The Communicative Orientation of Classrooms where Dutch is Taught as a Second Language

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Abstract: The current study aimed to pinpoint some of the factors underlying the communication difficulties faced by Arabic-speaking immigrants learning Dutch as a second language (L2). To this end, six classrooms where Dutch is taught as L2 were selected in order to investigate the level of the communicative orientation they foster. Part A of the COLT coding scheme (Fröhlich et al., 1985) was slightly modified and used for the classroom observations. That part of the scheme describes classroom events at the level of activity and contains categories related to participant organization, student modality, content and materials. The materials that seemed to highly control the classroom activities were also analysed in terms of their communicative orientation and in terms of the type and length of output they require from students. The results of the classroom observations revealed that that the communicative orientation was different among the six classes observed. It was minimal at some classes where the teacher was the dominant speaker and the sole controller of the topics discussed. Contrastively, students were passive learners who provided short, prescribed answers without involving in any kind of discussion. Classes with a minimal level of communicativeness were also characterized by being form-focused with minimal integration of meaning and by being highly controlled by the course materials. Other classes fostered the communicative competence at a moderate level. At these classes students were limitedly active, the integration of meaning was higher and group/pair discussion was present. The third type of classes observed was highly communicative. At these classes teachers and learners alike involved in open discussion and they both determined the topics to be discussed. Most of these topics were of broad reference. The analysis of the materials ascertained that the course books used were not communicatively oriented as they stimulate limited output from learners; both in terms of type and length. Nevertheless, a shift in the communicative orientation towards the more communicative end was traced throughout the two books.

Keywords: COLT coding scheme, communicative competence, active role, orientation, type of output, length of output

1. Introduction

Through my work as a volunteer with Arabic-speaking immigrants in Rotterdam, I found that some immigrants at schools where Dutch is taught as a second language find themselves incompetent to orally communicate using Dutch. In other words, their communicative competence doesn't seem to reach a sufficient level. After spending a long period of time at these schools, those immigrants still seek support from various governmental and non-governmental organizations to handle their official documents and to carry out their daily procedures. A question here arises: "Why are those immigrants not able to communicate properly after spending two to three years at these schools despite having a rich repertoire of vocabulary and despite their advanced reading skills?". I conducted this research motivated by my intention to investigate some of the factors underlying this seeming lack of communicative competence by those immigrants.

Those Arabic-speaking immigrants upon their arrival at the Netherlands are offered a loan to learn Dutch and the time limit for this loan is three years. During these three years, students are allowed to take courses at schools of their choice. The expectation would be that immigrants at these courses will gain the ability to articulate their thoughts using Dutch, to comprehend what they hear and to overcome the challenges imposed by face-to-face communication. In other words, students would learn "how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication" (Celce-Murcia et al., 2007, p.46). Gaining this ability will not only foster successful communication but also will enable these learners to integrate and become part of the target society; i.e. "to communicate as a member of a particular socio-cultural group" (Breen & Candlin, 2001, p.10). What this implies is that learners at these schools will be stimulated to actively interact in the lessons and consequently to learn the language as a tool of communication rather than as an abstract system of grammatical rules isolated from the underlying social implications and connotations. This is embedded in Hymes' theory of communicative competence: "the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour" (1972, p.286).

Thus, to be a successful communicator of a given language is to know how speakers of that language employ the linguistic elements in various contexts and what are the common uses expected to be produced at different occasions. What is emphasized here is that words have no communicative meaning on their own till they are combined in a way that is typically used by L1 speakers to achieve a certain communicative goal. Therefore, L2 teachers are expected to stimulate L2 learners to practice real life communication in the classroom environment. In other words, L2 learners need to be provided with the opprtunity to openly discuss any topic of interest, to raise any inquires, to involve in group/pair work and to be exposed to a broad range of topics. In this way, students will learn how to be successful communicators in the second language and subsequently will be able to integrate in the target society.

The current study was conducted to investigate the level of the communicative orientation fostered at some schools where Dutch is taught as a second language. That would ensure a better understanding of the difficulties faced by Arabic-speaking immigrants in their daily communications. To this end, a number of classrooms where Dutch is taught as a second language were observed.

After analysing the results of the classroom observations, two course books used in these classes were found to possess high control over the classroom activities. These books were also analysed to check their communicative orientation and to what extent they trigger active participation from students. In addition, the first and last chapters of each course book were compared to trace any shift in the communicative orientation throughout the book.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Communicative Competence

Communicative competence is first introduced by Hymes (1972) in an attempt to rectify Chomsky's (1965) view of competence which was confined merely to the linguistic domain and so ignoring the socio-cultural features naturally inherent in human communication. Hymes' definition of competence encompasses two competences that are essential for acquiring a second language: linguistic and sociolinguistic competences. While the former is connected to the ability to produce utterances that conform to the language-specific grammatical, morphological and phonetic norms, the latter "refers to a learner's ability to interpret an utterance for its social meaning" (Geeslin and Long, 2014, p.5). Canale and Swain (1980) who have adopted this definition elaborated it further by adding a third component, strategic competence. This component is "made up of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence." (Canale & Swain, 1980, p.30). A more detailed description of sociolinguistic competence was proposed later by Canale (1983) by introducing discourse competence as part of it. Discourse competence entails "the ability to produce and interpret language beyond the sentence level" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.42). This model was elaborated further by Celce-Murcia (1995) with the addition of actional competence as referring to "the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.42). Another revised model of communicative competence was proposed by Celce-Murcia (2007) as a synthesis of six competences that are interrelated and indispensable. In what follows, I introduce these six competences.

I. Sociocultural Competence

Students need to be exposed to the social composition of the target society and to be made familiar with the cultural norms that govern language use. In other words, students need to practice "how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication" (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.46). One of the examples that underpins the crucial role that pragmatics plays in the successful communication in L2 is the use of register-specific linguistic items.

Registers are language-specific. For example, certain linguistic choices could be available in the target language for indicating formality while they could be absent in the mother language. In Dutch, for instance, the use of the pronoun 'u' is expected in formal settings but for an English-speaking learner of Dutch, whose mother language doesn't make such differentiation in terms of pronouns, this choice is not default as its equivalent is absent in the mother tongue.
Metaphorical competence in the target language needs also to be part of the learner's sociocultural competence. Metaphor "is a cultural phenomenon that has significant impact on human psychology and how we conceive of and act in the world. The ability of native speakers to think and converse metaphorically gives naturalness to their discourse, which is often absent in L2 speech." (Bobrova & Lantolf, 2012, p.18). In other words, figurative language generally and metaphors specifically are, to a great extent, based on the culture and history of the target community. Thus, "metaphoric expressions can be understood varyingly by L2 or *lingua franca* users, with possible influence from their L1 cultures". (Musolff, 2017, p.8).

II. Discourse Competence

Discourse competence can be identified as "the ability to understand, create and develop forms of the language that are longer than sentences (stories, conversations, letters, …) with the appropriate cohesion, coherence and rhetorical organization to combine ideas." (Trujillo and Ortega, 2010, p.5) Meeting the expectations of the target-language speakers implies gaining insight into the ways they organise their thoughts, what they prioritize and what they marginalise, and how to achieve the balance in sentences by learning how to distribute the new and given information along the sentences. The logical organization of ideas; i.e. thematic organization and the rhetorical devices; both lexical and grammatical, that made a text sound natural, coherent and easy to be followed are skills that need also to be acquired to facilitate communication in the target language. Transferring merely the techniques used in the mother tongue or employing them without proper adjustments that fit the target language will foster miscommunication or disturb the natural flow of the learner's speech.

III. Formulaic Competence

"Formulaic competence refers to those fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in everyday interactions."(Celce-Murcia, 2007, p.47). Providing SL learners with these fixed chunks will help them to cope with the time pressure imposed by direct communication so instead of spending time on formulating their message, learners could resort to these chunks to convey that message or to fill in gaps of communication and gain some time till they can articulate their message. The basic advantage of formulaicity is that the fixed or prefabricated chunks are learned and stored as whole so they are also retrieved from the memory as whole. This was evident in an experiment conducted by Assassi and Benyelles (2016) which revealed progress in the communicative competence of students who had attended a number of sessions about formulaicity and consequently the researchers concluded that formulaic language should form an important part of the EFL curriculum.

IV. Interactional Competence

Interactional competence is a composite of two competences; conversational competence and actional competence. Fundamental to conversational competence are turn-taking and repair techniques such as opening and closing dialogue, signalling ambiguity, asking for further illustration, supporting the interlocutor's point of view of interrupting for the sake of relinquishing the floor…etc. The linguistic tools for achieving these interactional goals are culture-specific as well as context-specific. The second component is actional competence. By this competence, speech acts or how to perform actions via linguistic tools need to be in focus. Promising, asking a favour, apologizing, requesting, sympathizing, ordering, stating…etc. are performed via conventionalized utterances. In other words, "speech acts have standardised structural forms which are assigned to standardised language functions" (Kaburise, 2012, p.36).

V. Strategic Competence

Strategic competence "concerns the ability to express oneself in the face of difficulties or limited language knowledge."(Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991, p.16). It is a composite of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies (Canal & Swain, 1980). Non-verbal strategies can be developed via accessing real-life interactions in the target language. Therefore, "teachers and learners need to have access to videotapes or film clips that realistically demonstrate interlocutors' total behaviour (not just speech) during oral communication" (Celce-Murcia, 2007,p.52).

The verbal strategies, on the other hand, can be divided according to Corder (1983) into two types; message adjustment strategies and resource expansion strategies. Message adjusement strategies "involve the tailoring of one's message to one's resources" (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991, p.18). Resource expansion strategies, on the other hand, are of two types; the cooperative and the non-cooperative. By the cooperative type, the interlocutor is asked either directly or indirectly for help whereas by the non-cooperative type the speaker depends solely on his/her resources and tries to make the utmost benefit out of it. Among the strategies that are usually used in the non-cooperative type are; paraphrasing/circumlocution, approximation, using borrowed or invented words or resorting to other non-linguistic means such as referring to an item existent in the surrounding, using mime and gestures…etc. Paraphrasing is avoiding mentioning the name of a particular item and referring to it by mentioning its function or form. Approximation is using for instance the general term 'tree' to refer to a more specific type such as 'pine tree'. Borrowing can be either from the mother language or from a third language with which the interlocutor is familiar such as using the English noun 'environment' to refer to 'milieu' in Dutch. Inventing is using a logical combination of simple words to refer to a more complex one or by literal translation from the mother tongue. For instance, the Dutch noun '*afstandsbediening/* remote control' might not be in the SL learner's inventory and the literal translation from English would be 'afstand besturing'.

VI. Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence entails learning the lexical, semantic, syntactic, morphological and the phonological components of the target language. Classrooms with an explicit focus on language as a system are classified as form-focused. Opposite to this type is the content-focused instruction whereby form is learned inductively from the content rather than explicitly introduced.

The level of the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms is to be determined via estimating the degree to which all of these six skills are fostered in the classroom environment. The L2 classrooms which are investigated for the current study are those where Dutch is taught a second language.

2.2. Teaching Immigrants Dutch as a Second Language in the Netherlands

DUO (*Dienst Uitvoering Agency; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap)/* 'The Education Executive Agency of the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science' offers a loan to refugees upon their arrivals in order to register for courses to learn Dutch and do the compulsory integration exams. The time limit for this loan is three years. If students manage to integrate and learn Dutch minimally at the integration (A2) level, then this loan becomes a grant. During this period of three years, students are allowed to take courses at schools of their choice as long as these schools have the 'Blik op Werk' quality mark. 'Blik op Werk' is an agency that annually checks the quality of schools where Dutch is taught as L2. Three factors are taken into consideration in the quality survey; the qualifications of employees and the relevance of their education to the function they perform, the adherence of the contract conditions to the rules of the agency, and lastly students' satisfaction of schools and the education provided. What seems surprising is that the quality of education is not among the quality standards checked by this agency. Instead, the students' satisfaction is the sole determinant.

At the website of 'Blik of werk'; https://www.blikopwerk.nl/, there is a possibility to specify students' search for school. Students can identify a number of preferences and at the end only schools which have these will be listed. The website underlines a number of factors which are of key importance to the success of the learning process. The first factor is small class size since more time will be allocated to each student. The second is the same language level of classmates as that will ensure a rapid flow of the lesson. The last factor is whether all students of the same class start at the same time since, in that case, all students will be on the same track and thus no time is spent to integrate new students. Nonetheless, these factors are not obligatory conditions to grant the 'Blik op Werk' quality mark. So some schools allow students to join at any stage of the course, while others necessitate that when the course started, registration for that course is closed. Moreover, some schools specify the class size to 10 students while others accommodate 25 or more in one class. In addition, some schools have an evaluation test to identify the current level of students before starting a course while others take the student's demand as the only determinant.

What the 'Blik of Werk' website also offers is finding a school which offers a course that fits the student's level of Dutch. Normally four levels of Dutch are available at these schools; A1, A2, B1, B2, ranging from the very basic literacy course to the integration course to the two advanced courses. However, the demand for the B2 level is limited and thus not available at all schools. C1 level which is advanced is offered at the university level as it is needed for people who want to go further with their studies. DUO has a number of exams that are tailored to the skills required at each level. Passing the exams of the four skills of the A2 level; listening, speaking, reading and writing, is a minimum requirement to turn the loan into a grant. In addition, two subjects are obligatory at all levels; the first one is known as *KNM (Kennis van de Nederlandse Maatschappij)/* 'Knowledge of Dutch Society' and the second subject is ONA (Oriëntatie op de Nederlandse Arbeidsmarkt) 'Orientation on the Dutch Labour Market'. If a student passes the four exams of any level in addition to the two obligatory subjects then s/he will get the integration diploma. Students are allowed to take an exam several times in case of failure and there is a possibility to extend the loan period under certain circumstances. Once the student succeeds, the loan will be stopped and subsequent courses will therefore no longer be funded.

2.3. Previous Research Using Observation in L2 Classroom Settings

Research on classroom observation can be classified depending on the analytical perspective of researchers and the information to be elicited. Three main types of research can be identified: analysing verbal interaction, observing communication used in settings, and tracing differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms. Interaction Analysis research aims at analysing the verbal interaction in the classroom environments and thus studying "teaching behaviour by keeping track of selected events that occur during classroom verbal exchanges among teachers and students" (Etter, 2005, p.6). A typical instrument that is used for this kind of research is the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) developed by Flanders (1970), which was adopted in the second language field by Moskowitz (1976) who named it Flint (Foreign Language Interaction). Another well-known coding scheme that is used for L2 classroom observation is FOCUS, an acronym for Foci for Observing Communications Used in Settings. This coding instrument was developed by Fanselow (1977) to distinguish "five characteristics of communications: the source, the medium, the use, the content and the pedagogical purpose." (p.19). Sometimes, discovering how communicatively-oriented L2 classrooms are, would be the sole purpose of research. To this end, what is needed is a coding scheme that covers not only aspects of second language acquisition but also properties of communicative competence in the classroom pedagogical activities.

One of the pioneering observational schemes which was specifically designed to probe differences in communicative orientation of L2 classrooms is the COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language

Teaching) instrument developed by Fröhlich, Spada and Allen (1985). In that study, the researchers elicited data from thirteen classes in four different L2 programs in order to test the validity of the COLT observational scheme. Theories of communication competence, communicative language teaching and first and second language acquisition were the sources to derive the categories contained in that scheme. This scheme consists of two parts, part A and part B. Part A covers categories that provide insight into "classroom events at the level of episode and activity" (p.53). Part B digs deeply into each activity to reveal "the communicative features of verbal exchanges between teachers and students or among students themselves" (p.53). Part A was filled in real time during the classroom observation while part B was filled in based on the audiotape recording of the class.

The study started by making a number of assumptions about the main characteristics of the four programs observed; such as which classrooms would be form-focused, teacher centred and which would be meaning-oriented. When these expectations are met then the scheme developed would prove its validity in capturing the differences in the communicative orientation of the four programs observed. The communicative features included in part A were classified into four main categories; Participant organization, Content, Student Modality and Materials. Participant organization specified three main types of interaction; Whole Class, Group Work and Individual Seat Work. Secondly, content specified the types of topics discussed in the classroom activities; Management, Language, and Other topics which could be either of narrow, limited or broad reference. Indicating who controls the topic also fell under that category. The third section covered the various sorts of activities that students did during the classroom; listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The last section was about the type, source and use of the classroom materials.

Starting with participant organization, the results showed that whole-class interaction that was teacher-centred was the dominant category in the program where French is taught as a subject. Choral work was also common at that program. In contrast, a shift to individual seat work was documented in the most advanced course. Content-wise, time was coded in terms of form/meaning focus. Time observed was spent mostly on form in the basic L2 course while it was mostly dedicated to meaning in the most advanced courses where topics of broad range of reference are discussed. The length of text materials used in the classroom ranged from 'minimal' in the basic level to 'extended' in the more advanced one. Moreover, the source of materials used was analysed in terms of their origin and the purpose they fulfil. In the basic course, the purpose of the teaching materials was merely pedagogic while in the most advanced courses the materials designed for some other purpose (non-pedagogic) were used more frequently. Thus, the results ascertained the validity of this scheme in capturing the differences in the communicative orientation of the four programs observed.

Chen & Wright (2016) adopted a modified version of the COLT scheme for their classroom observations. The task-based version covered categories taken from the first part of the COLT observation scheme (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). What has been added to this scheme is the communicative continuum which was adapted from Littlewood (2011) and used to determine the 'communicativeness' of the classroom activities. The continuum was divided to five levels of communicativeness; non-communicative learning, pre-communicative language practice, communicative language practice, structured communication and authentic communication. The

quantitative data were analysed in terms of the time observed. Teacher-centred approach was reported as the classroom was mostly designed in the teacher-to-the-whole-class manner. Content-control was also analysed in terms of whether the student or the teacher controlled the topics of the lesson. The expectation is that in communicatively-oriented classrooms students involve more in open discussion to raise new topics and thus the teacher is not the only controller. The communicative continuum clearly revealed the communicative orientation of each activity. For instance, 'substitution' or 'using a filler word in place of a word or a phrase to avoid repetition' was labelled as non-communicative. In contrast, creative role-play activity is placed at the opposite positive end of the continuum and listed under 'authentic communication'. The data collected using the modified version of COLT scheme (TCOLT) were complemented by data gathered from interviewing the teachers and from the material analysis. The results revealed that teachers are acquainted with the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and its status as a preferred method. Nevertheless, their teaching practices didn't consistently resemble TBLT. Despite the strong institutional support, teachers were hesitant to apply TBLT especially at the beginner level which they preferred to structure in the standard form-focused model.

In sum, differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms could be linked to the different levels of L2 learned at these classes and to whether L2 is the subject or the medium of instruction (Fröhlich, Spada & Allen, 1985) in addition to the different perspectives of communicativeness taken by teachers (Chen & Wright, 2016; Moskowitz, 1976).

2.4. Previous research on the analysis of L2 course books

Analysing course books in terms of their communicative orientation can be conducted from different perspectives. Some kinds of analysis used checklist for analysing oral competence in course books such as the one conducted by Agulló, Bueno-Alastuey, Luque Agullo, and Camino Bueno-Alastuey (2017). In their analysis of the most used English language textbooks in the second year of Baccalaureate in Spain, they found out that oral competence is being developed in these course books. Nevertheless, these books are more focused on form. Other analysis has focused on the course book activities to determine their effectiveness in developing oral communication such as Abu and Maarof (2011)'s analysis of Saudi EFL (English as a Foreign Language) third year secondary textbooks. By analysing the oral communicative activities in these books, they found out that these books were highly structured and didn't contain free communicative activities. Other types of analysis aimed at classifying activities of course books in terms of their focus and then a general tendency in the book is to be determined according to the most common type. Gomez-Rodriguez (2010) identified three main sorts of activities; mechanical, meaningful, and communicative in their analysis of five English texts representative of those currently used in Colombia. They found out a prevailing dominance of the first two types over the communicative-practice type.
The different perspectives of materials analysis can be summarized in terms of three different levels introduced by Littlejohn (2011). According to Littlejohn (2011), the process of analysing language teaching materials can be conducted at three different levels; the 'objective description', the 'subjective analysis' and the 'subjective inference'. As we move from one level to the other, the analysis becomes deeper. The data included in the first level reveals explicit information such as the material type, the intended audience, design and layout…etc. The analysis at the second level becomes deeper as the materials will be divided into the tasks required to be performed by students

and teachers. Task is defined as referring to "any proposal contained within the materials for action to be undertaken by the learners, which has the direct aim of bringing about the learning of the foreign language". (Littlejohn, 2011, p.188). This level tackles questions about passive/active turn taking, form/meaning focus, mental operations required, participants, and lastly about the content which covers both input to the learner and the output required from that learner. The third and last level in the material analysis implies the subjective reflection on the data collected in the first two levels. For instance, if the percentage of the learners' active participation in the classroom is high and if the required output from the learner is set at an extended discourse then the teaching materials can be classified as communicatively-oriented.

The analysis by Criado and Sánchez (2009) was conducted on the second and third level. These researchers adopted an analysis of language teaching materials that reflects on the communicative nature of these materials to check whether the textbooks used for English language teaching (ELT) in Spain comply with the official methodological regulations that advocate the communicative language teaching method (CLTM). In their analysis they made the principles of communicative language teaching as the core of the evaluation process. They randomly picked up one unit per book to be representative of the whole book and then analysed the activities included in that unit. The activity is evaluated according to the goal it achieved; communicative/linguistic. The strategy applied to reach that goal is also analysed from two perspectives "(i) whether or not meaning and content are emphasized, and (ii) whether or not interaction is promoted" (p.8). Thus, the activities were placed along a scale from 0 (fully linguistic) to 10 (fully communicative) with 3 marks in between; 2.5, 5 , and 7.5. Strategies, on the other hand, were evaluated simply with two options; yes/no since they "either focus on the transmission/comprehension of meaning or on the learning of linguistic forms." (p.10).The results pointed to the prevailing communicative nature of all the materials under that study since more than 50% of the activities included in each unit were communicative in nature. In contrast, a concentration on the linguistic features; grammar and vocabulary is evidenced in the remaining non-communicative activities. In this sense, the textbooks used for teaching English in Spain complied with the official methodological regulations with a small variation that is justified by the complex nature of language learning.

In comparison, Van Batenburg, et al. (2018) adopted the three levels of analysis introduced by Littlejohn (2011) to analyse the course materials for English as a foreign language (EFL) used for Dutch prevocational learners in the Netherlands. They developed a coding scheme to analyse the activities that are thought to activate and develop the interactional competence. Sections 1 and 2 of their coding scheme resemble the ones used in Littlejohn (2011) scheme while section 3 was more detailed and modified to cover the requirements for developing the interactional ability. For that purpose many features of Bueno-Alastuey and Agulló (2015)'s tool for analysing oral competence were adopted and modified to cover oral interaction. The three stages of interaction; pre-interaction, during-interaction, and post-interaction were covered in each section. Among the factors that are taken into account in order to evaluate the activities as fostering oral interaction or not are the availability of a sample dialogue, whether the speech production is spontaneous or prescribed, whether the activity is form-focused or meaning-focused, whether the activity engage students in limited or extended discourse…etc. Materials were also evaluated in terms of their reference to the interactional strategies and how they provide venue for learners to practice these strategies. The results revealed a focus on developing the language knowledge rather than on developing the language as a tool of interaction. In addition, interactional strategies were not

fostered in these materials while interactional practice was limited in context as merely the personal and the public contexts were covered.

In sum, taking different analytical perspectives, the studies mentioned above predominantly revealed that L2 course books are form-focused. (Agulló et al., 2017; Van Batenburg et al., 2018, Abu and Maarof, 2011). The analysis by Criado and Sánchez (2009) was the only one which pointed to the prevailing communicative nature of all the materials under that study.

The current study aims to gain a view of the communicative orientation of classrooms where Dutch is taught as a second language. To this end, the first part of the COLT coding scheme is used as a tool of observation of the didactics and classroom activities. The materials that seem to possess high control over the classroom activities are analysed to gain an insight into their communication orientation and into the type and length of the active role they assign to learners. Another analysis is conducted to reveal any shift in the communicative orientation throughout the books.

In sum, the current study aims to address four research questions:

1. To what extent are L2 classrooms where Dutch is taught as a second language communicatively oriented?
2. How communicatively oriented are the materials that possessed high control over classroom activities?
3. How actively involved do these materials require the learners to be?
4. Is there any shift in the communicative orientation to be traced throughout the books?

3. Method: Classroom Observations

Through various visits to a number of schools where Dutch is taught as a second language, an analysis of the didactics applied at these schools was conducted in an attempt to gain insight into the communicative orientation of Dutch L2 classrooms and into the active role assigned to students at these classrooms. The COLT observational scheme was adopted and slightly modified to capture details that articulated how communicatively-oriented the classroom is and to what extent students are actively involved in the classroom. The details listed in the scheme were checked off upon attending the various classes. In addition, the teaching materials that seemed to control the learning process in the classroom were analysed in terms of their communicative orientation and the type and length of output they require from students.

3.1. Participating schools, courses attended and attendants of these courses

A. Participating Schools and courses attended

Three schools were selected from the Rotterdam region where two different levels of the Dutch language are offered; A2 and B1. The first one is affiliated with an organization that offers newly-arrived immigrants help in all their official correspondences and helps them throughout their integration process. This institution is called *VWN 'vluchtelingenwerk Nedeland'*/refugee institution in the Netherlands'. The reason behind choosing this school was that it is thought to have a general overview of the communication problems immigrants suffer from and so it is expected to tailor its courses in accordance with these needs. The second school is where I previously learned Dutch and is known as *NCB BV;* two locations were visited in this study. This school was chosen since their course books are designed for self-study. Consequently, course books are expected to have minor control in the classroom. The third school is randomly chosen from the 'Blik op Werk' website after checking the availability of the courses under study. It is also situated in Rotterdam and called *Tulp Training*. These schools provide A1 level as well but this level was excluded from the current study since it is very basic and confined to the basic linguistic knowledge; letters, basic grammatical roles and a number of short sentences. In contrast, the two levels included in this study form the crucial period during which the communicative competence is expected to be developed. C1 level, on the other hand, is very advanced and is offered at universities rather than at schools as the demand for it is very limited and the teaching requirements are higher. Another level that could be relevant to the current study is B2 but it is rarely offered and thus observing it at different schools was not possible.

B. Attendants

Attendants of the courses observed in this study are immigrants who have been living in the Netherlands for less than 3 years and they come from various backgrounds. The majority of those students are Arabic-speakers from Syria and Iraq. They live in the Rotterdam region and they attend three language classes per week. Attending language courses is the first step in their civic integration process since they do not only learn the language at these courses but they also get familiarized with the Dutch society, labour market, social values, history and law. At the initial stages, these immigrants are offered help from various governmental and non-governmental

organizations to manage their official correspondences and to carry on some daily activities. Another source of support to those immigrants is language coaches provided by some schools. Language coaches help students to practice what they have learned at schools and to answer any language-specific inquires. However, some language coaches go beyond that to provide assistance in formal correspondences and other administrative issues. This support is provided as long as these students are registered in the language courses and stops when they pass their integration exams.

3.2. Materials: COLT Observational Scheme as Modified for the Current Study

The observational scheme was developed based on the one used by Fröhlich and Allen (1985). Part A "describes classroom events at the level of episode and activity" (p.53). It covers topics related to activity type, participant organization, content covered in these activities, student modality and materials. A number of sections were modified by adding more detailed categories that specify to what extent students are actively involved in the classroom environment. In addition, procedures and tools that could motivate such involvement are covered by the addition of the following subsections;

- the availability of a mentor to supervise a group
- the availability of helpful tools during individual seat work
- students' participation is facilitated via pre-planning
- students' participation depends merely on the students' willingness to communicate
- students are assigned roles randomly

To check the feasibility of the observational scheme and the possibility of observing all details specified in it, an appointment for a pilot lesson was made. Pilot testing is an important means of assessing the feasibility and usefulness of the data sampling and collection methods, and revising them before they are used with the research participants." (Gass & Mackey,2007, p.3). The lesson attended is for A2 level or the integration level by *Tulp Training* and the results of this pilot lesson are not included.

One of the areas that proved to be confusing during the pilot lesson is the section pertaining to 'content'. Given the fine-grained details listed under the three categories in this section, a clear boundary needed to be highlighted at least between two of these categories; 'language' and 'other topics'. These two sections overlapped at some point. For instance, the teacher covered the sociolinguistic aspect of the use of modal verbs by providing examples from everyday life which is limited in reference. The concentration was on the form and its sociolinguistic implication so 'language' needs to be checked rather than 'other topics' of the limited reference. That's why in the subcategory 'language', the phrase 'focus on form' was added to the heading while the phrase 'focus on meaning' was added to the heading 'other topics'. That clarified any confusion during the pressure of real time observation. In addition, that clear boundary ensured consistency of observation.

In Table (1) below the observational scheme is provided:

Table 1: Adapted COLT Scheme Used for Classroom Observations

Materials	**Use**			No Control			
				Semi Control			
				High control			
	Source			Non-pedagogic			
				Semi-pedagogic			
				Pedagogic			
	Type	Visual					
		Audio					
		text		Extended			
				minimal			
content	**Topic Control**			student			
				Teacher/student			
				teacher			
	Other Topics	**Broad**		other			
				World T.			
				Imagination			
				Pers./Ref.			
				abstract			
		limited		other			
				School T.			
				Fam./Com.			
				Rou./Soc.			
				personal			
		narrow		other			
				Pers.Bio			
				Stereotyp.			
				classroom			
	Language			sociolinguistics			
				discourse			
				function			
				form			
	MAN.			discipline			
				procedure			
Participants organization	**Individual Seat Work**	**-tools**					
		+ tools					
	Group Work	**Different tasks**					
		Same task					
		+ mentor					
	Whole class	S-S/C	**WTC**				
		S-S/C	**Random assignment**				
		S-S/C	**Pre-planning**				
		T-S/C					
Student Modality	**Open discussion**						
	Speaking limited to answering a question						
	writing						
	Group/pair discussion						
	Watching video						
	listening						
	presenting						
	reading						
Activity							
Time							

This observation scheme was developed after taking the components of communicative competence (as described in the theoretical background, parag.no.2.1.) into consideration. Below some clarification is provided about the connection between some of the classroom activities included in the list and the relevant communicative elements they represent.

In the first section headed 'time', the duration of the classroom activities can be written down in minutes. The following section 'activity' gives a brief general description of the activity taking place. Section 3 which is about 'student modality' allows for determining the extent of students' active involvement in the classroom activities. This section in the original COLT scheme was confined to the basic skills such as speaking, listening, writing and speaking; but in this study it is elaborated to contain presenting, watching video, group/pair discussion. Furthermore, speaking was divided into speaking limited to answering one question, involving in group/pair discussion, and getting involved in an open discussion. The rationale behind this specification is to get a clear picture of the active role assigned to students in these activities. When students are required to provide a prescribed answer then they are limitedly active. In contrast, involving in group/pair discussion or in open discussion imposes higher demands on students such as the negotiation of meaning, asking for further explanation or even initiating a turn. Another differentiation that is made is between watching video and listening to an audio recording. Through watching videos, students get acquainted with the non-verbal tools adherent to L2 such body language, personal spaces, eye movement and gestures while in an audio recording these features are absent. (see section 2.1. parag. V). The last modality that has been added is *presenting*. The skills related to discourse competence can be activated via presentations. When a topic needs to be presented to the whole class, the student will ensure that his thoughts are logically arranged and the deictic expressions are clearly identified while simultaneously all what s/he says is coherent.

The fourth section covers 'participant organization' and it consists of three subsections 'whole class', 'group activity' and 'individual seat work'. Fine-grained details were added to each of these subsections. In the subsection related to 'whole class', the student's interaction with another student or with the whole class was detailed to figure out whether that involvement was facilitated by previous preparation or it was merely derived by the student's willingness to communicate or the role was randomly assigned to that student by the teacher. The reason behind this specification is to shed light on any underlying factors that could have facilitated that active involvement. Willingness to participate implies that the student is familiar with the skills implicit in turn-taking. Those skills include techniques on how to get the floor, how to contribute to conversation and how to interrupt and backchannel. The second facilitating factor in communication could be previous planning as it enables students to organize their thoughts before articulating them while simultaneously it alleviates stress imposed by constraints of time. The last tool that could ensure active participation from students is random assignment. Assigning turns randomly can be used in order to involve students who otherwise would fail to get the floor in the classroom activities.

The second subsection related to participant organization is 'group work'. This subsection in Fröhlich and Allen's (1985) paper was concerned with the task to be performed and whether groups are working on the same or different tasks. What was added to this subsection is the availability of a mentor or teacher assistant to supervise these groups. Mentors or teacher assistants will not only

provide guidance and comment on any mistakes that could be acquired by fellow group members if they are not directly highlighted and corrected, but they will also be the reference when communication is interrupted due to incompetency and thus keep the flow of conversation going. Furthermore, mentors/teacher assistants will be representatives of the sociocultural norms of interaction.

The last subsection in the 'participant organization' which is 'Individual seat work' was further subdivided to specify whether students' participation is facilitated by the availability of some helpful tools or not. Providing students with the means to complete a task; computer, dictionary or books, is expected to facilitate learning in the classroom. One of the advantages of these tools is clarifying ambiguities by providing translation to the student's mother tongue or to a third language that the student speaks. The second advantage is expanding the scope of L2 exposure beyond the classroom context. The third advantage is providing access to some fixed and prefabricated chunks of language as in the case of using a dictionary.

The two other sections; 'content' and 'materials' in Part A were initially adopted without any modification as they were deemed enough to provide the information essential to the current study. The section 'content' is subdivided in terms of the topic highlighted in the corresponding activity; classroom management, language and other topics. Under 'classroom management', two possibilities are listed; explaining some procedures or informing students about some disciplinary roles. 'Language' is to be checked when the focus is merely on the linguistic form, or on the function it achieves, or on its role in the discourse level, or on its appropriateness in a given social context. Topics outside the scope of these two categories are classified in terms of their reference; 'narrow', 'limited' and 'broad'. When the reference is merely to "the immediate classroom environment and to stereotyped exchanges" (Fröhlich, Spada and Allen, 1985, p.54), then the content is be considered of the narrow type while when the reference goes beyond the classroom to cover some personal topics about the students' personal circumstances then the topic moves to the limited scope. The topic is of the broad type when the reference is to abstract topics such as topics covered currently in the news. As stated earlier, the only modification to this section was made after attending the pilot lesson. As described above, a clear boundary between the 'language' and 'other topics' categories was drawn by adding 'focus on form' to the 'language' heading and the phrase 'focus on meaning' to the 'other topics' heading. The last subsection listed under content pertains to topic control. The observation scheme allows for noting whether the student is the initiator and suggests any topic of interest to him/her or to the entire class or whether only the teacher has full topic control or both seem to have control. If the teacher has the full control then students would merely follow without getting the opportunity to address any topic of interest.

The last category that needs to be observed in the scheme is materials. The materials used in the classroom are observed in terms of type, source and use. What needed to be specified under the subcategory 'type' is whether the material used is text (minimal or extended), audio or video. The source is defined in terms of three possibilities; pedagogic, semi-pedagogic, or non-pedagogic. When the materials are designed specifically for L2 teaching then 'pedagogic' needs to be checked. On the contrary, 'non-pedagogic' materials are authentic and intended for non-school purposes. The third category; 'semi-pedagogic' refers to the authentic materials that are adapted for educational purposes.

The subcategory covering use implies to what extent the materials used have control on the classroom activities; high, semi, or minimal. If the lesson is planned merely to do the activities in the book, then the materials have high control over the classroom activities. 'Semi-control' is noted when the teacher occasionally elaborated by the use of extra materials. The materials are considered of minimal control when they are used merely as a starting point for discussing a wide range of topics.

3.3. Procedure

Tulp Training was contacted for attending a pilot lesson. The lesson attended was for A2 level or the integration level. Upon attending this lesson, I sat among students as I thought that would alleviate the unrest caused by the attendance of an observer in the class. However, what happened was the contrary; students sitting next to me were very curious to raise questions about what I was checking on the screen and they tried to understand the scheme I used. Thus, sitting aside proved to be a better option for the real classroom observations as students would be less distracted.

Another challenge faced during the pilot lesson was filling in all the fine-grained details relating to one activity due to the constraints of time. As a solution for this challenge, a detailed description of the activity was provided in real time while its classification in terms of categories was postponed to a later stage at home and in case of uncertainty the audio recording was the reference. Audio recording was intended to clarify any confusion related to a specific activity or the time consumed on that activity. This recording was done upon written approval of the director of the school. The teachers' and the students' approval were orally obtained by the researcher at the beginning of each lesson where brief description of the research was presented to students in Dutch and before any observation was made. In appendix A, a copy of the permission approval form is attached. What was made clear in that form is that the recordings will be solely used for research purposes and the school has right to withdraw that permission whenever they want. The form conforms to the standards set by Leiden University.

The third tip learned from the pilot lesson is that the section related to the type of the materials used needed minor attention during the observation. This section specifies three categories; text, audio and video and these are implicitly covered in the section related to 'student modality; as by watching video, reading, listening…etc. As a consequence, this section was marginalised in the real classroom observations and was merely checked in terms of the length of the text materials; minimal versus extended or when a combination of materials was used for a single activity.

After contacting the three schools participating in this study, a schedule was set to attend one class at one school per day as schools are situated far from each other and visiting more than one school on the same day was not possible. The director of each school was the point of contact so s/he approached the teachers to get their consent. A number of teachers found the presence of a research inconvenient both to them and to their students and that is the reason behind attending at two different locations of *NCB BV*. Others were very interested and even showed their interest in the results later.

The timing of the lesson also played a role in determining the order of attendance. Each school offered three classes for each level per week and the days and timings of each level overlapped with those of another. Schools also overlap in terms of days and timings of the lessons offered. So after

intersecting the available classes with their timings at the three schools, the attendance schedule was set for April and shared with the directors to inform the teachers. The first class attended was of A2 level at the *VWN* in their school in Spijkenisse. That was followed by a class of B1 level at *Tulp training* in Rotterdam Zuid and then again a B1 class at *VWN Spijkenisse*. At NCB BV, a B1 class was attended first at their location in Kruisplein and then an A2 class at their location in Barendrecht. The final class was an A2 class by *Tulp Training* in Zuidplein.

Every class lasted for three hours with approximately a half hour pause. I was present 10 minutes before class to get the observational scheme ready on laptop and to set the mobile phone in a way that both students' and teacher's voice can be clearly recorded. A brief introduction about the research was presented at the beginning of each class and an oral permission was obtained from students for the voice recording. Any ambiguities related to the classroom activities were documented and raised in a small conversation with the teacher at the end of the lesson. Contact information of teachers interested in the research was saved not only to share the findings of the study but also for any further inquiries about the class.

4. Results: Classroom Observations

Each of the six classes was arranged differently both in terms of the number of activities and in terms of the type of activities. While one class contained a lot of short exercises, the other was based on five main activities that provided more avenues for discussion. Furthermore, some teachers chose to make one grammatical tense the topic of the whole lesson while others were more interested in exploring new vocabulary and the different contexts in which this vocabulary is used. In what follows, I will first briefly describe the activities of each class and then proceed with the detailed analysis of the data collected at each of the five sections in the scheme.

Starting with the A2 level at *Tulp Training,* this class was arranged in the form of 'teacher to the whole class' or 'student to the whole class' interaction and the focus was on teaching grammar, correcting pronunciation and dictating some words to check spelling. The students' interaction in this class was limited to reading aloud a number of words or providing short answers. Moreover, their speech was limited in length and in most cases prescribed by the book or the teacher. Limited reference to pragmatics was noted such as how to ask for help in a station or how to appreciate the help provided by someone.

The interaction at the other class at *Tulp Training;* B1 Level, was most of the time in one direction; teacher to students. The teacher spent the lesson focusing on the rules of the simple past and the present perfect and how different factors related to the spelling needed to be taken into consideration. That's why the students' interaction was limited to asking for clarification or providing examples. The content covered was limited to the examples used.

In contrast, the teacher of the A2 class at the *NCB School* used a communicative teaching method where students were encouraged to integrate their thoughts and their personal experiences in the explanation of the lesson. The teacher created a discussion thread about one word and asked students for their thoughts. For instance, the adjective *hierarchische* 'hierarchal' was introduced with a link to the students' Arabic culture by mentioning the pyramids. Another reference was to the context where the noun from this adjective is to be expected; work hierarchy. In addition, codified gesture was used to represent its form and an example about the different positions at the *NCB School* and how people report to each other was also given for insuring comprehensibility. Moreover, grammar was taught inductively by asking students to provide examples about the present perfect and then induce the rule from their examples. Students were encouraged to work in groups on authentic materials taken from newspapers.

Students at the B1 class at the *NCB School* were also involved in discussion, albeit in a limited manner. Students in this class were mostly passive learners who could ask questions and very limitedly contribute to the discussion. In comparison, the teacher expanded the scope of discussion by providing a lot of information related to education, the culture and history of the Netherlands, technology and health. In other words, the lesson was very informative to students and contained many links to real life scenarios, but students were provided small opportunity for communication.

In contrast, students at the B1 class at the *VWN School* were stimulated to communicate during the entire lesson. Pre-planning facilitated students' interaction as most of the exercises were given

previously as homework. However, the high control of the teaching materials affected the active role assigned to students. Focus on form sometimes overweighed the focus on meaning. The interaction in the class was either 'teacher to the whole class' or 'student to the whole class'. Group work or pair work was not documented since there were merely 4 students in that class. At the beginning of the lesson the group was bigger but students were divided according to their progress in the B1 level. Two other advanced groups were supervised by two teacher assistants whereas the group observed is taught by the teacher. Body language, drawing and gesture were used as means for clarification.

In comparison, the students at the other class at the *VWN School*; A2 level were not involved in similar sorts of discussion. Instead, they were asked to do the exercises specified in the book and to give short prescribed answers in turn. Giving an answer was time-consuming and a lot of correction was needed from the teacher on the pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary level.

In what follows, the observations at all sections of the scheme are presented. The calculations of all sections were made in terms of total number of activities except time of interaction since time needs necessarily to be the unit. The first reason behind choosing the activity as a unit rather than time is that part A of the original COLT scheme was intended to describe classroom environment at the level of activity. The second reason is that the lesson plan introduced at the beginning of each lesson showed almost equal division of time among activities. The third reason is that the categories and parameters checked off at the level of an activity as a whole is more representative of the actual situation than that checked at the level of individual minutes. For instance, the participant organization at the level of one activity was 'teacher-to-the-whole-class'; thus students were passive listeners. When that organization is to be checked at the level of individual minutes, some instances of 'speaking limited to answering one question' will be documented. However, this participation is marginal as it is limited to providing one verb as an example. Calculating these different instances will collectively sum up to 'student-to-the-whole-class' participation if it is to be calculated in terms of time while in terms of activity the actual dominant category will be reflected.

4.1. The Time of Student's Interaction vs. Teacher's Interaction

Every lesson attended lasted for 3 hours. However, lessons varied in the duration of the pause taken. In table (2) below the actual duration of each lesson is given after excluding the pause. It is essential to mention that the time spent on an activity whereby the students needed to write is excluded as there is no interaction during such activities. What was also excluded from the student's time is the individual seat work on the website affiliated with the book as communication is absent in this modality. That clarifies why the percentages given don't add up to 100%.

Table 2: The time of students' vs. teacher's interaction given in percentages

Lesson (number of students)	Total time exc. pause	Teacher	Students	Time per one student
A2 *VWN* (4)	130	37%	51%	12.8%
B1 *VWN* (5)	156	53%	46%	9.2%
A2 *NCB* (9)	160	56%	45%	5%
B1 *NCB* (8)	165	53%	41%	5.1%

A2 *Tulp Training (13)*	151	44%	31%	2.4%
B1 *Tulp Training* (16)	144	69%	24%	1.5%

This table also elucidates the percentage of the students' oral interaction in comparison to that of the teacher. These percentages were calculated via dividing the total time (in minutes) of the teacher interaction by the total time of the lesson and then multiplying by 100. The percentages related to the students' time was calculated in a similar manner.

It is noticeable that in all classes the teacher is the dominant speaker during the lesson and the time consumed by all students collectively is less than that consumed by the teacher. The only exception is the lesson for A2 level at the *VWN School*. That can be explained by the high control of the materials used over classroom activities. Students needed to provide short, prescribed answers to the questions in the book so the structure of the lesson is provided by the book and the teacher just provided explanation, commented on answers, and explained some grammatical roles. Notwithstanding this, the percentage of time devoted to individual student at this class is still limited compared to that devoted to the teacher.

The other percentages for all classes show no obvious differences in terms of the time used by the teacher and that by the students collectively. However, when the time devoted to the individual student is compared to that devoted to the teacher, the teacher's dominance in the interaction will be clear. For instance, the A2 class at *Tulp Training* contained 13 students so every student is given only a minor opportunity to communicate (2.4%). Thus every student was assigned a role limited to answering one or two questions from the book.

4.2. Student Modality

Some of the activities listed under student modality were never documented by any of the classes observed such as watching video or were used merely at one class such as presenting. Other activities were common among all classes, although in variant degrees, as it is apparent in table (3). The number of the occurrences of one modality was divided by the total number of the activities taken place in the class and the result was multiplied to calculate a percentage. What is worth mentioning here is that at some activities two modalities were registered; i.e. there was an overlap between modalities. For instance, students were converting sentences to the present perfect while the teacher was highlighting the different spelling rules applied at each sentence. So here both 'listening' and 'speaking limited to answering one question' is to be checked. This justifies why some percentages don't sum up to 100%.

Table 3: Student Modality: All activities are given in percentages

Student modality								
Classes	reading	presenting	listening	Watching video	Group/pair discussion	writing	Speaking limited to one question	Open discussion
A2 *Tulp Training*	5%	0	26%	0	0	42%	42%	0
B1 *Tulp Training*	0	0	60%	0	0	40%	20%	0
A2 *VWN*	8%	8%	33%	0	17%	0	17%	17%
B1 *VWN*	0	0	18%	0	0	0	81%	9%
A2 *NCB*	0	0	11%	0	22%	11%	0	56%
B1 *NCB*	0	0	14%	0	0	43%	43%	0

The most common modality is listening. Teachers tended to lead the interaction by explaining procedures, rules and vocabulary in addition to providing links to real life situations. In some classes, students were passive listeners as is the case in the B1 class at *Tulp Training* with the highest percentage. During this class, students were given small opportunity to raise some questions in case of incomprehensibility and to give some examples. The second highest percentage was documented at the A2 class at the *VWN* School. Students at this class were at the starting stages of their learning process and the teacher spent a lot of time introducing new vocabulary by means of drawing, gestures, and sometimes other languages. The rest of students' time was divided moderately among all other modalities as the teacher tried to keep the development of all their language skills parallel.

The second common activity is 'speaking limited to answering one question' with the highest percentage documented at the B1 class at the *VWN School.* Due to the high control of the materials, students' answers were mostly restricted in content as the exercises prescribed the answers. This class was planned mostly for doing homework given to students beforehand. The other highest percentages were documented at the B1 class at the *NCB School* and at the A2 class by *Tulp Training* successively. At the B1 class by the *NCB School*, students' active role was limited to providing short answers or asking a number of questions. Most of the time, students were working individually to write answers related to external materials. Similarly the students' answers at the A2 class at *Tulp Training* were limited in length and prescribed by the book. The organization of the lesson resembled to a great extent the organization of the book. One common activity in that lesson was a choral repetition of a number of words read out by the teacher and this was followed by individual repetition of these words with the teacher correcting the pronunciation. The other class where this modality was observed is the A2 class by the *VWN School*, although in a small percentage.

Other modalities were dominantly present at some classes while they were totally absent at others. As table (3) elucidates the modality 'writing' was used at both classes by *Tulp Training* and also at both classes by the *NCB School,* although in variant degrees. As a step for the preparation of some exercises, this modality was used to give students extra time to formulate their answers, to find out mistakes in some texts, and to convert some sentences from tense to tense. At the *NCB School*,

another usage was observed. Students needed to work individually on the website affiliated with the book.

A similar distribution was found for 'open discussion'. This modality was very common at the A2 class at the *NCB School* and totally absent from the B1 class at the *NCB School* and the A2 and B1 classes at *Tulp Training*. The teacher of the A2 class at the *NCB School* used this modality most of the time to involve students in the learning process and to expand the scope of discussion by stimulating students to share their ideas and their personal experiences and even related elements from their culture. This modality was also used at the A2 class by the *VWN School* as a means to negotiate meaning. Students were invited to contribute to the explanation of new vocabulary and to raise any topic of interest. Thus, although the class was characterized by high adherence to the course materials, there was some opportunity for authentic and original input from students. At the B2 class by the *VWN School*, this modality was limitedly used when students wanted to inquire over other uses of the vocabulary introduced or wanted to help their colleagues using their shared mother tongue.

The other three modalities were either observed at only 2 classes or merely at one and with low percentages. Starting with 'group/pair discussion', this modality is used at the A2 class by the *NCB School* and in smaller percentages at the A2 class by the *VWN School.* In contrast, it was totally absent from the other classes. The use of the mother tongue for facilitating the discussion was allowed at both classes. The other two modalities were very rare in all classes. 'Presenting' was used only at the A2 class of the *VWN School*. It was limited to describing a number of photos to the whole class. Every photo needed to be described in one sentence, consequently the output required was limited in length. 'Reading' was also used at this class as a preparation for a listening activity. In other words, students were asked to read the questions about one audio recording before listening to that recording. 'Reading' was also documented at the A2 class by *Tulp Training*. Students were asked to read out the new vocabulary while the teacher commented and corrected the pronunciation.

4.3. Participant organization

Another dimension of the classroom observations was 'participant organization'. Table (4) below represents the distribution of all kinds of participant organizations among the six classes observed. Percentages were calculated via dividing the number of the occurrences of each type by the total number of classroom activities and then multiplying the result by 100. Sometimes, the teacher is addressing the whole class while a student raises a question or provides examples, in this case both 'student to the whole class' and 'teacher to the whole class' were documented and calculated. These instances led to percentages that sum up to more than 100%. Similarly, when students were busy in their individual seat work, the teacher went to each student individually to give comments. In such cases, both 'teacher to student' and 'individual seat work' were documented.

Table 4: The percentages of the different types of participant organizations among all classes

Participants Organization										
Classes	Whole class					Group/Pair work			Individual seat work	
	T-C/S	S-C/S: random assignment	S-S/C: pre-planning	S-S/C: WTC	choral	+ mentor	Same task	Different tasks	+ tools	-tools
A2 *Tulp Taining*	42%	26%	42%	0	5%	0	0	0	21%	0
B1 *Tulp Taining*	80%	20%	0	0	0	0	0	0	40%	0
A2 *VWN*	42%	0	0	25%	0	0	25%	0	9%	0
B1 *VWN*	37%	9%	64%	0	0	0	9%	0	0	0
A2 *NCB*	67%	0	11%	45%	0	0	22%	0	11%	0
B1 *NCB*	71%	28%	14%	0	0	0	0	0	42%	0

- T-C/S stands for teacher to the whole class/or to individual student
- S-S/C stands for student to the whole class/ or to another student

Similar to table (Table 2: The time of students' vs. teacher's interaction given in percentages), table (4) shows that the dominant speaker in all classes is the teacher. In other words, the interaction was mostly in one direction; 'teacher to the whole class'. The highest percentage was by the B1 class at *Tulp Training. A*s stated earlier the teacher spent the whole lesson explaining to students the present perfect and the simple past while students were randomly asked to give examples. Thus, their active interaction was very limited. The 'individual seat work' was used in this lesson to convert a number of sentences from one tense to the other. Meanwhile the teacher was talking to each student individually to comment on their mistakes.

Another high percentage of 'teacher to the whole class/ student' was found at the B1 class by *the NCB School*. At that class, the teacher linked what was learned in the class to real life scenarios, to history, to the Dutch culture, and even to recent trends in technology. In that sense, students were passive listeners who were randomly assigned roles to provide short answers. The percentage of 'teacher to the whole class/student' was also high at the other class by the *NCB School*. However, it is parallel to that of the 'student to the whole class/student', in its two types. As was mentioned earlier, the class was arranged in the form of open discussion where teacher and students equally participated in that discussion. Willingness to communicate was more common than pre-planning in that class. Since students contributed spontaneously to the discussion by linking what is discussed to their personal experiences, their culture and their education…etc. Pre-planning was merely used to infer some differences between two texts. Contrastively, 'pre-planning' facilitated most of the students' interaction both at the B1 class by the *VWN School* and at the A2 class by *Tulp Training*. Most of the exercises were given previously as homework. Students in these classes were providing prescribed answers to the exercises in the book and from some extra materials.

Group/pair work on the same task were observed by two A2 classes at *VWN School* and at the *NCB School* and in a very small percentage at the B1 class by the *VWN School.* This kind of interaction was

absent in the other classes. The last type of participant organization which is 'individual seat work' was also facilitated by tools; mainly by the translation programs available online on the students' mobiles. These programs provided translation to the students' mother languages. The high percentage documented for the B1 class at NCB School is due to the individual work on the computers while the high percentage for the A2 class at *Tulp Training* is due to the individual work on the extra materials with a focus on grammar.

4.4. Content

This feature is concerned with the focus of each classroom activity. Sometimes, one activity could fulfil different functions, such as underlying one grammatical rule and providing the function which that rule fulfils. In such instances, both form and function were observed. The focus of another activity could be form but this form is incorporated in a context with a broad reference. In that case, both form and broad needed to be checked. Table (5) shows which topics were highlighted and covered in each class. The percentages were calculated by dividing the number of the occurrences of each category on the total number of classroom activities and then multiplying the result by 100.

Table 5: Content Feature as Observed at the Six Classes

Content																				
Classes	Mang.	language					meaning													
							narrow				Limited					broad				
	procedure	discipline	form	function	discourse	sociolinguistics	classroom	Stereotyp.	Pers./Bio.	other	personal	Rout./Soc.	Fam./Com.	School T.	other	abstract	Pers./Ref.	Imagination	World T.	other
A2 *Tulp Training*	5%	0	47%	42%	0	0	0	15%	0	26%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B1 *Tulp Training*	0	0	100 %	0	0	0	0	0	0	20%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A2 *VWN*	0	0	59%	8%	0	0	0	0	0	8%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25%
B1 *VWN*	0	0	91%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45%
A2 *NCB*	11 %	0	56%	0	0	0	0	0	0	22%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34%
B1 *NCB*	29 %	0	71%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	57%

In all classes, there is a dominance of form over the other categories with 100% dominance at the B1 class at *Tulp Training*. This focus on form was sometimes moderated by incorporating this form in texts with broad reference, as was the case at the B1 class by the *NCB Schoo*l. Though the focus of one activity was on the relative pronouns, the teacher went beyond the grammar to talk about the content of the example sentences referring sometimes to history and culture. The other B1 class at the *VWN School* also used context of broad reference such as health, regulations and fines. These topics were discussed upon introducing new vocabulary that is commonly used in these contexts.

Topics of broad reference were also documented at the A2 class by the *NCB School*. As students contributed to the discussion, they expanded its scope. Moreover, the teacher made the vocabulary relevant to students by making references to their daily life and to their culture. The topics of broad reference observed at the A2 class by the *VWN School* came from another source. One exercise in the course book was over daily news whereby many national and international events were reported. Some instances of content with narrow reference were also documented. For instance, students at the A2 class by the *VWN School* were asked to describe their dream house using a number of adjectives. In that sense, not only the spelling rules related to adjectives are highlighted but they were incorporated in context, albeit of narrow reference.

'Function' was the focus of the A2 class at *Tulp Training.* At their starting stages, students learned how to achieve certain purposes using language such as asking for direction, apologizing, conveying appreciation…etc. Consequently, stereotypical chunks or collocations were introduced. This category was also highlighted at the A2 class at the *VWN School* but in a very small percentage 5%. During the other classes, 'function' was never in focus. 'Management' was checked only by introducing the schedule of the day. The other instance was documented for explaining the exam procedures during the B1 class at the *NCB School*.

4.5. Topic Control:

Table (6) shows who determined the classroom topic. From this table it can be seen that for the main part or even totally (A2 *Tulp Training*), the teacher alone determined the topic. The students' contribution was limited to asking one question about different topics and getting a short direct answer to that question. The only exception to this generalization is the A2 class at the *NCB School*. Students were actively involved in the lesson and decided the range of topics to be discussed at the class. Sometimes, the teacher and the students collaboratively decided the topic of discussion.

Table 6: Topic Control Presented in Percentages

Topic Control			
classes	teacher	Student/teacher	student
A2 *Tulp Taining*	100%	0	0
B1 *Tulp Taining*	90%	0	10%
A2 *VWN*	90%	0	10%
B1 *VWN*	90%	0	10%
A2 *NCB*	45%	33%	22%
B1 *NCB*	90%	0	10%

4.6. Materials

Table (7) elucidates the type and source of materials used in the six classes observed in addition the type of control these materials possessed over the classroom activities. The type and source of materials were identified at the level of each activity. Then the total number of the occurrences of

each category was divided on the total number of activities and the result was multiplied by 100. 'Use' was identified by the overall control the course books had over the classroom activities. For instance, the course materials used at the *NCB School* are designed for self-study so they possessed minimum control over the classroom activities. Similarly, the course books designed for the B2 class at *Tulp Training* had minimum control. The teacher explained the grammar without any reference to the course materials; even the exercises used are taken from external materials. Other classes were highly controlled by the materials as the whole lesson was planned to do exercises in the course books. Thus, in terms of use, an identical division is documented between classes with high control and classes with minimal control.

Table 7: Classroom Materials classified in terms of type, source and use

Materials										
Classes	type				source			Use		
	text		Audio	visual	Pedagogic	Semi-Pedag.	Non-Pedag.	High control	Semi Control	Mini Control
	minimal	Extended								
A2 *Tulp Taining*	53%	26%	21%	-	90%	10%	-	yes	-	-
B1 *Tulp Taining*	90%	10%	-	-	100%	-	-	-	-	yes
A2 *VWN*	60%	16%	16%	8%	90%	10%	-	yes	-	-
B1 *VWN*	64%	36%	-	-	90%	10%	-	yes	-	-
A2 *NCB*	34%	66%	-	-	50%	-	50%	-	-	yes
B1 *NCB*	17%	67%	-	16%	50%	-	50%	-	-	yes

In terms of type, 'text' was the dominant type. In comparison, audio and visual were very limitedly used. The category 'visual' was confined to some pictures that evoked certain reactions and some charts that needed description.

In terms of source, the materials used at *Tulp Training* and at the *VWN School* were 90% pedagogic. Only 10% of the materials used were authentic materials. They were included in the book and adopted for L2 purposes such as audio recording of daily news, announcements for delay at the train station, and an advertisement at one popular website for second-hand items. The only class where semi-pedagogic materials or non-pedagogic materials were never used is the B2 class at *Tulp Training* with 100% pedagogic materials. In contrast, a 50-50 division was documented at the two classes by the *VWN School*. The division is between pedagogic and non-pedagogic as both teachers incorporated authentic materials in their lessons such as a newspaper article and a chart taken from CBS; a Dutch governmental institution concerned with providing reliable statistical information related to the social issues in the Netherlands.

As is clear from table (7), the materials used at the *VWN School* and the A2 class at *Tulp Training* proved to highly control the classroom activities during the classroom observation. Therefore, these materials will be subject to further analysis to check their communicative orientation and the type and length of output they require from learners. Any increase in the communicative orientation throughout the same book will also be checked.

5. Method: Material Analysis

During the observations at *Tulp Traning* and *VWN School,* it was evident which course books highly controlled the classroom activities. These course books were chosen for the materials analysis to probe into their communicative orientation and into the active role they assign to students. The first book is '*TaalCompleet'*. It is used both at *Tulp Training* and at *VWN School* for A2 classes. The second book is 'De Opmaat' and it is used at *VWN School* for B1 class. In the other B1 class at *tulp training*, 'In Zicht' was used. However, this book was excluded from a detailed analysis as its control over the classroom activities was minimal. Course books used at NCB BV were also excluded from the analysis since they played a marginal role in the classroom. Those books were mainly designed for self-study and included activities that needed to be performed at home online. At the end of each chapter, the student gets a score that need to be more than 60% in order for that student to be able to move to the next chapter. The other activities that are designed for classroom were confined to worksheets for role play in speaking assignments in addition to a number of themes for writing paragraphs and this is individually performed. Each unit ends with a list of the new vocabulary learned. Thus, the general topic suggested by the title of each chapter can be covered creatively by each teacher as long as s/he covers the new vocabulary required.

The two selected course books were analysed in terms of their activities. The analysis was conducted on three levels. The first level of analysis covered objective description of the materials as specified in littlejohn (2011). The second level of analysis was conducted by means of the five-point scale presented by Criado and Sánchez (2009). Two chapters were selected from each book; the first and the final one. The reason behind this selection is to check whether there is any progress in the communicative orientation throughout the book as students proceed in the learning process. Thus, the data collected from this scale reflected to what extent these books are communicatively-oriented and to what extent this orientation may change throughout the book. After identifying the overall orientation of the course book, more fine-grained details were obtained via analysing the type and length of output required from students in the constituent activities; prescribed or spontaneous, minimal or extended. This analysis is what Littlejohn (2011) called the subjective analysis. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from this analysis elucidates "how actively involved students are supposed to be in the classroom given the materials" and whether a shift in perspective is to be traced throughout the whole book.

5.1. Objective Description of the Two Course Books Analysed:

In this section the two books are described in terms of type, intended audience, distribution and subdivision. Publication details and related course books in the series are also provided. In addition to this broad description, three types of detailed analyses were conducted on both books.

5.2. Placing Activities along the Communicative Continuum

The first and the last chapters of each of these two books were analysed in terms of their communicative orientation of their activities as well as the output they require from students to know to what extent students are actively involved in the learning process. Thus activities were

placed along the scale presented by Criado and Sánchez (2009) ranging from fully linguistic to fully communicative. The only modification is that the points on the scale ranged from (0) to (5) instead of from (0) to (10) and that is done for ease of calculation. When the exercise concentrates merely on grammar, pronunciation or form without any integration of meaning then it is graded (1). The following example from *Taalcompleet A2* is a good representative of the (1) ranking.

I. Put the following singular nouns in the plural.
The letter

Taalcompleet A2 (p.39)

Exercises similar to the one provided in (II) are also classified as fully linguistic since the concentration is merely on the pronunciation.

II. On which syllable is the stress to be placed?
druk-ken

Taalcompleet A2 (p.39)

When these linguistic rules are integrated in minimal content then a shift to (2) ranking is given. For instance, there was an exercise about the simple past and the present perfect and students were asked to classify the sentences taken from the transcript of a previous audio file according to these tenses. They were also required to write down the infinitive form of the verbs. Thus, grammar is the focus in such exercises but it is incorporated in a meaningful context.

III. Which sentences are in the present perfect and which are in the simple past? What is the infinitive form of the main verbs in these sentences?

De Opmaat (p.206)

The middle of the scale is granted to those exercises where both meaning and form have received equal attention. For example, students were asked in exercise (IV) below to make comparison based on the information provided in a previous exercise using the comparative and the superlative. The details covered in the previous exercise are about five of the West Frisian Islands. Therefore, the content is rich and authentic.

IV. Work in groups of 3. Compare between the islands using the information provided in the previous exercise. Use the comparative and the superlative.

De Opmaat (p.215)

A shift to the more communicative areas on the scale; 4 and 5, is recorded when meaning is the focus without any reference to grammar. The differentiation is made between exercises where answers required need to be extracted from the text provided or merely related to an audio file and exercises where there is more room for innovation on part of the students in providing the answers. While the former sort of exercises is graded (4) on the scale the latter is graded (5) and considered as highly communicative. Examples (V) and (VI) are representatives of these two rankings successively.

V. Read the questions, read the text and provide answers to the questions below.

De Opmaat (p.218)

VI. Work in a group of 3. Compare your own country with the Netherlands. Use the information from the table in the previous exercise. Think about….(a number of themes are provided.

De Opmaat (p.218)

These guidelines guaranteed consistency of analysis and drew clear boundaries between the five points on the scale.

5.3. Type of Output Required from Students

The other detailed type of analysis was devoted to the type of output required from students. That output was classified in terms of two types; prescribed and spontaneous. While the former should be taken merely from the text or audio files, the latter can be formulated by students creatively without any restriction imposed from the materials provided. Exercises where a spontaneous output is stimulated do contain some open questions or a number of general points related to the topic under discussion. The aim behind including such questions of points is to direct students' attention to a number of related subtopics and thereby helping them to start the formulation of their output. The exercise provided in (VII) requires a prescribed answer while the one in (VIII) requires a spontaneous answer.

VII. Read the questions, then read the text and answer the questions by choosing between the three options provided.

De Opmaat (p.187)

VIII. Work in group of 3. Discuss the following questions.
Do you have good memories from the primary school? Think about: teachers, children, subjects and results..

De Opmaat (p.195)

5.4. Length of Output Required from Students

The third detailed type of analysis covered the length of the output required from students. The output limited to one sentence or less than that is classified as 'minimal' while the output that goes beyond the limit of one sentence is considered 'extended'. Some exercises do request students to read an extended text but what is required from students is merely to choose between a number of options as we could see in the exercise provided in (VII). In that case, the output is considered 'minimal' since the active participation of students is limited to checking a box next to the correct answer. In contrast, the active participation in exercises such as the one provided in (IX) is set to an extended level. Here students can produce utterances with unlimited number of sentences. In other words, the length of the output is to be decided by students themselves.

IX. Discuss together.
Have you ever travelled using the bus, tram, metro or train? yes/no? say why in both cases.
How do you pay for the bus or the train? do you find that easy or difficult?

Taalcompleet A2 (p.37)

5.5. Comparing the First and the Last units of each course book

The final step in the analysis was to compare the first and the last units in each book in terms of their communicative orientation to trace any shift in orientation towards either ends of the scale. The expectation was that a shift towards a more communicative perspective would be found as we proceed throughout the book. The rationale behind this is that the concentration on the language as a system will be substituted by the concentration on the language as a tool of communication. In the following section, it will be become clear whether results meet this expectation or not.

6. Results: Materials Analysis

In what follows, I will first describe the two course books objectively, then I will analyse the results related to the communicative continuum and finally I will cover the results related to the type and length of output required from students.

6.1. Objective Description of the Course Books Analysed:

Taalcompleet A2, Dutch for non-native speakers is a method for learning Dutch as L2 designed for lower or middle-educated adults. It is published by KleurRijker bv. It comes with support in 15 languages; both vocabulary lists and explanations. The A2 course book improves the level of Dutch till the A2 level. It consists of eight chapters. The organization of these chapters was maintained the same throughout the whole book. Each chapter is headed by one dominant topic and is further divided to cover relevant subtopics. For instance, the first chapter is titled "moving to a new house" and it contains subtopics such as new neighbours, how are you?, *Marktplaats*; a Dutch website for second-hand items, on the station …etc. Within each of these subtopics, different grammatical structures are introduced. The main skill improved by a certain exercise and the manner of performing it is indicated via an icon drawn next to the number of that exercise. These icons are listed and explained in the introduction.

What is also stated in the introduction is that chapters become more difficult as students proceed in the book. This seems interesting for the purpose of the current study. Not only the texts become longer, but also the speaking tempo in the audio fragments becomes closer to the real life tempo. Moreover, the topics and the activities become more challenging and resemble those related to the integration exams. Another statement in the introduction is that there is a lot of attention to vocabulary. In each chapter, there is a list of about 14 words in the speaking and listening texts which will reoccur at least 7 times in the exercises and texts and in this manner these words are more likely to be remembered by the students. Another relevant statement in the introduction is that grammar is taught following the theory of Focus on Form; i.e. students' attention is drawn to linguistic elements during communicative activities (Long, 1991, p.46). A reference to the www.taalcompleet.nl website that is affiliated with the book is also mentioned in the introduction. On this website students can do all the online exercises while the teacher can monitor their progress.

The second book that is analysed is called *De Opmaat, Naar NT2-niveau A2.* This book is a publication of Boom Publishers Amsterdam. It is the first book in the 'NT2 De Opmaat' learning series that contains also three other books De Sprong, Vooruit, and De Finale successively. Although this book is intended for A2 level, it is used at the initial stages of B1 courses at the VWN School. De Opmaat consists of 10 chapters covering different themes related to health, work, education, making an appointment, shopping, transportation…etc. These topics are covered via authentic materials taken from brochures, websites, programs and forms. Grammar is integrated in these chapters and is also allocated a separate part at the end of the book. There is also a lot of grammatical exercises provided at the website affiliated with this book; www.nt2school.nl. On this website, students can also find texts with gaps to be filled in, the answers to the exercises in the

books, links to the materials used in the exercises, and transcripts of the audio files. English translation of the vocabulary lists is also available to students in this book.

6.2. Results: Placing Activities along the Communicative Continuum

a. De Opmaat

As can be seen in Table 8, in chapter 10 of *De Opmaat*, on average, the activities scored quite high (4.25 on a scale of 1 to 5). This average was lower in chapter 1, and this difference proved significant in a t-test (p = 0.026).

Table 8: *De Opmaat* on the Communicative Continuum

De Opmaat	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Chapter 1	1-5	3.52	1.20
Chapter 10	2-5	4.25	0.90
T-Test	**p-value:** 0.026		

b. Taalcompleet A2

As table (9) elucidates, in chapter 8 *of Taalcompleet A2*, on average, the activities were placed in the middle of the continuum closer to the more positive end (3.4 on a scale of 2 to 5). In comparison, the activities of chapter 1, on average, sored less (2.9 on a scale of 1 to 5). This difference proved to be significant in a t-test (p=0.0002).

Table 9: *Taalcompleet A2* on the Communicative Continuum

Taalcompleet A2	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Chapter 1	1-5	2.9	1.1
Chapter 8	1-5	3.4	1
T.Test	**p-value:** 0.0002		

6.3. The Type of Output Required from Learners:

a. De Opmaat

In table (10) below it is given how many of the activities of chapter 1 and chapter 10 required prescribed answers compared to others which stimulated spontaneous answers. It is clear that the majority of the activities triggered prescribed answers such as choosing between a number of options, or finding an answer in a text. A chi-square test was carried out to check whether there was a difference in type of output in chapter 1 from chapter 10. No shift in type of output could be discerned (p = 0.176).

Table 10: Type of Output Required in *De Opmaat*

De Opmaat	Chapter 1	Chapter 10
Prescribed	19	18
Spontaneous	2	6
Chi-square test	**p-value:** 0.176	

b. *TaalCompleet A2*

A similar distribution to the one found in *De Opmaat* is documented in *Taalcompleet A2*. The dominance of the activities that stimulated prescribed answers is clear in table (11) below; both in chapters 1 and 8. However, there is an increase in the number of activities with spontaneous answers in chapter 8. This increase proved to be significant in a chi-square test (p=0.003).

Table 11: Type of Output Required in *TaalCompleet A2*

Taalcompleet A2	**Chapter 1**	**Chapter 8**
prescribed	121	91
Spontaneous	6	18
Chi-square test	**p-value:** 0.003	

6.4. The Length of the Output Required from Students:

a. *De Opmaat*

In table (12) below it is given how many of the activities of chapter 1 and chapter 10 required short answers compared to others which stimulated extended answers; that minimally go beyond the limit of one sentence. It is clear that the dominant type in both chapters is the one that stimulated short answers. However, the distribution of the two types of output is different in chapter 10 with an increase in the activities with extended answers. The p-value (0.03266) of the chi-square test implied that this increase was significant.

Table 12: The Length of Output Required in *De Opmaat*

De Opmaat	**Chapter 1**	**Chapter 10**
Minimal	**20**	**17**
Extended	**1**	**7**

b. *TaalCompleet A2*

As is evident from table (13) below the activities of minimal answers prevailed those of extended answers in both chapters. However, there is a change in the distribution between the two chapters with more extended answers to be triggered by the activities of chapter 8. Chi-square test proved that this change was significant (p-value=0.000133).

Table 13: Length of Output Required in *TaalCompleet A2*

TaalCompleet A2	**Chapter 1**	**Chapter 8**
Minimal	121	86
Extended	6	23

7. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted in an attempt to find answers to four research questions:

1. To what extent are L2 classrooms where Dutch is taught as a second language communicatively oriented?
2. How communicatively oriented are the materials that possessed high control over classroom activities?
3. How actively involved are learners in these materials?
4. Is there any shift in the communicative orientation to be traced throughout the books?

Regarding the first research question of *how communicatively-oriented Dutch L2 classrooms are*, the classroom observations have shown large differences between the classes similar to the differences expected and observed by Fröhlich et al. (1985) between the different French L2 programs.

The two classes at *Tulp Training* can be indicated as minimally communicatively-oriented. Both classes were mostly structured in the form 'teacher to the whole class'. In that sense, they had the same teacher- focused structure observed by Fröhlich et al. (1985) at the core French program and by Chen & Wright (2016) at the Chinese secondary school. In addition, the standard form-focused model documented at the core French program and the Chinese school, was also observed at both classes. Among the other factors that have hindered a proper fostering of the communicative competence in these two classes were the insignificant active role assigned to students, teacher's control of topics, and the dominance of the pedagogic materials over the classroom activities.

In comparison, both classes at the *VWN School* and the B1 class at the *NCB School* could be categorized as moderately communicatively-oriented. At these classes, form was integrated in some content of either limited or broad reference. Group/pair discussion is limitedly present. Students were provided the opportunity to discuss some topics of interest, albeit in to a limited extent. Students' interaction with the whole class was mostly facilitated via pre-planning as the exercises done in the classroom were given as homework beforehand. Some semi-pedagogic and non-pedagogic materials were used. Similar to what Fröhlich et al. (1985) observed at the extended French program, where L2 was not only taught as a subject but also was a medium of discussion in the subject matter material, these classes were less structured and more meaning-oriented.

The only class that scored high on communicative orientation is the A2 class at *the NCB School*. At this class, the students were active contributors most of the time. Together with the teacher they formulated the structure of the lesson. In other words, although the teacher identified some main headings as a lesson plan, the actual flow of the lesson was not previously determined. Thus the classroom environment resembled real-life communication where scope of interaction can't be previously determined. Participants in the interaction can take part whenever they are willing to and they decide themselves the extent of their contributions. Thus, WTC that is indicative of familiarity with techniques inherent in turn-taking was documented at this class. Topics of broad reference were very common. In addition, authentic materials that are intended for non-pedagogic purposes were used. In sum, this class fostered authentic communication and provided opportunities for the negotiation of significant meaning, similar to what Fröhlich et al. (1985) observed at the French immersion classes where students received their education using L2. For these reasons, this class

should be taken as a representative example to be generalized in other schools where Dutch is learned as L2.

Regarding the second, third and fourth research questions, they were answered via analysing the two course books that seemed to highly control the classroom activities; *De Opmaat* and *TaalCompleet A2.* These two books are to be placed in the middle of Criado and Sánchez (2009)'s communicative continuum. Contrary to what Agulló et al. (2017) found in their analysis of the most used English language textbooks in the second year of Baccalaureate in Spain which were more form-focused, these books emphasized form as well as meaning. Notwithstanding this, these course books are not communicatively oriented in terms of the type and length of output they required from learners. Similar to what Van Batenburg, et al. (2018) found out in the course materials for English as a foreign language (EFL) used for Dutch prevocational learners in the Netherlands, these books stimulated prescribed and limited output whereas communicatively-oriented materials are expected to stimulate spontaneous and extended output. However, a shift towards more spontaneous and extended answers was found throughout the two books and this shift goes in line with this increase in the communicative orientation. In other words, as the two books unfold, their activities become more challenging for learners both in terms of type and length; i.e. the expectations from students become higher as they proceed in their learning process.

This study was not without limitations. Starting with the limitations of the classroom observation, part A of the COLT observation scheme with the modifications made to it was comprehensive enough to cover the features related to the development of the various competences that make up the communicative competence. However, the communicative features related to the verbal interaction during each activity were not analysed since part B of the COLT scheme was not adopted. These details could have complemented the ones collected in part A giving a more comprehensive view of the classroom orientation. A subsequent study that considers both parts could be compared to this to highlight the missing features.

Another limitation is related to the analysis of the classroom observations. The results were analysed to reflect on the communicative competence as a whole and thus I was not able to reflect on which of the six competences making up the communicative competence is fostered. In this study, part A of the COLT scheme was slightly modified to cover some elements related to the development of each of these six competences (see section 3.2). However, in the analysis of the results, it was not clear which of them was fostered and which was not. A subsequent study that takes another analytical perspective with the six constituent competences as the focus would identify specifically which of them is fostered in the classroom environment and which is not. In this way, more specified recommendations could be suggested per each observed class.

The third limitation is the inability to report a lot of details that seemed interesting since they don't fell under any category. Thus a subsequent study that concentrates on these details could highlight more factors related to fostering the communicative competence in the classroom. Some of these details are related to the teachers' use of languages other than L2 in the classroom and the purpose these languages are used for. In addition, when these languages are used by students, what is the teachers' reaction? Corrective, tolerant, are students asked to rephrase or as long as grammar is correct this usage is neglected. Another sort of details that were not covered is the use of non-verbal tools for the explanation of the lesson such as gestures; both codified and culture-specific, pointing,

drawing and imitation. These elements when applied, contributed to a better comprehensibility especially at the basic A2 level

The fourth point that needs to be considered as a limitation to this research is that the results are taken from the perspective of one lesson per level. Teachers put weekly plans for three classes in the week. Thus they could have had different structures at the other two classes of the same week of observation. An observation that covers all three weekly classes could have provided a more comprehensive view.

The last limitation is pertained to the differences in the course duration among classes. Some of the classes were at the beginning stage of the course as the class observed was the fourth lesson and some were at the final stage of the course as students were about to take exams. As we traced a shift in the communicative orientation throughout the books, the same case could apply to courses. For instance, the A2 class at the *NCB School* was at the last stage of the course and that could partially elucidate the high communicative orientation of that class.

The material analysis has also a number of limitations. First, this analysis reflected on the level of communicative orientation fostered at the course books. However, how these course books are actually used in the classroom environment could be different. For instance, some exercises were intended for watching videos but students merely listened to an audio recording and consequently all features related to non-verbal communication were marginalized. Therefore, the approach taken by teacher for the use of these materials should also be analysed.

Some activities which were reported as triggering limited output could be answered using an extended one, but the default output is reported. Evaluating students' expectations about the kind of output they think they need to provide could be taken as another analytical perspective to such sort of activities.

Notwithstanding the limitations mentioned above, we could still conclude that the common orientation of some classrooms observed was more linguistic than communicative. Others were moderately communicative while only one was highly communicatively-oriented. The course materials that highly controlled some of these classrooms seemed to be moderately communicative. However, the active role assigned to learners in these books was very limited in terms of length and type of output required. A shift in the communicative orientation towards the more positive end of the communicative continuum was traced in both books. In the same vein, a shift towards more spontaneous and extended answers was traced throughout the two books.

Considering the communication difficulties using Dutch faced by the Arabic-speaking immigrants in the light of the results of the current study, we could highlight the link between the insignificant active role assigned to students in both the minimally and moderately communicatively-oriented classrooms as well as in the course materials used in these classrooms. Involving students more in the education process and creating opportunities for authentic communication in the classroom environment could help these students to practice face-to-face communication and to overcome the challenges related to it.

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Appendix A
Permission Approval Form

WETENSCHAPPELIJK ONDERZOEK OVER HET LEREN VAN DE NEDERLANDSE TAAL VOOR COMMUNICATIE

Mijn naam is Samah Rahmeh, Ik studeer research master in taalwetenschap at Leiden Universiteit. Voor mijn scriptie, doe ik een onderzoek over het leren van de Nederlandse taal voor communicatie. Ik ga even onderzoeken “wat zijn de uitoefeningen die het meeste helpen bij het behersen van de Nederlandse taal voor communicatie?”.

- Wat ga ik doen tijdens de les?

Ik wil bij uw les aanweizig zijn. Tijdens de les ga ik een aantal observaties doen over de uitoefeningen in de les. Ik ga ook het gesprek audio opnemen.

- Welke data verzamel ik en wat doe ik daarmee?

Het gesprek zal opgenomen worden zodat ik dit later kunnen terugluister voor gedetailleerde analyse. Al deze zaken zullen enkel voor de onderzoeker inzichtelijk zijn en alleen gebruikt worden bij de analyse van de onderliggende dimensies vanonderzoeksopvattingen. Alle informatie wordt vertrouwelijk bewaard en verwerkt. Deze gegevens worden voor geen andere doeleinden gebruikt dan voor dit onderzoek.

Als je meer wilt weten over dit onderzoek, dan kunt u mij bereiken via onderstaande TaalCompleetcontactgegevens.

Samah Rahmeh
Samah.rahmeh@gmail.com

Als je het bovenstaande begrijpt en ermee instemt, vragen we je hier onder je naam, de datum en je handtekening in te vullen.

Naam:

Handtekening:

Datum: