation Model

Barjesteh & Vaseghi (2012) explain the acculturation model by using socio-psychological factors in predicting the proficiency levels of acquiring a second language which includes proximity to the target language, attitude of the learner and the teacher, congruence of the two cultures, the desire to assimilate, preserve, and adapt, as well as the intended length of time spent engulfed in the target language. The propounder of this theory, John Schumann, in the late 1970s, studied six migrants language learners (two children, two adolescents, and two adults) for ten months, noting their various acquisition levels (Barjesteh & Vaseghi, 2012). According to the authors (2012), Schumann noted that the English acquisition of one male adult in his study did not show much of an increase in language acquisition over the ten months, but pointed out that this man did not engage in the social or psychological conversations that occurred among other native English speakers. Schumann believed that “the more positively the person is identified with and is psychologically integrated into the target language group, the more likely the learner is to succeed in L<sub>2</sub> acquisition” (Jia et al. 2014, p. 253). This is the reason why Brown (2000, p.55) says “No one can dispute the widely observed success with which children learn foreign languages, especially when they are living in the culture and linguistics milieu of the language”.

In validating the acculturation model, Schmidt (1983) studied a Japanese artist (Wes) who moved to Hawaii at age 33. Observing and examining Wes’s acquisition of the English language for three years, and without formal education, Schmidt (1983) found that given the proximity to social and psychological components of the English language, Wes acquired competence in communication; but did not master linguistics in the English language (Amanda, 2020).

As indicated from the findings of this work, a friendly relationship between teachers of English and their students establishes special bondage and solidifies trust between these stakeholders. Students, therefore, can communicate with or without errors freely to their teachers who then seize this opportunity to effect appropriate corrections. Thus, the issue of the Avoidance Phenomenon, one of the stabling blocks to identifying learners' errors would be minimal.

### **5.2.2 Sociocultural Theory**

Under this theory, Vygotsky explains the zone of proximal development as being the level at which a student can independently do a task compared to what that same child can do while collaborating with a peer or teacher to complete the same task (Amanda, 2020). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) has made its way into most educators' vocabulary as the magnitude of teaching students at a level slightly beyond what is already developed and understood in their minds is vitally important (Turuk, 2008, as cited in Amanda, 2020). Indeed, Vygotsky intended to draw attention to the relationship between development and appropriate instruction (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). Interactions between the SL learner, the second language itself, and the SL teacher are appropriate and major requirements when considering the importance of those interactions as a way of communicating (Turuk, 2008). The ZPD promotes the use of negotiating language among SL learners and SL teachers (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018).

As the findings of this work indicate and in line with this theory, forty percent of the lessons observed actively engaged learners in negotiating meanings.

### 5.2.3 Universal Grammar Hypothesis

This theory, propounded by Chomsky, approached language acquisition as more than just social and psychological experiences; rather, biological. Chomsky believed environmental factors were insufficient in describing the acquisition of language because one's output can become more than just what was received through the input (Amanda, 2020). However, White (2007, as cited in Amanda, 2020) explained that for universal principles within the Universal Grammar (UG) to be activated, they must be triggered by some kind of input. This input could take different forms including motivation or encouragement, a necessary ingredient in SL acquisition.

### 5.2.4 Krashen's Theory of SLA (Monitor Model)

This theory by Stephen Krashen is based on five different hypotheses which include: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, monitor hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis (Abukhattala, 2013). From the acquisition-learning hypothesis, one of Krashen's hypotheses, Bahrani (2011) indicates that *learning* requires conscious effort on the learner's part to learn a language which includes among others focusing on established structures of the said language; whereas, *acquisition* occurs when subconscious activity is used as a way to internalize the language in the individual's mind, making it natural for a person to use. Learning does not "turn into" acquisition and it usually takes place in formal environments, while acquisition can take place without learning in informal environments (Krashen, 1982). Therefore, in a classroom, the two concepts (learning and acquisition) require equal opportunities to enhance the development of automatic and long-lasting knowledge of the SL. This can easily be achieved through a relaxed and liberal classroom environment as revealed by the findings of this work.

From the above theories, the learning environment (classroom atmosphere) and SL learners' interactions with the target language (in this case, the student-teacher relationship) are some of the important determining factors in the second language acquisition process.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The sole concern of this study was to find out the role of the maxim of encouragement in the form of the student-teacher relationship and the classroom environment in the ESL classroom.

In the case of the classroom atmosphere, the majority of the respondents opted for a flexible/relaxed but formal environment. Most lessons observed found teachers encouraged learners' questions and motivated learners to discuss questions among themselves before responding. Behind this, their reasoning was that such environment lessens the hesitation of the students and they could ask their problems without fear. A good number of the respondents condemned the authoritative environment. Interestingly, most of the respondents required learners to raise their hands for permission to be granted before asking and/or answering questions.

On student-teacher relationship, ninety percent of the respondents exhibited positive attitudes towards a friendly but formal relationship with their learners. Eighty percent showed liberalism during lessons. They believed that such relationship incentivises learners to remain open to their teachers. Teachers can therefore capitalize on this to regularly guide their learners. This was one of the reasons why majority of the respondents showed and expressed their role as guides and motivators. On the other hand, those who were seen against friendly relationship argued that in such relationship students could disrespect teachers and make the classroom management difficult. Some

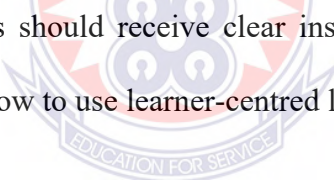
also mentioned that students are students and such are teachers. So, there should be complete formal relationship.

Surprisingly, all the respondents believed that students should be active participants during lessons but only a little over half of the respondents exhibited that during their lessons. This was clear as majority of the respondents employed inappropriate teaching methods such as discrete teaching of the various skills. This was more pronounced among teachers who had just joined the service with limited experience.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the summary and conclusion, the following recommendations can be provided:

##### **5.4.1 Policy Level**

- 
- The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central lamp with a flame, set against a background of a sunburst. Below the lamp, the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE" is inscribed on a banner. The entire emblem is rendered in a light, semi-transparent style.
- i. The concerned teachers should receive clear instructions from policymakers and curriculum designers on how to use learner-centred language teaching methods.
  - ii. The planned curriculum should support students in engaging in inquiry, investigation, and discussion.
  - iii. Activities for teaching and learning should centre on motivating the learners.
  - iv. Assigned tasks should motivate learners to always talk to their teachers and peers about their thoughts, emotions, and experiences.
  - v. Teachers of ESL should be schooled on ways of adapting and adopting appropriate authentic materials that are motivating enough for learners.

##### **5.4.2 Practice Level**

- i. Teachers should carry out their teaching and learning activities in a laid-back setting because both they and their students can benefit from it. Teachers have an excellent

chance to research and advise students. Students can also be open and honest. They can share their ideas, feelings, and experiences with their teachers as well as their friends. Such a type of environment encourages the students to be close to the teacher and teaching learning can be more effective and beneficial. The teacher's professional development is also aided by this.

ii. The teacher should allow their students the chance to discuss and come to their conclusions before responding to their questions. Their active participation is encouraged by this.

iii. Teachers should constantly look for ways to motivate their students. They should always support learners' appropriate behaviour. The teacher should always compliment the students' responses since this helps to lift their spirits and motivates them to actively participate in the teaching-learning process.

iv. Teachers should be liberal and friendly. They should not be always authoritarians. An authoritative environment can deprive students of learning and their active participation can be lessened in the teaching-learning process.

v. The teachers' job should be to act as facilitators or guides. The teachers should act as prompters during the students' performances. The teachers should offer positive comments and always appreciate the learners' feedback.

vi. The teacher should conduct the classroom in such a way where students can play the role of active participants and they can take the ownership of their learning by themselves.

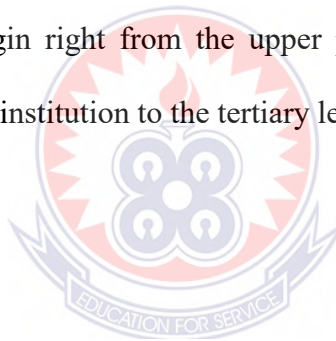
vii. Teachers in the ESL class should always find possible ways of getting their learners involved their lessons. This can be achieved through group/pair related activities. This

interactive situation in the ESL classroom has the greatest potential of fostering the speaking skill of learners.

viii. It would be better for teachers to apply communicative method in the ESL classroom where learners' participation in learning process can be increased.

#### **5.4.3 Future Research**

Nothing is practically static in this world. Regarding future research in the field of teachers' maxims in the ESL classroom, it is important that large-scale qualitative research is considered. This will make adequate data for appropriate generalization. Further, future research in this field could also be stretched to cover all the levels in the pre-tertiary institution. Thus, from primary, junior high to senior high schools. This is because ESL lessons begin right from the upper primary through the Junior High school, the Second Cycle institution to the tertiary level.



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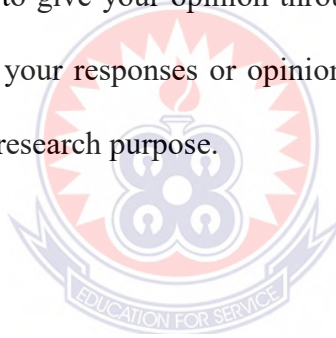
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**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire has been developed to elicit data for my research work. Being a student of Master's Degree in Education with a specialization in Teaching English as a Second Language, I am working on research as partial fulfilment of Master's Degree in TESL under the guidance of my Supervisor, Dr. Sefa Owusu of the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign Languages Education, Winneba Campus, University of Education, Ghana. The title of my research is "**Maxim of Encouragement in the ESL Classroom: A Case of Zabzugu SHS**". In this regard, you are kindly requested to give your opinion through the following questionnaire. I sincerely assure you that your responses or opinions will remain highly confidential and will be used only for research purpose.



Researcher

Bawa Amadu

Form.....Sex.....Name of Teacher  
(Optional).....

Years of experience.....

Please, select the best answer.

1. Is it necessary for a student to stand up before answering questions in class?  
a) Yes b) No
2. Sir, what type of environment do you expect in your classroom?  
a) Relaxed b) Strict
3. Is it essential for students to raise their hands if they want to answer questions in class?  
a) not essential b) simply yes
4. There are different ways of answering the students' questions. Which of the following do you like most?  
a) Simply answer the raised question  
b) Give them (students) a chance to discuss
5. In the classroom, the role of the students should be  
a) active participant  
b) passive listener
6. Students can ask unnecessary questions if they are given freedom so they should not be given freedom.  
a) Yes, they should not. b) No, they should.
7. Interaction among students during lessons should be  
a) Encouraged b) discouraged
8. Students should be encouraged to share their ideas, feeling and experiences because it helps learning outcomes last longer.  
a) Yes b) No
9. Students' questions should not be entertained because they make classroom environment noisier.  
a) Yes b) No
10. The best way to encourage students in the classroom is  
a) behaving in a friendly manner  
b) giving thanks to their responses  
c) giving support to their answer  
d) all of the above
11. The role of the teacher should be to  
a) guide the students  
b) encourage the students  
c) empower the students  
d) all of the above
12. The interaction among students is not entertained not because  
a) they start personal talking  
b) classroom becomes noisy  
c) they go beyond the topic

- d) it is difficult to control the class
- 13. The involvement of students is necessary for learning because it makes learning easy
  - a) Agree
  - b) disagree
  - c) strongly agree
  - d) strongly disagree
- 14. The behaviour of teacher in class should be
  - a) Liberal
  - b) authoritative
- 15. Students should be encouraged for asking questions.
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
- 16. Give suitable reason(s) for your choice in item 15

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- 17. Do you believe that only authoritative environment is helpful for maintaining discipline?

- a) Yes,  
why?.....

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- b) No,  
why?.....

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- 18. Some teachers believe that friendly relationships with students create problems to manage classroom environment. Do you think so?

- a) Yes,  
why?.....

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- b) No,  
why?.....

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- 19. In your opinion, the role of the teacher should be

- a).....

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b).....  
.....  
.....  
.....

20. Authoritative classroom environment is

- a) helpful for better learning
- b) helpful to maintain discipline





## APPENDIX B

### CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Class/Form.....Date..... Name of  
Teacher (Optional).....

Key: 1 – Not observed,            2 – Slightly observed,            3 – Observed very well

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| 1. Actively encouraged student questions   | (1 2 3) |
| 2. Asked questions to monitor student understanding  | (1 2 3) |
| 3. Waited sufficient time for students to answer questions                                     | (1 2 3) |
| 4. Listened carefully to student questions   | (1 2 3) |
| 5. Responded appropriately to student questions  | (1 2 3) |
| 6. Restated questions and answers when necessary   | (1 2 3) |
| 7. Demonstrates respect for diversity and requires similar respect in classroom                | (1 2 3) |
| 8. Demanded required posture to be assumed by students when answering questions                | (1 2 3) |
| 9. Tolerated students' errors  | (1 2 3) |
| 10. Teacher acted as final authority   | (1 2 3) |
| 11. Learners are actively engaged in negotiating to mean and try to make themselves understood | (1 2 3) |