LANGUAGE REGULATORY PRACTICES IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: AN ANALYSIS OF LESSONS IN SOME PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN GHANA

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Abstract:

Language regulation is perceived as positive because it makes learners more aware of their errors and allows for learner-generated repairs. Despite this evidence, studies in language regulation place little emphasis on language regulation in the classroom. This study examined the practices of language regulation in the ESL classroom. Using purposive sampling, data consisted of classroom lesson recordings and interviews from 8 classrooms (360 students; 24 teachers) in senior high schools in the Koforidua township. The findings showed that second language speakers reject the notion of *"anything goes"* and take on language expert roles, resulting in explicit and implicit regulation of language. Based on the findings, it is argued that teachers should design a system that provides learners the opportunity to practice English in the form of negotiating for correctness and acceptability within and outside of the classroom.

Keywords: language regulation, explicit, implicit, accommodation, language expert

1. Introduction

The active and effective participation of a member of a society is dependent on the individual's ability to speak, read, and write with confidence and with purpose in a wide range of contexts (Zar, Arkoh, & Appiah, 2019). Communication is, therefore, seen as the lifeblood of any language curriculum, especially in the context of second language learning. In Ghanaian schools, English language is the medium of instruction, besides being a subject of study. Learning English and attaining competence in it, therefore, is a means of learning and performing well in other areas of the school curriculum. The ability

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to effectively speak the English language is very crucial to achieving one's goals and aspirations in life as a Ghanaian. Hence, students need to understand the language to develop the competence and confidence needed to meet the demands of school, employment, or further education. As students and teachers find themselves in the classroom, they form their own community. Some teachers even have their own classroom rules and regulations. Some of these rules and regulations regulate language practices. Although some of these rules are explicitly stated (e.g., speak English always), some are covert, through existing and moderate classroom activities and verbal behaviours.

Communication attempts to solve a problem or a need for survival. Hence, speakers should be able to use the correct sounds and speak intelligibly to facilitate the understanding of the message. This is done to give back the appropriate response for purposes of effective communication. Adaba (2017) observes that to develop experience in English speaking, students need to regularly interact with fellow students, teachers, and with materials using the target language because the interaction is the heart of communication. Unfortunately, interaction in the language classroom seems to be a problem for the teachers. The goal of the teaching process then cannot be achieved if the teacher ignores these problems. This is in line with Yule's (1996) assertion that when there is an inappropriate use of language, speakers can be misled. However, despite these known benefits of the appropriate use of language, it is not in all cases that speakers are able to use the language appropriately as it should be. In this regard, Hedge (2000) notes that in the practice of English language teaching and learning, a lack of appropriate classroom interaction is a common thing. Despite the abundance of evidence to show how important it is to regulate one's language in the classroom so as to avoid miscommunication, there is no known study in Africa that reveals how language regulation is practiced in the classroom. Hence, the interactional dimension of language regulation within the classroom is the focus of this study.

Such a study is important because it exposes us to language-regulatory practices of managing and monitoring language use in interaction. This study's aim of revealing language regulation practices in the classroom is crucial to teachers, especially Ghanaian teachers handling English language classes. The findings reveal practices teachers employ unconsciously. Teachers are always considered as language experts, and this study is beneficial to teachers by bringing their attention to what they do in the classroom and how their actions ensure that the language of their students conforms to specific standards. This ultimately leads to the creation of language norms that may not necessarily coincide with what exists in the macro speech community. It would also help teachers to be aware, of how, though indirectly, their actions in the classroom help their students to use language that is acceptable and correct. The research questions that guide the study are:

1) What are the forms of language regulatory practices exhibited by teachers and students?
2) Who assumes responsibility for these practices in the classroom?

The next section discusses the concept of language regulation, followed by the framework in the third section. The fourth section presents the methodology while the results are discussed in the fifth section. The paper ends with the conclusion in the seventh section.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language Regulation

Following Hynninen (2016, p. 30), language regulation is defined in this study as "*the discursive practice through which norms are reproduced and through which alternative ones emerge*". Accepting the suggestion that speakers' linguistic behaviour needs to be distinguished from their expectations and beliefs, a two-dimensional approach to language regulation has been adopted in this study. With the first dimension, language regulatory mechanisms used are considered as being used for monitoring and managing language when conversing with people within the same speech community. The concept is also employed to describe the ways participants construct normative beliefs about language and their expectations of how language should be used in their speech community. Thus, the language-regulatory mechanism forms the interactional dimension of language regulation, whereas the construction of expectations and beliefs forms the ideological dimension.

2.2 Types of Language Regulation

During the interaction processes in the classroom, interlocutors negotiate for the acceptability and correctness of language. This regulation can be explicit where boundaries are drawn between what should be considered correct or acceptable and what falls outside the level of acceptability or is considered incorrect. It must be noted that explicitly judging an interlocutor's language in the form of correcting his or her own or other participant's language brings to bare, the participant's notion of language and their judgement of what falls beyond the scope of acceptability. According to Hynninen (2016, pp. 127-128), the surest means by which a participant in an interaction may draw boundaries between unacceptable and acceptable language is to correct the language of other interactants in the communicative event. A participant's correction of the language of another, in the same conversation, indicates explicitly that the participants are negotiating the boundaries of acceptability of language and portrays how the interactant evaluates the language of his co-interactants. In this way, language correction may be considered as an instance in a conversation whereby an interlocutor modifies or changes a linguistic detail in the previous speaker's turn.

Through repair, participants in social interaction display how they establish and maintain communication and mutual understanding (Albert & de Ruiter, 2018). Language speaker correction could be self-initiated; where one attempts to correct his own language. The linguistic items corrected in an interlocutor's utterance could fall into the domain of pronunciation, grammar and lexis, with lexical correction constituting the

majority (Smit, 2010). There are instances of regulation practices whereby the process is not covert (implicit). That is, instead of outright correction, speakers may embed the repair in their turns. Repetition in language regulation is considered an indication of acceptance of the repeated items and the process has been found to be typical in interactions involving non-native speakers, as a way of ensuring mutual understanding and cooperation (e.g. Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2006).

In communication accommodation, a situation like this is subsumed in the category of other-repair, where in the course of an interaction, participants temporarily pause in order to solve some communicational 'trouble'. For instance, in an interaction where one of the interlocutors identifies a linguistic problem, he may repeat the same utterance made by the previous speaker, by providing the correct form or linguistic item. It must be noted that it is not always that the correction is accepted. This normally results in a momentary argument between the interlocutors in order to settle on the correct form or structure (Brouwer et al, 2004). According to Hynninen (2016) "*if the repetition is another-initiation of repair, in contrast to pointing towards acceptance, the initiator of the repair may be questioning the linguistic form of the expression, and rejecting the repeated item*" (p. 140). Studies that have examined classroom language (e.g. Seedhouse, 2004; van Lier, 1988) have shown this type to be typical of language classroom interaction, where teachers, along with using other types of other-initiations focusing on language, have been found to repeat 'incorrect' items in order to prompt the pupils to self-repair their 'errors'. However, Smit (2010, p. 222) argues that in English as a lingua franca context, initiations are not used to indicate genuine communication trouble created by the use of erroneous linguistic items. Cogo and Dewy (2012) therefore claim that accommodation appears to underpin a good deal of variation in lexicogrammatical systems of English as enacted in lingua franca talk.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: Communication Accommodation Theory

Communication Accommodation Theory was developed from the Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) advanced by Giles in 1973. The theory suggests that individuals use communication, in part, to indicate their attitudes toward each other, and thus, it is a barometer of the level of social distance between them. This constant movement towards and away from others, by changing one's communicative behaviour, is called "*accommodation*" (Giles & Ogay, 2007, p. 259). The main accommodative strategies people employ during interaction include converging toward or diverging away from one another or other people involved in the same communicative event. In accommodating a communicative event, different verbal and nonverbal mechanisms are employed. Expectedly, people interlocutors may converge toward those whom they like, respect, or have power over. On the other hand, speakers will not accommodate by diverging when they are psychologically disposed, favourably, to an interlocutor in a commutative event. In short, as Cogo and Dewey (2012) posit, the theory assumes that speakers will converge toward the language of their interlocutors as a consequence of seeking social approval, or will diverge from them as part of a process of signaling a

distinct identity, affiliation, or approval. It has also been noted by Giles and Powesland (1997) that a desire to be understood also plays a substantial role in accommodative behaviour. Other accommodative moves include attuning to others' conversational needs and knowledge, under- and over-accommodating. Accommodative processes are necessary to unpack the dynamics of intercultural competence and dialogue.

The theory encompasses a wide range of communicative behaviours (Soliz & Giles, 2012, p. 5). Owing to this, the theory enabled the researchers to analyse the data from the perspective of both speech communication and intercultural communication. As noted in the discussion, CAT looks at communication on both interpersonal and intergroup level, and explains modification or regulation in communication. It allowed us to consider the relational, cognitive, and communicative outcomes of accommodative behaviours in the process of language regulation. The holistic nature of the theory for both pragmatic and literal accommodation makes it ideal for analysing language regulation in the classroom (Griffin, 2012; Soliz & Giles, 2012).

The theory has received some appreciable level of research because it is a comprehensive and scientifically versatile theory in communication (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). For instance, Suputra, Ramendra and Swandana (2020) in a study of communication accommodation strategies used by ESL students found that the students' choice of lexical items was influenced by whom they spoke with and other factors such as family affinity. In the same study, the use of divergence strategies was also evident: students chose some lexical items that are not familiar with their interlocutor such as \s"kabak"(boy/girlfriend) and "baas pipis"(a term for people who go to paranormal). To diverge their interlocutors, they adjusted their speech due to situations such as self-branding, preserving social heritage/identity, and demonstrating uniqueness. This is in line with Giles and St. Clair's (1979) assertion that speakers will specify their individual identity and allegiance to a group that is endangered in order to remain distinct.

Manju (2015) also investigated the effectiveness of communication accommodation in the English language classroom and discovered that teachers employed convergence tactics such as changing discourse to get learners' approval or developing productive interaction. From the findings, teachers employed divergent methods to maintain good social identification. Yi-Rung and Wenli (2015) examined teachers' use of accommodation tactics and the factors that influence their use in EFL classrooms. They identified six accommodation strategies: introducing, defining, listing, prompting, demonstrating, and highlighting. These were seen to affect the difficulty level of input materials, student feedback, and language proficiency of the teacher and the students. Lastly, Barton (2017) probed the use of accommodation theory to facilitate content comprehension in the teaching of register in English for Specific Academic Purposes classes. Instances of semantic convergence in the classroom and divergent register shifting were discovered. From these studies, it is argued that the adoption of CAT as the framework with which the researchers analysed the data is appropriate. Since the theory has been used in diverse cultural contexts and has been proven beneficial in intergroup communication situations (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008; Knobloch, 2008), we

found it appropriate and adequate in analyzing the data for language regulation practices in the ESL classroom in Ghana.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Research Approach and Design
A qualitative case study design is considered appropriate for the study since it is to emphasize the nature and processes of language regulation in the classroom (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because of the interest of the researchers in understanding the meanings teachers and students attach to their experiences as they engage in classroom language regulation. The case study design allowed for an exploration of participants' experiences but not to generalize, even though findings can be applied to similar settings.

3.2 Sampling and Sampling Size
Two sampling techniques were used in this study: purposive and simple random. Four Senior High Schools at Koforidua in the Eastern Region of Ghana that fall within the category 'A' of the Ghana Education Service classification of schools were purposively selected for this study. The selection was based on the fact that they have large class sizes and have student population from varying backgrounds. Due to the standard of these schools, students from every corner of the country are found there, and this implies that they are from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. The selected schools are also boarding schools, which means that the students on these campuses constitute their own communities. Using a draw, two class groups were randomly selected from each school. The participants included all students who belong to the specific classes and were present in class at the time of the data collection. The average number of students in a class is 45, giving a total of 360 participants in all eight classrooms. In each school, one General Arts class and one Business class were selected. These classes are selected without any criteria since the class and subject of study have no significance on the issues the study intended to investigate.

3.3 Instruments and Data Collection
Data for the study were collected through classroom audio recordings of teaching and learning sessions and observation of classroom teaching and learning. Once permission was obtained from the head of a school, teachers of English were contacted to allow for the recording and observation. All lessons were recorded with a Crown Sound Grabber II PZM Condenser Microphone connected to a Sony digital voice recorder placed on a table in the middle of the class. This type of microphone was used so as to capture only the voices of the participants and not any outside noise. This also ensured that high-quality recordings were obtained.

3.4 Data Analysis

The recorded data were transcribed orthographically from audio to text format. The data were then analyzed thematically based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps in analyzing qualitative data. The various themes that emerged were linked and discussed to make a meaningful report. The analysis was informed by the Communicative Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1973) which was proposed to offer an explanation of how and why interlocutors reduce or magnify communicative differences among themselves. The observation notes were also grouped into themes to allow for proper interpretation.

4. Results and Discussion

This discussion focuses on how participants in the classroom construct the boundaries between what is considered correct from incorrect or unacceptable language forms. Issues of overt and covert language regulation are given thorough attention in this analysis.

4.1 Forms of Language Regulation

From the analyses, two main types of language regulations are identified. These are explicit and implicit forms. In the section that follows, the forms of language regulation are presented as follows:

4.1.1 Explicit Classroom Language Regulation

The explicit judgement of an interactant's language by a participant in the interaction constitutes a kind of language correction. According to Kaur (2009) and Mauranen (2006), two types of explicit language regulation are observable: self-repair and other-repair.

4.1.1.2 Self-repair

There were instances whereby the participants undertook the task of regulating themselves. Self-repair occurred in two ways: explicit regulation was done by the participant who had committed the error after being prompted by the other participants and done without being prompted by others. For instance, in Extract 1, students involved themselves in the regulation process but with a different approach from the teachers.

Extract 1

    Teacher: "*ok so we are going to look at adverb of time.*"
    "*So errh Beatrice, what is an adverb of time.*"
    Student 2: "*it states, it modifies the time, ei the this one the action.*"

    Teacher: "*I can't hear you speak louder.*"
    Student 2: "*it **modisfy**. (The class laughs and repeats the word **modisfy**).*"

Teacher: "*come again.*"
Student 2: "*it **modifies** the time an action takes place*".

We observe from Extract 1 that the students resort to laughter in registering their evaluation of their colleague's speech as unacceptable. Thus, the student pronounces the word *modifies* as *modisfy.* The speaker did not only use a word that does not exist in the lexicon of English, but also failed to adhere to the subject-verb agreement rule in English. This kind of identifiable error is considered unacceptable by the other students and that triggers the laughter. The students, in an attempt to ensure that the kind of error was something the speaker could correct by herself or otherwise, repeat the wrong word as they laugh. This way, the student identified the error and checked her English lexicon for the correct word, thus, engaging in self-repair. From the interaction, we realize that the student who made the mistake was not helped by being provided with the correct form of the word. She was able to regulate her own language after her attention is indirectly brought to the possible error. This brief exchange, as noted by Mortensen (2018), amounts to a clear example of language regulation, in this case, self-repair.

4.1.1.2 Other-repair

In other repair, the speech of an interactant is modified in some kind of linguistic detail by a co-interactant within the same communication situation due to a lack of conformity that the interactant undertaking the correction identifies with the previous interactant's speech. Sometimes, as noted by Brouwer, Rasmussen & Wagner (2004), the interaction is paused by the interactants in order to solve an identified communicational 'trouble'. Concerning this, outright corrections of a conversational partner's speech form a side sequence in the interaction. In this regard, the conversational partners negotiate for an acceptable or correct form of a linguistic item or unit that occurs in the conversation. An instance of other-repair is illustrated in Extract 2:

Extract 2

Teacher: "*So, all these things are some of the importance of a constitution. Any other? Is that all?*"
Student 1: "*it serve as a **reference** of statehood.*"
Teacher 1: "*it serves as a **symbol** of statehood.*"
Student 1: "*Yes, it serves as a **symbol** of statehood.*"

In the example, the student uses the word reference, but that is not the expected term the teacher wanted. He then corrects the student by providing the appropriate word, *symbol*. In acknowledging or accepting the correction, the student repeated the sentence, this time, using *symbol* that the teacher provided. The teacher moves then moves on to another concept because he is satisfied with the student's response. As a conversational repair mechanism that targets troubles in speaking, hearing, or understanding as observed by Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (1977), explicit other-repair has been found to

consist of three components: the trouble source or repairable; the repair initiation, which is the indication that there is trouble to be repaired; and the outcome, which is either the success or the failure of the repair attempt. According to Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2003), as the interactants, considering themselves as L2 learners, undertake the regulation activity of another's speech in the same conversation, they engage in an activity through which they work together linguistically to repair or resolve communication issues and set a common ground by which members understand the meaning of each other's message. This means that in other-initiated language repair, the conversational partner receiving a linguistic message signals that there is a problem comprehending or perceiving what the other partner in the conversation has said, and the sender attempts to fix it.

The extract also shows that the teacher's correction of the student has created a side sequence in the interaction whereby the interlocutor's correction triggered the student's repetition of the 'correct' structure by forgoing his word, reference, and using what has been provided by the teacher. This indicates that, in the process of correcting the language of the speaker, the topic of discussion is suspended to make room for the interactants to negotiate which linguistic item to use. The illustration in the example confirms the observation by Jefferson (1987, p. 90) who intimates that in communication accommodation, "*corrections are typically followed by a repetition of the correction, or if the correction is rejected, repetition of the original item (also known as the 'repairable')*".

4.1.2 Implicit Regulation

Participants in the communication event may also correct the language of other participants, even though this may be done subtly. Implicit or tacit regulation of an interactant's language is less direct than explicit feedback in signaling to learners that an error has been committed (cf. Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006). Hence, implicit language regulation may take the form of partial or incomplete reformulation of the expression (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) and does not offer an overt indication of a language problem concerning a speaker's speech (Xie & Yeung, 2016). Covert correcting of language during interaction occurs when the one doing the correction refuses to interrupt the speaker to regulate but rather waits till it is his turn to speak.

4.1.2.1 Embedded Repair

Literature suggests that repair can be embedded in talk (e.g., Jefferson, 1987). In this sense, the speaker modifies an item in the prior turn by substituting a linguistic unit with another within the same repair turn (Kurhila, 2006). Kurhila further observes that the speaker "*produces the unmarked next activity and embeds the correction in this activity*" (p. 40). Instead of drawing attention to the error, embedded corrections allow the talk to proceed in an unmarked way. An embedded repair is seen in Extract 3:

Extract 3

Teacher: *"It seems I gave an assignment last week; you were to list a number of transitional words in English language."*

Class Prefect: *"Sir, you told us to present [**prɛsent**] them before Friday, so I sent them last week Friday."*

Teacher: *"I told you to present /**pri. zɛ́nt**/ them before Friday?"*

Student: *"Yes, Sir."*

Teacher: *"Ok. Does it mean all of these people are absent today?"*

Students: *"They are present /prɛsent/."*

Teacher: *"They are present /prɛzent/, and where are they now?"*

From Extract 3, we observe that the teacher subtly corrects the student's pronunciation of the word *present* on two occasions: when it was used as a *verb* and when it was used as a *noun*. He does this through repetition and by using the correct stress placement. Although the student does not repeat the word after the teacher, the teacher gives the correct pronunciations during his turn to prompt the class prefect that his pronunciation is a deviation. Though an opportunity was not created for the student to repeat the corrected form, which would then imply acceptance, we can argue that from the teacher's position as a language expert and the representative of the native speakers in the classroom. That is, his modeling of the language is considered appropriate and worthy of emulation by the students. We observe that repetition was used as a strategy to prompt the student so that they could self-repair their errors (cf. Seedhouse, 2004; van Lier, 1988). As the teacher converges through 'correct' repetition, it enhances mutual understanding and serves as evidence of cooperation in the class. According to Brouwer et al. (2004), the nature of embedded correction creates a potential for it to be useful in non-native speaker interaction.

4.1.2.2 Reformulation

Another form of implicit regulation observed is reformulation. This has been defined as any *"process of restating a previous statement which maintains, in the reformulated statement, an invariable part to which the rest of the statement which could be different from the source statement is attached"* (Martinot, 2015, p. 3). It also refers to the interactional feedback a conversational partner offers by way of rephrasing a speaker's erroneous utterance into a target-like form (e.g. Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2001; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Nassaji, 2007). This means that reformulation compels the speaker to implicitly or explicitly repair his or her own errors. However, this forms an aspect of other-initiated repair (Nassaji, 2007). Two defining characteristics of the phenomenon of reformulation have been observed; firstly, the reformulated extract must have its origins in the previous statement, and secondly, there must be a similarity of content and/or form for it to be called a reformulation of the source statement. Commenting on the attributes of reformulation, Martinot (2015) indicates that the definition of the concept makes room for paraphrastic reformulations, non-paraphrastic reformulations, and repetitive

reformulations. It also enables one to situate the linguistic level of the invariable part of the statement – whether it is lexical, syntactic, or semantic.

In this regard, reformulation is the summation of a prior speaker's turn as a language-regulatory mechanism (cf. Lyster & Mori, 2006). It can therefore be argued that interlocutors adopt the strategy of reformulation to make their sense of 'what we are talking about', or 'what has [just] been said' clear to other interactants. As a repair strategy, reformulations may be considered as the rephrasing of a speaker's utterance by another interlocutor, not speakers' self-reformulations, as a response to interactional trouble (cf. Bremer & Simonot, 1996). From the observation of Kurhila (2003, pp. 218-221), reformulations indicate a confirmation or rejection by another participant of the previous speakers' language. In the data, the reformulation occurred in two different ways: mediation and lexical accommodation (cf. Knapp-Potthoff & Knapp, 1986).

4.1.2.2.1 Mediation as a Reformulation Process

According to Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp (1986), mediation is a term used to describe a process where an interlocutor, who during the communicative event, assumes the role of an interpreter. This he does, by making the utterance of a previous speaker clearer to another interlocutor who is also involved in the speech event. In the context of the classroom, mediation may occur when a student attempts to rephrase the statement of another student to a student, the teacher, or the whole class. In this regard, Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp (1986, pp. 156-160) explain that "*the interpreters often end up dealing with two discourses: on the one hand, they worked as intermediaries between the other speakers, and on the other, as participants in the interaction*". What makes mediation different from interpretation is that in mediation all the participants have a common language, are able to use that language, and the shared language is what is being used in the interaction.

The data in Extract 4 illustrates mediation:

Extract 4

> Student 1: "*Sir, Ghana became Ghana in which year?*"
> Teacher: "*Ghana became Ghana? What do you really mean?*"
> **Student 2: "Sir in which year was the name of our country changed from Gold Coast to Ghana.**"
> Student 1: "*Yes, yes.*"
> Teacher: "*Ok. I now understand. The name of the country was changed from Gold Coast to Ghana on the day of independence. And that year is ………?*"
> Students: "*6th March, 1957.*"

Here, we observe that the target of the question student 1 posed was the teacher. However, the teacher could not understand the question as it was not clear enough for him to be able to provide the needed response. This compelled the teacher to demand clarification by asking for it. As a way of helping the student who asked the question, student 2 acted as a *mediator* by clarifying the question for the teacher to understand. The

role of mediation in the communicative event is for a participant to understand another's utterance better. Apart from students, teachers can also reformulate and this is seen in Extract 5 as follows:

Extract 5

Teacher: "*Has someone any more questions for the class?*"

Student 1: "*I would want to know whether we the people of Ghana speak the same English as those in Nigeria, it appears their intonation is different from our intonation.*"

Teacher: "*It is their **accent** that is different from our accent. Accent refers to how we speak through our way of pronouncing words. Intonation is rather a technical term that refers to how sentences are said to give different interpretations, including questions, statements and commands.*"

Student 2: "*Yes, I think they have their special way of pronouncing their words, and that is different from how we pronounce words in English.*"

Student 1: "*Does it mean that there are different types of English based on the **accent** of the speakers?*"

Student 3: "*I don't think so. Every English is English.*"

From the extract, the teacher reformulates the student's utterance by providing the appropriate word, *accent.* When the turn came for the student, whose utterance was regulated by the teacher to speak, he used the correct form as he abandoned the word *intonation* and opted for *accent "Does it mean that there are different types of English based on the accent of the speakers?".* It can be observed that by providing the student with the correct form through remediation, the student got access to the correct model of the target language. This is consistent with the assertion of Nassaji (2007) that when the teacher or conversational partner reformulates a speaker's erroneous utterance, the correction that is provided gives the interactant positive evidence. Additionally, the reformulated utterance tends to shift the conversational partner's attention from the message they are transmitting to the linguistic form by indicating that the speaker's speech contains an error and the reformulator is correcting that error (e.g. Doughty, 2001; Gass, 2003). In such cases, the regulation might result in what Nassaji (2007, p.514) describes as "*noticing the gap*". This is a process that occurs "*when the learner compares his or her original output with the teacher's output and then realizes that his or her interlanguage differs from the target language*". Reformulation does not prompt the speaker to pause so that he could be corrected and continues his speech but occurs during the other speaker's turn. It has a pedagogical advantage to the second language learning context as it helps the learner to undertake a cognitive comparison of his erroneous speech and the regulated one (e.g. Long & Robinson, 1998).

4.1.2.3 Lexical Accommodation

Lexical accommodation is a kind of language regulation practice whereby a speaker adjusts his or her own language. According to Hynninen (2016, p. 159), lexical

accommodation "*can show how speakers take up others' linguistic usage, and thus sheds light on the ways that a co-interactant's language can affect a speaker's language*". Thus, speakers in an interaction can take and reuse a lexical item that has been used by a previous interactant or co-interactant. By so doing the speaker who reuses the lexical item is seen as accommodating to the other speaker (convergence). It can also happen that the speaker may reject the item used by the previous speaker in the interaction. In this case, the speaker is construed to be diverging from the interlocutor whose lexical item has been rejected (Gallois, Ogay & Giles, 2005). Lexical accommodation is seen in Extract 6:

Extract 6

> Teacher: "*Do you know that sometimes we rely on other word classes to derive others? Sometimes, we don't add affixes to words in order to form new words. Now, tell me. What is the word class or part of speech for the word water?*"
> Students: "*Water is a noun (it is a name of a substance).*"
>
> Teacher: "*That is excellent. Now, let's look at how water is used in these sentences.*
> *(a) The gardener will water the flowers.*
> *(b) Agric students water their nursery every morning.*"
>
> Teacher: "*Now, looking at how the word water has been used in these two sentences, can we say it names a substance? Yes, who is helping us with a response?*"
> Student 1: "*Sir, water in the sentences is the event that is happening.*"
>
> Teacher: "*Yes, water is the action that students and the gardener perform. What then is the word class or part of speech for **water** as used in the sentences?*"
> Student 2: "*Sir, I think water this time around is a verb.*"
>
> Teacher: "*Yes, your observation is correct; water in these two sentences has been used as a verb. The process that enables us to use words in this way is called conversion.*"
> Student 4: "*Sir, **conservation** is very interesting.*"
> Student 5: "***Conversion** is really interesting.*"
>
> Teacher: "***Conversion** is the process whereby words can be used to perform a function other than its original function.*"
> Student 4: "Sir, please do we have conversion in the sentence "***the teacher marks the test and then recorded the marks***""
> Teacher: "*Exactly, **mark** can be a verb and a noun depending on how the speaker uses it in the sentence.*"

In the extract, the teacher's choice of using the terms, *parts of speech* and *word class* with the conjunction *or* was intended to accommodate the problem of comprehension or understanding. Both phrases have been used by the teacher to make the students

understand as they both meant the same thing. In terms of lexical accommodation, this strategy is divergence, where Student 5 does not use the term Student 4 used, but a different one. The student thus replaces the student's word *conservation* with *conversion*. It can be realized that as the student accommodates the other's language by diverging, the boundary of acceptability is narrowed and this increases communicative effectiveness. This observation contrasts with the findings of Cogo (2007) that speakers of English as a second language accommodate through convergence by repeating forms from others' turns in the conversation.

Although Student 5 repairs the language problem by supplying the correct word, he does not interrupt to deal with the problem but allows Student 4 to complete his turn. It is observed that the rest of the students did not raise any objection to the word *conservation* that Student 4 used. This is probably because the teacher did not write the word *conversion* on the board and so the other students were thinking they probably did not hear the exact word. Therefore, the repetition of the sentence by Student 5 is not to just regulate the previous student's words, but also to confirm whether what he heard was indeed correct. We also realize from the extract that Student 4 accepts the correction of Student 5 and concurs with his word, *conversion* rather than continuing with his word, *conservation.* This occurs in his subsequent question: *Sir, please do we have conversion in the sentence "the teacher marks the test and the recorded the marks".* Here, there is convergence established between Student 4 and Student 5. In his speech after that of the students, the teacher repeated the word; this was done to bring clarity and to assure Student 5 and the other students in the class who probably unlike Student 4, also heard the word as *conversion.* Thus, in making sure the students get the right word, the teacher repeated it in his sentence.

4.2 Responsibility for Language Regulation
This section concerns itself with the responsibility for language regulation. From the observation, three (3) different groups were identified: the native speaker of English, the language expert by profession (i.e. the teacher), and the student. These are discussed as follows:

4.2.1 The Native Speaker
The highest level of expertise is reserved for native speakers, whose position, in the context of Ghanaian schools, is taken by dictionaries. Hence, it occurred that instances whereby both teachers and students are unable to establish a definite form or usage in terms of correctness, the dictionary is consulted. The dictionary is often consulted in the classroom for the correct pronunciation of words as shown in the previous data. Extract 7 illustrates this:

Extract 7

Teacher: *"So, in our reading, we saw that the idea was good but the way he came out with the measures was very poor and that didn't help the individuals. So, if this law is used to write a constitution, we call it a **decree**. I hope you are clear."*

Class: *"Yes."*

Teacher: *"Better still, we can check the dictionary to get it more clearly. Is there any in the class?"*

Students: *"No Sir, but we can rush for one from the next class (a student rushes and goes for a dictionary from the Library)"*

Teacher (Checks the dictionary and turns to students): *"Good. (defines a decree). You should all bring your dictionaries to class next week. It is very necessary. I will check your dictionaries when I come."*

Students: *"Yes, Sir."*

The data in Extract 7 show that in situations whereby the teacher thinks that he is not sure about the acceptable form, he calls for the help of a native speaker of English, which in the context of the classroom and in most of the schools visited, is the dictionary. This was done to confirm the correctness or otherwise of a linguistic form. Thus, without the physical presence of a native speaker of English in the classroom, the dictionary which is assumed to have been written by native speakers and therefore its realisation and use of an expression, is considered a model for the learners as it functions or plays the role of native English language speakers in the classroom. Again, we realize that the teacher does not just allow the correct definition of *decree* to elude anybody. This is intimated by Knapp (2002) that non-native speakers of English, in the context of English as a second language settings, reject the idea of 'anything goes' and always crave to draw the boundary between acceptability or correctness and unacceptability. This confirms Kurhila's (2003) that the native speaker (NS) is the language authority and that L2 speakers seem to try to conform to the NS and his or her norms.

4.2.2 Language expert by profession

Besides the dictionary is someone considered a language expert by profession, the teacher of English. In the analysis, we observed teachers correcting students' production, mainly because they are professionals who possess the requisite expertise in addressing the language problems students may encounter. This is seen in Extract 8:

Extract 8

Teacher: *"Everyone should put his or her book, No Sweetness Here, on the table. Those without the book should leave the class. Jonas! Where is your book?"*

Jonas: *"Sir, my book /buːk/ has been stolen."*

Teacher: *"Your book /buːk/? Is that how it is pronounced?"*

Students: *"book /bʊk/"*

Teacher: *"How many times do I have to tell you the word is not book /buːk/?"*

Students: "*Sir, we are used to book /bu:k/*"
Teacher: "*Ok. Anyone who will say book /bu:k/ instead of book /bʊk/ will be punished.*"
Students: "*[Laughter].*"

In Extract 8, the teacher repeats the wrong pronunciation in the student's production. This draws the attention of the class to the correct form of pronunciation that the teacher had taught; *book /bʊk*, hence, the speaker was able to self-correct. The teacher's repetition confirms the observation of Lyster and Ranta (1997) that if the repetition is another initiation of repair, in contrast to pointing towards acceptance, the initiator of the repair may be questioning the linguistic form of the expression, and rejecting the repeated item. Clearly, we realise that the teacher did not accept the pronunciation of the student, and by repeating it he was signalling to the speaker that his pronunciation of the word was wrong and he needed to correct it. The teacher corrected the error in the pronunciation of *book* because he is the more knowledgeable person whose orientation pertains to how language should be used, especially, in the classroom. By so doing, the teacher takes on "*the role of a language expert, and thus decides on the norms others are supposed to follow*" (Hynninen, 2016, p. 235).

4.2.3 The Students

At the bottom of the hierarchy are the students. We also observed that the students who were part of the interaction were actively involved in the negotiation of the acceptability of others' language. Although the teachers have been observed to offer their expert knowledge which then becomes the form the class accepts as correct, there were other instances that the teacher paid less attention to the debate of the students as they attempt to establish the correctness of speakers' language. An example of students regulating their colleagues' language through correction is shown in Extract 9:

Extract 9

Teacher: "*So, the next time I come we will go further. Before we close, do you have any question?*"
Student 1: "*Sir, can you explain flee and fair elec……*"
Class: [Laughter]
Student 2: "*Flee paa?*"
Student 3: *Free* and *fair* election, or?
Student 1: "*Thanks, free and fair election. Sir some people do like they don't make mistake. Have you people forgotten that our other teacher said Twi people have problem with saying free?*"
Teacher: "*Free and fair election means the people who vote during election time are not forced to vote …..*"

In Extract 9, a student substituted the sound 'r' with 'l' in the pronunciation of the word *free*. This triggered laughter from the rest of the students. In what seems to be a

habitual practice of the student who could not keep her free variation at bay, we note that she resorts to her ethnicity as a factor for her difficulty. While some of her colleagues chose to laugh, Student 3 picks the expression and produces the correct form *free* and *fair*. In all of this, the teacher chose not to comment on the student's arbitrarily transfer of free variants from Twi to English and rather went straight to explain the *free and fair elections* without commenting on the language of the student. From this, we see that students can also regulate language in the classroom whenever the need arises. In this sense, Smit (2010) reveals that learners can take up the responsibility of language experts, and this helps them to become better learners. This confirms Van der Stel and Veenman's (2014) assertion that when learners take part in the regulation process because of their individual learning, their performance increases.

5. Pedagogical Implications

The results of the study have implications for English language teaching and learning in Ghana, especially at the senior high school. From these, we realise that there are different forms of language regulation performed by different 'experts' in the classroom. Oftentimes, teachers are seen as the repositories of knowledge, while students are seen as depositories without any knowledge. From the analysis, we realise that this is not the case as learners were given the opportunity to negotiate for correct and acceptable language while they interact with their peers in the classroom. This means that it is crucial for teachers to design a system that provides learners the opportunity to practice English in negotiating for correctness and acceptability in class as they also take time to digest, reflect, and analyse what has been exposed to them. The different forms observed are an indication that there is a variety of language regulations to be chosen from. With this, teachers are encouraged to vary the way they correct their students' production to yield the desired results.

Teachers should also not neglect the importance of language regulation in the classroom. In line with this, Prasad (2018) asserts that the teacher should insist on accuracy in all aspects of language learning. Prasad's assertion makes it clear that language regulation has a special role in the teaching and learning of the English language in the classroom. Owing to this, they should integrate both explicit and implicit forms during the regulation process. This also means that teachers should be knowledgeable in these forms of language regulation in order to benefit from their application. As a regulator, it was evident that the use of the dictionary is crucial to the success of language production. Unfortunately, most of the classrooms did not have a dictionary to consult and class prefects had to run to the library to get one, causing an interruption in the flow of the teaching and learning process. It is therefore recommended that teachers, especially those who teach English, make their class prefects provide a dictionary in the classroom before the lessons begin.

6. Conclusion

The present study examined language Regulation in the classroom. The findings have shown two main types of language regulation occur in the classroom: explicit (or overt) regulation and implicit (or tacit) regulation. It was revealed that speakers' addressees may regulate their classroom language, a situation that has been described as other-repair; while the speaker can also regulate his own language, or self-repair. The analysis also revealed that the regulation could be self-initiated or other-initiated. Taking communication accommodation into consideration, it was observed that teachers diverged from their students' speech to narrow the scope of acceptability, or converged toward them, as a means of providing them with the appropriate input to follow. With respect to responsibility for regulation, the analysis showed that learners were given the opportunity to negotiate for correct and acceptable language while they interacted with other learners and their teachers.

This study immensely contributes to the field of language teaching and learning. It is significant to note that in whichever form language regulation takes, it is important to indicate that an error has been committed. However, Leeman (2003) cautions that explicit correction that consists of simply indicating that a problem exists does not appear to be helpful. Rather, a more detailed metalinguistic correction works better (e.g., Nagata, 1993; Rosa & Leow, 2004). It has seriously been argued by Chandler (2003) that whereas explicit correction enables learners to instantly internalize the correct form as provided by their teacher, learners whose errors are corrected implicitly do not know whether their own hypothesized corrections are indeed accurate or not. This delay in accessing the target form might level out the potential advantage of the cognitive effort associated with implicit corrective feedback. In support of this, Bitchener and Knoch (2009) recount the benefits of explicit corrective feedback: (1) reduces the confusion that language learners may experience; (2) provides language learners with information to help them resolve more complex errors (for example, syntactic structure and idiomatic usage); (3) provides language learners with more input on hypotheses that may have been made; and (4) it is more immediate. In effect, and as seen in the analysis, language regulation must be done immediately after a wrong input is made so that the desired outcome can be achieved.

While it was a desire to generalize the results to cover all senior high schools in Ghana, it was not possible because we could not obtain data from every school. Nevertheless, findings might prompt further in-depth research into the issues of language regulation and how it is influenced in other schools in other regions. The adoption of classroom observation is another limitation. The researchers' presence could have influenced the verbal behaviour of the students. To help minimize the probability of the students feigning their actions, the students were made aware of the process and were encouraged to behave naturally as on any other day. As already indicated, it is recommended that the study is replicated in other parts of the country. This has become necessary because this current study occurred in a Twi-speaking area. The idea provided in this study can be used by second language researchers to conduct cross-cultural

studies to examine if such practices differ across different levels of learners and settings. In this regard, the research could be a mixture of quantitative and qualitative to ascertain the facts.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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