WHY THAT LANGUAGE, IN THAT CONTEXT, RIGHT NOW?: THE USE OF THE L1 IN L2 CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN AN EGYPTIAN SETTING

This thesis explores the relationship between the use of the L1 and L2 in different classroom contexts. The aim of the study was to investigate the use of the L1 within the overall interactional organisation of L2 classroom discourse using a combination of CA sequential analysis and a CL approach. The data for this study consist of 27 video-recorded hours of classroom interaction from primary to university classes.

It is argued that a CA context-based approach to the use of the L1 may be more suitable for depicting the variations in L2 classroom interaction than an overall description of the functions within the lesson as a whole that does not take into account the different contexts that can occur within a single lesson. Following Seedhouse's (2004 p. 207) concept of L2 classroom context as "the instantiation of a particular pedagogic focus and a particular organization of interaction", the study looks at how the L1 and the L2 are used in each context. The organisation of turn-taking and repair within each context is illustrated using classroom transcripts. The argument is developed using the emic sequential analysis of CA and adapting the classic CA question: "why that language, in that context, right now?".

The functions of L1 use by both teachers and learners are identified using an adapted version of Ferguson's (2003) system of categorisation. Some of the identified functions are similar to those found in previous studies, while new ones are also identified. The functions are located within the different contexts with the help of CL. It was found that at the macro context level some functions are pertinent to a specific context and that those functions are appropriate to the pedagogical focus of the context in which they operate. Moreover, some other functions behave differently in different contexts. At the micro-interaction level, two distinct uses of the L1 were identified: background and foreground uses of the L1.

The study concludes that the use of the L1 can facilitate L2 classroom interaction and that a combination of CA and CL could provide a more complete understanding of L2 classroom discourse. It is also recommended that managing language alternation in the L2 classroom could be incorporated as a component of classroom interactional competence (Walsh 2006).