



LUNCHTIME RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

by

Professor Steve Walsh
Visiting Professor

Seminar 1

Appropriate Methods for Investigating Classroom Talk

September 26, 2019 (Thursday)

12.45-2.00pm • Room 205, Runme Shaw Building, HKU

The classroom as a site of institutional interaction has been the source of much attention and empirical study. Researchers have struggled for more than forty years to capture what is 'really happening' in classroom interaction. As Kumaravadivelu (1999:454) observes, classrooms are the 'crucible where the prime elements of education all mix together'; understanding the interactional processes which come together in that crucible is central to any serious educational research. Latterly, more and more corpora of classroom interaction have emerged and these have been studied in different ways, both quantitative and qualitative. In this talk, I evaluate the various approaches to studying corpora of classroom interaction, including conversation analysis, interaction analysis, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. Drawing on empirical classroom interaction data, I will assess the relative merits and shortcomings of the various approaches and look at the ways in which our understandings can differ according to which approach we adopt. I will also scope out the usefulness of combined approaches to analysis so as to appraise which combinations optimize our understanding for educational goals.

Seminar 2

Analyzing Seminar Talk: A CL/CA (Corpus Linguistics and Conversation Analytic) Approach

October 31, 2019 (Thursday)

12.45-2.00pm • Room 205, Runme Shaw Building, HKU

In this talk I consider how corpus linguistics (CL) and conversation analysis (CA) can be used together to provide 'thick descriptions' of spoken interaction in the context of small group teaching in higher education. From an analysis of the data, I show how the two approaches can be combined in an iterative process to account for features of spoken discourse at both micro (word) and macro (text) levels. Beginning with CL and focusing largely on words and combinations of words, CA is then used to highlight pertinent interactional features. This methodology follows an iterative process: from CL to CA, back to CL and so on. This approach to analysis provides powerful insights into the ways in which interactants establish understandings in educational settings and, in particular, highlights the inter-dependency of words, utterances and text in the co-construction of meaning. While CA and CL have both been used on their own to study spoken encounters, each has its limitations. CL, for example, largely ignores context and focuses on large scale analysis, whereas CA offers detailed descriptions but is unable to generalize to larger contexts. Using a combined CL and CA approach (henceforth, CLCA), I argue, cumulatively gives a more 'up-close' description of spoken interactions in an educational setting than that offered by using either one on its own.

Seminar 3

Dialogic Reflection and Feedback

November 21, 2019 (Thursday)

12.45-2.00pm • Room 205, Runme Shaw Building, HKU

This talk offers a social view of learning and professional development, taking the position that learning is a dialogic process in which meanings are mediated by language. Dialogue allows meanings to be co-constructed, new understandings to emerge and professional learning to develop. Dialogic reflection (Mann and Walsh 2017) considers the ways in which practitioners make sense of their professional worlds, develop new understandings and improve their professional practice. We will focus particularly on the use data and evidence in reflection, arguing that finer grained, 'up-close' understandings of classroom practice can be best achieved through the use of recordings, transcripts, 'snapshot' lesson extracts and so on, supported by dialogue with a colleague or critical friend. Talking to and collaborating with others are often key elements of any reflective process, allowing new understandings to emerge, current practices to be questioned and alternatives to be explored. The very act of 'talking through' a recent experience, such as a segment of teaching, facilitates reflection and may ultimately result in changes to practice.

~ ALL ARE WELCOME ~

For enquiries, please contact the Office of Research, Faculty of Education at 3917 8254.