

CLIC Summer Workshop for L2 Teachers
Terms and Definitions

1. Language and language use

Interactional competence

- Interactional competence is all about interaction, specifically the relationships between the way speakers talk and the social contexts in which they are talking.
- It is the “ability to make relevant and fitting contributions to an ongoing conversation in an orderly way” (Huth, 2015), with a variety of other speakers in a variety of settings. It includes the ability both to make sense of other speakers’ actions and to participate in conversation through recognizable actions, which are accomplished with various linguistic and embodied resources (i.e., gestures).
- Interactional competence builds on the idea of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). However, it differs from communicative competence because it is focused on how two or more speakers co-construct conversation in context, rather than on how one speaker uses language in context (Pekarek Doehler, 2016).

Intercultural competence

- Intercultural competence is difficult to define, but often includes multiple areas of knowledge, including knowledge of: day-to-day life, shared cultural values and beliefs, common history, cultural attitudes, cross-cultural similarities and differences, language, and interaction (CEFR, p. 11; Cohen et. al., 2005; Mullan, 2015; Woods, 2007).
- Research suggests that, “a significant part of acquiring intercultural competence is becoming aware of one’s own culture and cultural beliefs, practices, and values” (Cohen et al., 2005, p. 179). In fact, “in an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of the learner’s whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture” (CEFR, p. 1).

Interactional practices

Interactional practices are systematic ways to perform specific actions in interaction. These actions include: repair, compliments, openings, closings, invitations, refusals, apologies, etc. (Waring, 2016). These are recognizable actions that are routinely accomplished in similar ways (with a similar combination of resources in similar sequential positions, as mentioned above).

2. Speaker knowledge

Tool kit, or interactional tools/linguistic resources

- In the course of second language acquisition, second language learners must build their tool kit, or repertoire of systematic practices and linguistic resources, in order to use the second language. Such tools include not only their knowledge of and ability to use interactional practices in the second language, but also grammar, vocabulary, etc (Bardovi-Harlig, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2016). These areas of knowledge are not separate, but intertwined, and develop together over time.
- Learners become more interactionally competent as they develop multiple ways of doing the same thing or expressing the same concept (e.g., more than one way to express gratitude, to apologize, etc.).
- Expanding their tool kit, both interactionally and linguistically, allows learners to more effectively manage conversations in new or familiar contexts. A learner's development with interactional competence will be marked by "progressively more accurate, fluent, and complex interactional repertoires" (Markee, 2008, p. 406).

3. Teaching

Pedagogy informed by conversation analysis

- Conversation analysis is the study of what people actually do in interaction, rather than what they think they do. It focuses on observable actions and behaviors in their interactional contexts.
- With pedagogy that is informed by conversation analysis instructors can: 1. Utilize research findings from studies analyzing interaction in the target language; 2. Target specific interactional practices using the data from these studies; and 3. Help students learn to analyze interactional practices through an introduction to the conversation analytic approach to understanding language and interaction.

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