

## **Learning08: Methodologies and Practices for Approaching Learning as a Social Phenomenon Inside and Outside of School**

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### **Conceptualising Classroom Interactional Competence**

In this talk, we offer a conceptualisation of classroom interactional competence (CIC), defined as teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning on a moment-to-moment basis. According to Markee (2008, p3), developing interactional competence in a second language involves learners 'co-construct[ing] with their interlocutors locally enacted, progressively more accurate, fluent, and complex interactional repertoires in the L2' (p3). In this paper, we recognize that there are many factors which combine to produce interaction which is conducive to learning. 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, demonstrating CIC requires using language which is both convergent to the pedagogic goal of the moment and appropriate to the learners. Essentially, this entails an understanding of the interactional strategies which are appropriate to teaching goals and adjusted in relation to the co-construction of meaning and the unfolding agenda of a lesson. From a learner-learner perspective, CIC constitutes co-constructing an understanding of the task/activity, identifying what is required and orienting to its completion.

Secondly, CIC facilitates interactional space, providing learners with opportunities to participate in the discourse, to contribute to the class conversation and to receive feedback on their contributions. Interactional space is maximized through increased wait-time, by reducing teacher echo, by promoting extended learner turns and by allowing planning time. The management of interactional space in learner-learner interaction entails managing silence, supporting members of the group and adopting various orientations to the space as required by the constraints of the task.

Thirdly, CIC, from both teacher and learner perspectives, entails being able to *shape* contributions by scaffolding, paraphrasing, re-iterating and so on. This process consists of, for example, seeking clarification, modelling, or orienting to various systems of repair. Interestingly, the data indicate that learners orient towards 'doing being a teacher', assuming a more dynamic and active role in managing the learning.