

A MICRO-ANALYTIC INVESTIGATION OF CLAIMS OF INSUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE IN EAL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

This PhD thesis primarily investigates the interactional unfolding and management of students' claims and teachers' interpretations of insufficient knowledge in two 'English as an Additional Language' classrooms from a multi-modal, conversation analytic perspective. The analyses draw on a close, micro-analytic account of turn-taking practices, repair, and preference organisation as well as various multi-semiotic resources the participants enact during talk-in-interaction including gaze, gestures, body movements, and orientations to classroom artefacts. In this respect, this is the first study to investigate claims of insufficient knowledge (e.g. I don't know) from a multimodal perspective. Furthermore, although the phenomenon has been investigated from a CA perspective in casual talk and institutional interactions (e.g. Beach and Metzger 1997), this is the first study thus far to thoroughly examine students' claims and teachers' interpretations of insufficient knowledge in educational contexts, and in particular in instructed language learning environments, where English is taught as an additional language.

The research draws upon transcriptions of 16 (classroom) hours of video recordings, which were collected over a six-week period in 2010 in a public school in a multilingual setting; Luxembourg. The findings show that establishing reciprocity (Mortensen 2009) through mutual gaze and turn allocation practices have interactional and pedagogical consequences that may lead to claims of insufficient knowledge. The findings also illustrate various multi-modal resources the students use (e.g. gaze movements, facial gestures, and headshake) to initiate embodied claims of

no knowledge and that are a focus of orientation for the teacher to interpret insufficient knowledge by initiating 'epistemic status checks'. Finally, it is suggested that certain interactional resources (e.g. embodied vocabulary explanations, Designedly Incomplete Utterances) deployed by the teacher after a student's claim of insufficient knowledge may lead to student engagement, which is a desirable pedagogical goal. The findings of this thesis have implications for the analysis of insufficient knowledge, teaching, and language teacher education. It also has direct implications for L2 Classroom Interactional Competence (Walsh 2006) and the effect of teachers' language use on student participation.