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Document version
Final published version

Review of *Social Interaction and L2 Classroom Discourse*

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Social Interaction and L2 Classroom Discourse investigates interactional practices in L2 classrooms. Using Conversation Analysis (CA), the book unveils the processes underlying the co-construction of mutual understanding in potential interactional troubles in L2 classrooms – such as claims of insufficient knowledge (as previously described by Sert, 2011) – and their resolutions. Sert defines "L2" as "an umbrella term that stands for a(n) second/foreign/additional language used in an instructed language learning setting" (Sert, 2015, p. 1) – and throughout his book he uses a diverse dataset, ranging from language taster sessions over foreign language classrooms in monolingual contexts to English as an Additional Language settings in a multilingual context. This variety of settings allows him to examine a range of verbal and non-verbal features of classroom interaction, for example how code-switching is used in multilingual settings, and what the role of multimodal (such as gestures and gaze) and epistemic (for instance claims of insufficient knowledge and epistemic status checks) resources employed by students and teachers is. The book is structured in three sections: survey (Chapters 2 and 3), analysis (Chapters 4-6), and application (Chapters 7 and 8). A central focus throughout the entire book is classroom interactional competence and its influence on language learning.

In the introductory chapter, Sert argues for the use of micro-analysis, i.e. CA, in L2 classroom research. Classroom discourse is talk-in-interaction, and only a fine-grained method like CA can unveil just how social this interaction is (Chapter 2 goes into more detail on this), by closely examining the very details of talk. Conversation analysts like Sert create detailed transcripts of video-recordings of classroom interaction in which they try to capture every verbal and non-verbal aspect of the classroom discourse, such as talking pace, intonation, gaze, facial expressions, and

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gestures. A strength of this method is that it forces the researcher to adopt an emic perspective, that is, instead of analyzing the data with a specific research question in mind, the conversation analyst is looking at what is actually happening in the language classroom without any theoretical preconceptions, focusing exclusively on what is observable in the teacher-student interaction (see also Kasper & Wagner, 2011).

Chapter 2 explores the methodological strengths of using CA in analyzing L2 classroom discourse in more detail. The chapter starts out with an overview of different approaches to studying classroom interaction: systemic functional linguistics, sociocultural theory, interaction analytic coding and observation schemes, and discourse analysis. Sert carefully evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of each of these approaches in relation to the study of classroom discourse, before introducing the principles and analytic tools of CA. He does so in such a comprehensive and reader-friendly way that even readers with no prior knowledge of CA can follow the analytic chapters of his book after having read Chapter 2. What is more, I believe that the chapter by itself makes an excellent resource for students and scholars who would like to learn about the various approaches to studying social interaction and classroom discourse.

Chapter 3 provides the readers with an outstanding review of the literature on and the discussions about Conversation Analysis for Second Language Acquisition (CA-for-SLA) and L2 classroom interactional competence (see Walsh 2006, 2011, 2012). Using carefully selected extracts from his dataset, Sert walks the readers through the main concepts of CA-for-SLA: understanding is co-constructed and cognition is socially distributed. While all CA-for-SLA aim to reveal understanding and learning, only a few studies have focused on interactional problems in the L2 classroom. However, Sert argues that investigating how teachers and students use epistemic, multimodal, and multilingual resources and orientations in the co-constructing of understanding and in interactional problem resolution makes an important contribution to the field. Sert devotes a subsection to each of these three resources, in which he not only gives the theoretical background of them, but also provides the reader with a review of empirical studies that have focused on these phenomena as well as their implications: a teacher's effective use of these resources, as well as the successful management of their students' use of them can create learning opportunities, foster positive participation experiences, help achieve pedagogical goals, and resolve interactional troubles. The concepts of learning opportunities and L2 classroom interactional competence are also presented in this chapter. If we agree with CA-for-SLA researchers who understand language acquisition as learning to participate in interactions, maximizing learner involvement is one of the key factors in aiding language acquisition (Walsh, 2002).Classroom interaction is different from mundane interactions outside this institutional context, in at least two ways. One is that there are pedagogical goals in the classroom setting, and the teacher's aim is to facilitate learning. Therefore, there are unique features of talk specific to this institution (such as error correction and scaffolding) that can create learning opportunities. On the other hand, by interrupting students or completing their turns,

teachers can decrease learning opportunities. As CA reveals these practices, it is the only approach suitable to understanding how learning opportunities are created. The other difference between classroom and mundane talk is that, due to the large number of participants, classroom discourse is multilogic rather than dialogic, and teachers have to "find a fine balance between control and giving the floor, and between closing down or opening up 'space for learning' (Walsh & Li, 2013, cited in Sert, 2015, p. 52)". Again, CA, looking at the sequentiality of interactions and turn-taking, is the most suitable approach to studying how these interactional skills are used and developed. They are part of teacher classroom interactional competence, a term first coined by Walsh, which in turn, if carefully aligned with the current pedagogical goal, makes teaching and learning more effective and thereby also influences learner classroom interactional competence (Walsh, 2006). Misalignment of the pedagogical focus and the interaction on the other hand can lead to interactional troubles. CA can reveal these problems, by paying attention to the verbal and nonverbal actions that hinder the progressivity of the classroom interaction. These concepts form the basis for the then following analytic chapters (4-6).

There are three analysis chapters, each focusing on one of the resources described in chapter 3 (epistemic, multimodal, and multilingual) and their relevance in the L2 classroom with regards to classroom interactional competence. Classroom interactional competence, according to Seedhouse and Walsh (2010), encompasses several skills: maximizing interactional space, shaping learner contributions, effective use of eliciting, and interactional awareness. Throughout the analysis section, Sert links his findings to these features of classroom interactional competence, so that their implications become clear and easy to follow in the application section.

In Chapter 4, Sert first provides a survey of studies that have investigated the relationship between language teachers' ability to use epistemic resources and their success in mediating learning by resolving interactional problems, such as claims of insufficient knowledge. Using sequential micro-analysis, Sert is able to show how epistemic status checks (e.g. asking "You don't know?") and displays/claims of insufficient knowledge (e.g. "I don't know.") unfold in the classroom. Students' claims of insufficient knowledge following teacher questions were investigated in great detail in Sert's PhD thesis (2011). He found that students employ both verbal (for instance saying "I don't know.") and non-verbal resources (such as shaking their head) to claim insufficient knowledge. What is interesting is that these claims of insufficient knowledge are often preceded by a lack of mutual gaze, a phenomenon often indicative of student's unwillingness to participate (Sert, 2013b), which makes it difficult for teachers to interpret whether the students are unable or just unwilling to participate. Teachers usually react to claims of insufficient knowledge by allocating the turn to a seemingly willing student. Sert unveils the dynamics of epistemic status checks. In previous research (2013a) he found that teachers often interpret certain non-verbal student behavior as displays of insufficient knowledge. For example, while in a few contexts some teacher wait-time is to be expected (Walsh, 2006), long student silence in the place of a response to a question by the teacher (often accompanied by gaze

aversion or a change in body posture) is often interpreted as a display of insufficient knowledge. The teacher then makes this interpretation of the student's epistemic status relevant by performing an epistemic status check, which can be accomplished through verbal (e.g. by asking "No idea?") and/or embodied means, such as the teacher changing their body posture as in leaning towards the student (Sert, 2013a). Sometimes preceded by a verbal or embodied confirmation of insufficient knowledge by the student, the epistemic status check is followed by the teacher allocating the turn to another student. However, Sert has identified several resources that teachers can employ to succeed in eliciting an answer from the student and thereby not only resolve the interactional trouble but also provide a learning opportunity. Teachers can help students to progress from not knowing to understanding by making use of certain verbal and non-verbal resources, such as embodied vocabulary explanations, designedly incomplete utterances, deictic gestures, translation and code-switching.

Chapter 5 then goes into greater detail on embodied and multimodal resources, more specifically on how teachers use gestures in language instruction. Sert starts out by establishing the importance of considering the role of multimodal resources in meaning-making as crucial and inseparable from the verbal actions. He even goes so far as to say that he would question any findings of research on meaning-making from a research approach not acknowledging this. After all, other researchers have shown the necessity to analyze multimodal resources in trying to understand language learning, for instance Eskildsen and Wagner who showed that "vocabulary is learned and taught and accompanied by recurring gestures that have emerged from shared interactional spaces" (2013, p. 158, cited in Sert, 2015, p. 49). Sert provides several extracts from his dataset to show how hand gestures are employed by the teacher in various situations, in particular in repair, elicitation, and explanation sequences. In connection to his ideas on successful management of claims of insufficient knowledge, he shows how the combination of designedly incomplete utterances and gestures, and vocabulary explanations with gestures create opportunities for student understanding and thereby help teachers achieve the pedagogical goal of eliciting correct answers. He argues that achieving this goal is a sign of teacher classroom interactional competence, and that embodied elicitation with gestures manifests classroom interactional competence. Moreover, Sert investigates how students employ multimodal resources to display their orientation to learning. With regards to gaze, for instance, he found that students employ gaze in a variety of ways to display their orientation to learning, for example by gazing at a newly learned word on the blackboard in combination with saying it, and then gazing back at the teacher for approval.

In Chapter 6 Sert focuses on how students and teachers use multilingual resources in the classroom, that is the use of and orientation to languages other than the L2. He explores teacher-initiated, teacher-induced and student-initiated code-switching, as well as the participants' orientation to this interactional resource, and shows how it forms a part of classroom discourse in any instructed L2 learning setting. In alignment with the findings of Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005), Sert, too, shows that teacher language choice at any particular moment is related to the teacher's

orientation to the current institutional and pedagogical goals, and both have found an interesting pattern in teacher-initiated code-switching: when students cannot provide an L2 answer to a question asked by the teacher in the L2 , even after one or more L2 reformulations of the question by the teacher, the teacher will typically wait at least one second before initiating code-switching. In many cases, claims of insufficient knowledge or long pauses make it observable that the students cannot answer the question in the L2. Teacher-initiated code-switching can be observed in situations where the teacher wants to help students understand the fine meaning differences between two similar L2 words, for example "lonely" and "alone". By translating or asking students to translate one or both of these words, the teacher conforms to the current pedagogical goal, namely to create mutual understanding of the difference in meaning of two vocabulary items, and creates opportunities for participation in follow-up turns. Sert identifies three types of student-initiated code-switching: code-mixing, expansions for topic management, and providing an L1 utterance in a response turn. Lastly, he suggests several ways for successfully managing learner-initiated code-switching: designedly incomplete utterances, displaying compliance in L2 to a request in L1, and embedded repair. Based on his findings showing that code-switching can lead to the successful elicitation of student responses and create learning opportunities, Sert challenges the readers to think about whether the empirically identified potential benefits of code-switching might outweigh the theoretical drawbacks that proponents of L2-only policies have found.

The next chapters then discuss in what way the findings from the analytical chapters as well as the findings of the state-of-the-art survey chapters (2 and 3) can be applied in instructed language learning settings (Chapter 7) and what implications they have for language teacher education (Chapter 8).

In Chapter 7, Sert provides practical implications for raising awareness of and managing interactional trouble such as claims/displays of insufficient knowledge and students' unwillingness to participate. Moreover, Sert discusses practices of teacher gestures, especially in relation to how they influence participation experiences and the teacher's classroom interactional competence. What is more, implications for multilingual resources are given. The chapter starts out by linking the findings of the three analysis chapters to the current literature on classroom interactional competence (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010), by proposing to add and connect four items to it (Sert, 2015, p. 135):

"1. Successful management of claims/displays of insufficient knowledge (Sert, 2011).

2. Increased awareness of [unwillingness to participate] (Sert, 2011, 2013b)

3. Effective use of gestures.

4. Successful management of code-switching (Sert, 2011)."

To justify the addition of the first feature, he explains that the successful management of interactional troubles is imperative in enhancing student participation and thereby facilitating learning. It is crucial that teachers are aware of "(1) the ways in which [they] encourage learners to participate, (2) how they select the

students to speak next, (3) whether or not they can motivate `student self-selection`, and (4) they successfully monitor [unwillingness to participate]" (Sert, 2015, p. 135). Based on the literature review and his thorough analysis of successful instances of managing claims/displays of insufficient knowledge in Chapter 4, he offers eleven hands-on implications for teachers that might be helpful in resolving interactional trouble. With regards to the second proposed feature of classroom interactional competence, it becomes obvious just how groundbreaking his research is, in that he is able to show how to distinguish unwillingness to participate from inability to participate due to insufficient knowledge, the "symptoms" of which are often the same, namely displays or claims of insufficient knowledge. What is more, he offers four ideas on how to better detect and increase willingness to participate. Next, he discusses why he proposes to add multimodal resources, especially hand gestures, to the existing features of classroom interactional competence. "Hand gestures, when aligned with the linguistic content and the pedagogical goal, might present an additional and complementary channel that becomes an additive resource for meaning-making" (Sert, 2015, p. 145). Based on the findings from Chapter 5, he suggests nine strategies teachers can employ to use multimodal resources meaningfully, especially in repair, elicitation, and explanation sequences, and thereby increase their classroom interactional competence. As he rightfully admits (Sert, 2015, p. 145), "giving practical implications [for code-switching] directly as ´tips` for teachers is like skating on thin ice" considering the heated debates proponents of the use of L1 in the L2 classroom have had with scholars and practitioners defending the target language only approach. Nevertheless, his six ideas on how to manage multilingual resources are thoroughly grounded in both theoretical and – more importantly – empirical research. Lastly, Sert proposes six ways to handle learner initiatives successfully through the use of epistemic, multimodal, and multilingual resources.

Chapter 8 is concerned with the application of the findings of the book to language teacher education. Sert argues for a "teacher education programme that will put student participation and CIC at the heart of teacher development" (Sert, 2015, p. 153). Before proposing this "microscopic and reflective model" (Sert, 2015, p. 154) for language teacher education, Sert demonstrates how the development of classroom interactional competence can be observed in longitudinal data, using CA. He presents a case study of a Turkish pre-service EFL teacher's development. As part of her language teacher education programme, the pre-service teacher did micro-teaching, observed an actual teacher at a school, and did actual teaching. Moreover, she was continually asked to reflect on and document her process (partially by recording and transcribing her teaching) and was given feedback by the lecturer. Sert observed that over time she developed increased awareness of the micro-details of classroom discourse, and he provides evidence for that this language awareness developed due to a combination of several parts of her teacher education: the reflection on her own micro-teaching based on video-recordings and transcripts thereof, the lecturer's feedback, and the classroom observations. Sert then suggests another tool be added to

the language teacher education, namely dialogic reflections. The CA-integrated model for language teacher education he proposes focuses on reflective practice, a powerful tool in the development of classroom interactional competence as shown not only in the case study, but also in previous research (e.g. Mann & Walsh, 2013). Sert's model can potentially be applied in ESL and EFL teacher programmes around the world and consists in five phases that can be conducted in one semester or an academic year. The key parts of this model can be summarized under the acronym IMDAT (Sert, 2015, p. 164):

"(I)ntroducing [classroom interactional competence]

(M)icro-teaching

(D)ialogic reflection

(A)ctual teaching

(T)eacher collaboration and critical reflection"

The main advantage of the proposed model is that it focuses on developing both teacher language awareness (see also Walsh, 2003) and classroom interactional competence.

The concluding chapter 9 zooms out to macro lens, highlighting the relevance of the author's findings for both applied and educational linguistics. Sert also gives practical advice on how to conduct classroom research, including ethical considerations and technical requirements such as the need for video-recording. Sert calls for more research and provides an outlook on future directions for researchers and practitioners. According to him, more research is needed on (un)willingness to participate and on computer mediated spoken interaction (such as Balaman, 2015). Moreover, the IMDAT model Sert proposed needs to be tested in practice. Lastly, Sert criticizes the top-down foreign language policies that exist in many countries, and stresses that the focus of policy makers needs to shift towards micro-analytic, empirical studies of real-world classroom interaction.

It was a true pleasure to read this well-informed and exceptionally well-written book. The cutting-edge research is presented in a clear and comprehensive manner; not only the book as a whole but every individual chapter is notably well-structured, and – knowing that not all of his readers are familiar with CA – Sert guides the readers through his arguments step-by-step. The book makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of classroom interactional competence and thereby paves the way for improved L2 teaching and teacher education. The IMDAT model for language teacher education proposed in this book is well-grounded in both state-of-the-art theory and supported by empirical research, and I hope to see this model implemented in teacher education in the future. With the diverse instructed language learning settings investigated and its strong focus on practical implications for language teaching and language teacher education, I can definitely recommend Sert's book to anyone interested in classroom research, teacher education, language learning, and social interaction – researchers and practitioners alike.

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