Developing Classroom Interactional Competence

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12:45 – 14:00
Room 401-402, Meng Wah Complex, HKU
Chair: Dr Yongyan Li

Abstract:

In this talk, Professor Walsh offers an initial conceptualisation of Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC), defined as ‘teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning’ (Walsh, 2013, 124). Adopting a sociocultural perspective on learning and using constructs from this theoretical perspective, he presents a number of features of CIC and considers how an understanding of the construct can lead to more dialogic, engaged learning environments.

In classroom settings, there are many factors which combine to produce interaction which is conducive to learning. CIC encompasses the less easily definable - yet no less important - features of classroom interaction which can make the teaching/learning process more or less effective. CIC is concerned to account for learning-oriented interaction by considering the interplay between complex phenomena which include roles of teachers and learners, their expectations and goals; the relationship between language use and teaching methodology; and the interplay between teacher and learner language.

In the data, there are a number of ways in which CIC manifests itself. Firstly, and from a teacher’s perspective, a teacher who demonstrates CIC uses language which is both convergent to the pedagogic goal of the moment and which is appropriate to the learners. Secondly, CIC facilitates ‘space for learning’ (Walsh and Li, 2012), where learners are given adequate space to participate in the discourse, to contribute to the class conversation and to receive feedback on their contributions. Thirdly, CIC entails teachers being able to shape learner contributions by scaffolding, paraphrasing, re-iterating and so on.

About the speaker:
Professor Steve Walsh is Head of Applied Linguistics and Communication at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University. Most of his working life has been spent abroad, working as an English language teacher and teacher educator in Spain, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Poland and China. He is committed to teacher education, especially second language teacher education, and enjoys working with teachers to develop a closer understanding of teaching and learning in all contexts. He is interested in all aspects of classroom discourse, especially the relationship between ‘talk’ and learning. In addition to describing the interaction which takes place in a range of contexts, he is also interested in developing interactional awareness among both teachers and learners.

~ ALL ARE WELCOME ~

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