A Critical Approach to L2 Classroom Discourse Competence

Some Preliminary Considerations for English Language Teaching

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Abstract: This article develops a proposal for a Critical Second Language (L2) Classroom Discourse Competence (CDC) for (English) language teachers. The proposal takes the comprehensive competence model as a starting point, which Thomson (2022a) presents in her volume on *Classroom Discourse Competence*, and argues that the existing model is highly valuable yet lacking in two aspects: 1) It does not yet consider the interconnectedness of classroom discourse with discourses outside the classroom. 2) In its focus on L2 acquisition (in the sense of language structures), it neglects the fact that another key task of 21st-century L2 teaching is fostering inclusion and, hence, social justice in and beyond the classroom. Consequently, this contribution argues that today's L2 teachers' classroom performance should not only provide a model of language structures, but also of inclusive and empowering discourse practices. To provide such a model, L2 teachers need a Critical L2 CDC. Hence, this article proposes to add knowledge, skills, and awareness elements to Thomson's L2 CDC model, turning it into a *Critical* L2 CDC model. These considerations are specified by a multimodal interaction analysis of classroom videos from (inclusive) English lessons (years 5, 6, 9) that employ learner-centred methods. This analysis reveals the use of power-asymmetrical turn-taking practices and a potentially exclusive use of gender categories for classroom management. The article concludes by pointing out the potential role of teacher education in fostering Critical L2 CDC.

Keywords: classroom discourse; English language teaching; social justice; teacher competence; Critical Applied Linguistics; inclusion

1 Introduction[1]

> "What if schools and education were to focus profoundly on the reduction of social inequity? […] And what if foreign language teaching with its own genuine content – the otherness of language – made students aware that language is power and that language can empower, that language can construct inequality, but also reduce it, that language can discriminate, but also redeem discrimination?" (Gerlach, 2020, p. 8; translation P.S.)[2]

With these crucial questions, David Gerlach opens his collected volume on Critical Foreign Language Pedagogy[3] (2020). Similarly, these questions resonate in the call for the second *New Horizons* conference, which asked contributors to consider what language education denotes in the 21st century. While the call focused mainly on the literary, linguistic, and cultural canons with which students should be educated, some contributions (e.g. Güllü & Gerlach, pp. 23–49 in this volume) turned this question upside down and proposed to consider 21st-century teachers and their knowledge, attitudes, and skills first.

This paper, too, focuses on the challenges L2[4] teachers face in the 21st century. It argues that David Gerlach's quote above points out a key responsibility L2 teachers have in a period that struggles with issues of social injustice in global and local contexts. Here, I understand the ideal of social justice in line with Fraser (1998, p. 10) as "parity of participation", which entails the resources for everyone to participate with their own 'voice' as well as "equal opportunity for achieving social esteem".

In order to foster social justice, L2 teachers have to guide their students to become "thoughtful, committed and active citizens" (Banks, 2003, p. 18) who are not only able to recognise social injustice but also to "take action that will make the world a just place" (Banks, 2003, p. 18). In this paper, I argue that this requires L2 teachers to be particularly sensitive to L2 classroom discourse as the locus in which such educational processes take place.

Under the title of L2 *Classroom Discourse Competence* (L2 CDC), a comprehensive collected volume (Thomson, 2022a) has recently drawn attention to the notion that shaping L2 classroom discourse in a way that is conducive to language learning constitutes a specific competence for language teachers. Given the significant role teachers have in doing so, the special challenges they face in the L2 (here: English) classroom and the remarkably scattered attempts at conceptualising such a competence, the value of Thomson's volume can simply not be overestimated. At the same time, questions of how L2 classroom discourse can contribute to perpetuating social injustice and/or can act as a catalyst of change towards societal transformation, are not tackled in the volume. Therefore, this paper takes Thomson's volume as a valuable starting point to develop a *Critical* L2 CDC for language teachers.

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[2] The original reads as follows: "Was wäre, wenn Schule und Bildung grundsätzlich auf den Abbau dieser Ungerechtigkeiten fokussieren würden? […] Und was wäre, wenn der Fremdsprachenunterricht mit seinem ihm genuinen Gegenstand – der Fremdheit von Sprache – Schülerinnen und Schülern ein Bewusstsein darüber vermittelt, dass Sprache Macht ist und Sprache machtvoll machen kann, dass Sprache Ungleichheit konstruieren, diese aber auch relativieren kann, dass Sprache diskriminieren kann, aber auch davon erlösen kann?"

[3] The original German title of the volume is: *Kritische Fremdsprachendidaktik: Grundlagen – Ziele – Beispiele.*

[4] In what follows, I will use the label *L2* instead of *foreign* language. English, as the L2 this paper focuses on, cannot be considered entirely *foreign* anymore in times of its global spread and its use as a lingua franca. The label *L2* itself is used as a convenient way of referring to any language acquired after a first language (cf. Saville-Troike & Barto, 2018). This paper acknowledges, of course, that in a plurilingual society, English is very likely to be a student's third, fourth or further language.

The paper first outlines the core components of Thomson's concept and some selected predecessors (Section 2) before developing the concept of Critical L2 CDC (Section 3). Without any claim of being exhaustive, some facets of this competence are specified with the help of examples from classroom practice (Section 4). The paper concludes with some remarks on how to foster the suggested competence in teacher education (Section 5).

2   Key aspects of L2 classroom discourse competence

It is not a new notion that teachers in general and of L2s, in particular, need specific skills to interact in the classroom. In fact, there is an abundance of guidebooks on the market that present interested language teachers with classroom discourse strategies and the corresponding idiomatic L2 structures (e.g. Hughes et al., 2009). In an academic context, the 'interactional architecture' (Seedhouse, 2004) of the L2 classroom has met with increasing interest from researchers working in the paradigm of Conversation Analysis (e.g. Lenz et al., 2020; Schwab, 2009; Schwab et al., 2017b). These studies describe various interactional practices and often state in what way Conversation Analysis as such (Kern, 2014; Kupetz, 2018) or their results are relevant for teacher education.

Walsh (2011, 2022), for example, aims at transferring the results of microanalysis to teacher professionalisation in developing his concept of *Classroom Interactional Competence*. However, as Thomson (2022b) points out, Walsh does not suggest a fully-fledged competence model, but rather a collection of interactional strategies that teachers (and learners) can employ in the classroom. Similarly, the German concept *De-facto-Didaktik* (Schmitt & Putzier, 2017), which "focuses on aspects of professional action linked to classroom interaction",[5] does not encompass a professional competence, but rather a micro-analytical approach aimed at extrapolating ways in which teachers deal with classroom-interactional tasks. L2 CDC can indeed be considered the first comprehensive proposal of an L2 classroom discourse competence model.

The focal point of Thomson's L2 CDC is a very broad understanding of classroom discourse as

> "all forms of discourse that take place in the classroom. It encompasses the linguistic as well as the nonlinguistic elements of discourse. The former includes the language used by the teacher and the learners, as well as teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions. The latter includes paralinguistic gestures, prosody, and silence – all of which are integral parts of the discourse." (Tsui, 2008, p. 261)[6]

Additionally, Thomson highlights that *discourse* in her understanding refers to both the reading of small 'd' discourse as longer, cohesive, and coherent stretches of language (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980; Walsh, 2022) and what has usually been subsumed under discourse with a capital 'D':

> "Discourses, in this sense, are more than just language, they are ways of being in the world, or forms of life that integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities." (Kramsch, 1998, p. 61)

This capital 'D' understanding is based on Foucault's work and is the sphere where power relations, marginalisation, inclusion, and exclusion are negotiated (Hallet, 2008).

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5   The original reads as follows: "Aspekte des professionsspezifischen Handelns, die mit dem interaktiven Vollzug des Unterrichts verbunden sind".

6   Researchers in interactional linguistics use the term *classroom interaction* to denote a very similar field (You et al., 2018). In the context of language teaching, however, the term *interaction* is often used to refer to specific "pedagogical formats" (You et al., 2018, p. 187), aimed at fostering the communicative exchange between students in order to foster language acquisition processes (cf. also Schwab et al., 2017b). As the present paper is mainly situated in a language pedagogical context and develops the existing concept of L2 CDC further, I use the term *classroom discourse*, too.

Thus, this understanding of discourse makes us aware of aspects such as who receives a voice (or who doesn't), who has the power to determine topics and in what way they are treated, whose perspective counts and so on. While the capital 'D' dimension does not play a significant role in Thomson's conceptualisation of the discourse competence as such (see Section 3), it clearly offers a perspective to observe and understand discourse phenomena related to social justice that are hidden under the surface of minor case 'd' discourse. Including both understandings of *discourse* is, therefore, highly relevant to conceptualising Critical L2 CDC. In what follows, I will apply the capital 'D' perspective throughout in order to highlight its scope and potential.

Thomson's understanding tries to capture all possible semiotic realisations of discourse that could potentially become relevant in language teaching: It encompasses written and spoken language as well as all other sign systems, on- and off-topic discourse in the target language, and all other languages potentially present in the classroom. It also acknowledges the significant role played by classroom media such as textbooks and other teaching material. Thomson's classroom discourse mainly takes place during L2 lessons, but can go beyond these boundaries to some extent: For example, teachers and learners can engage in small talk before or after the lesson.

It is within this focus that L2 CDC becomes relevant. Some of its key premises include the following:

- Even though learners, too, become competent in interacting in the classroom (Walsh, 2011), L2 CDC is explicitly conceptualised as a component of *teacher* professional competence (i.e., it does not include the learners' competence).

- In the L2 classroom, the L2 is both the means and "the goal of study" (Walsh, 2022, p. 28). Therefore, it goes without saying that L2 teachers have to be competent in the respective L2. L2 CDC is naturally related, but not equal to a teacher's general L2 competence: The classroom is a specific, institutional communicative setting with its own discourse practices (e.g., Vogt, 2015), and in the L2 classroom these are motivated by the overall purpose of acquiring the target language. For example, being competent in having fluent conversations on various topics (general language competence) does not entail the ability to adjust one's language level to L2 learners, give appropriate task instructions, apply different ways of error correction, and so on.

- L2 CDC translates into and is partly developed further by reflecting on actual teaching practices.

- L2 CDC consists of knowledge, skills, and an awareness component.

The knowledge component contains both surface knowledge and deep knowledge. The surface knowledge comprises knowledge of certain patterns, structures, and terminology relevant to L2 classroom discourse such as error correction moves, techniques of speech modification, turn-taking patterns and many more. Deep knowledge, on the other hand, comprises an understanding of how elements of classroom discourse relate to each other and can "enhance (or hinder) language learning" (Thomson, 2022c, p. 47). The skills can be differentiated in analytical skills (i.e., to analyse and reflect on classroom discourse), anticipation skills (e.g., to anticipate potential effects of one's discursive actions on learners) and adaption skills (i.e., to put knowledge into action, adapting to the learner group and situation at hand). L2 classroom discourse awareness is defined as a sensitivity "to the complexity of classroom discourse processes" as well as "effective classroom discourse and teacher talk" (Thomson, 2022c, p. 51).

3 Introducing the critical to L2 CDC

Even though the few sketched remarks in the previous section cannot do full justice to Thomson's conception, it becomes obvious that their concept of L2 CDC
   a) is based on a broad and thorough definition of L2 classroom discourse,
   b) possesses a complex micro-structure, and
   c) occupies a plausible place in a general model of L2 teacher competence.
Thus, it provides a compelling conceptual step beyond previous models such as Walsh's Classroom Interactional Competence (2011). At the same time, the first two points particularly inspire an extension and elaboration of the already existing conceptual work. In addressing both, I develop a first idea of Critical L2 CDC in the following sections.

3.1 The classroom as a multilayered and embedded discourse space

As stated above, Thomson (2022c) uses the organisational structure of school days into individual lessons to define the scope of the concept of L2 classroom discourse: The concept is relevant during a "lesson" and, potentially, slightly beyond these boundaries, if the interlocutors choose to do so.

While this appears intuitively convincing, it does not tell the entire story. First, the *internal* structure of classroom discourse is more complex. From an interactional point of view, each classroom can be seen as a meeting place where the members need to negotiate and re-negotiate constantly by which rules they would like their meetings to unfold (Schildhauer & Brock, accepted). They can do so on a macro- and on a micro-level (Fig. 1).
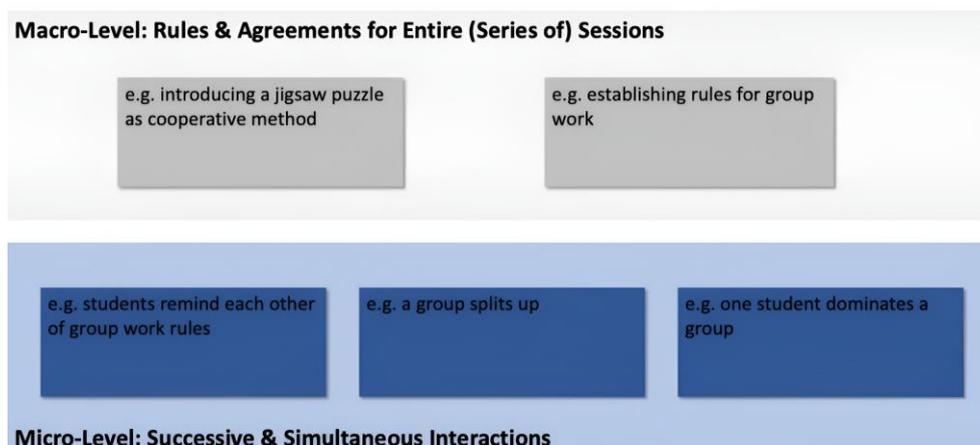

Macro-Level: Rules & Agreements for Entire (Series of) Sessions

e.g. introducing a jigsaw puzzle as cooperative method

e.g. establishing rules for group work

e.g. students remind each other of group work rules

e.g. a group splits up

e.g. one student dominates a group

Micro-Level: Successive & Simultaneous Interactions

Figure 1: Macro- and Micro-Level of Classroom Discourse

On a macro-level, the members set up rules that are supposed to span entire meetings or even series of meetings. That happens, for example, when teachers introduce an expert group jigsaw puzzle as a cooperative learning method for a lesson or a lesson series. This regulates precisely who will interact with whom for what purpose in what way until the jigsaw phase closes. On a micro-level, the classroom meetings can be envisioned as a plethora of small interactions that happen in succession as well as simultaneously. In each of these, the interlocutors can re-establish what was agreed on at the macro-level – for example, when students remind each other of their individual tasks within the jigsaw framework. However, the interactants can also challenge and re-negotiate rules of interaction, for instance when a group decides to work separately or if one group member takes over the interaction entirely. Thus, the internal architecture of the L2 classroom should be viewed as multi- instead of single-layered as suggested by Thomson's model.

Second, the L2 classroom itself does not exist in a void but is linked to the world outside the classroom. Put bluntly, "the classroom is part of the world, both affected by

what happens outside its walls and affecting what happens there" (Pennycook, 2021, pp. 140–141). This connection is also fundamental to current approaches to L2 teaching. For example, Hallet (2008) proposes to see the classroom as a place where students can analyse and reflect on artifacts from discourses of the target cultures and, by producing their own responses, become "cultural agents" (Freitag-Hild, 2018, p. 163) who participate in these discourses. In this understanding, the classroom and its discourse are woven into a much wider network of discourses outside the classroom. Along a very similar line of reasoning, proponents of critical literacy stress the transformative potential of classroom discourse, which can lead students and teachers to take action against instances of social injustice beyond classroom boundaries (e.g. Louloudi et al., 2021). Thus, the classroom is tightly connected to the world beyond; everything that is used and done within is "laden with meanings from outside" (Pennycook, 2021, p. 141), and everything that happens within may have an impact outside of the narrow boundaries Thomson postulates.

If these two points are considered together, L2 classroom discourse receives a much higher significance on a socio-cultural level than acknowledged in the model so far. This point is further elaborated on in the next section.

3.2 L2 classroom discourse as a potential model of inclusive practices

As stated above, Thompson envisions L2 CDC with a complex microstructure of knowledge, skills, and an awareness component. This micro-structure appears to be designed with an underlying 'efficiency' paradigm that, due to its focus on the teacher alone, echoes ideas of knowledge transfer rather than of co-construction. This becomes obvious in the characterisation of classroom discourse awareness quoted above as sensitivity to "*effective* […] teacher talk" (Thomson, 2022c, p. 51; emphasis P.S.), but also in other parts of the model. Deep knowledge, for instance, is exemplified as follows: "For *effective* use of questioning techniques, teachers also need to understand, for example, how the choice of a question type impacts the complexity of a student's response […]" (Thomson, 2022c, p. 48; emphasis P.S.). Implicitly, the focus appears to be on the acquisition of language *structures* (phonology, lexis, morpho-syntax) via interactional processes, while aspects of capital 'D' discourse are not considered yet.

Additionally, elements of L2 classroom discourse are presented as an established toolkit ready to be used in practice; a critical examination of these conventional elements – especially from another than an 'efficiency' perspective – is not yet part of the model. For example, the canonical classroom discourse pattern *Initiation – Response – Evaluation*, which has been criticised for depriving learners of their agency (Little et al., 2017), is included in the toolkit without reference to its potentially problematic aspects. Thus, the current conception of L2 CDC appears to relate to a rather teacher-centred classroom architecture with pronounced power asymmetries between the teacher (as the transmitter of knowledge) and their students (Little et al., 2017).

However, if the L2 classroom is a multi-layered discourse space in which practices can be negotiated, then nothing is *per se* a given. Practices could be re-examined and, if found necessary, re-negotiated. This point is crucial as L2 classroom discourse is more than an efficient tool for the acquisition of the phonology, lexis, and morpho-syntax of the target language. Given the tight connections between the classroom and the world outside, the very way in which L2 classroom discourse is shaped and hence the interactional practices employed inside the classroom are a vital aspect of language acquisition, too: Just as language teachers' linguistic performances are a model of target language structures, they are also a model of discourse practices. As a "way of being and doing in the classroom" (Vasquez et al., 2019, p. 300), L2 classroom discourse has the potential to reproduce power asymmetries and issues of social injustice, or it could become a model for empowering democratic and inclusive discourse practices.

3.3 Critical L2 classroom discourse competence

The discussion of Thomson's L2 CDC in the previous section highlighted several issues related to power relations as well as "ways in which language perpetuates inequitable social relations." (Pennycook, 2021, p. 25) The perspective taken here is, therefore, one that relates to Critical Applied Linguistics. The essence of the critical work proposed by this strand is "[…] always turning a sceptical eye toward assumptions, ideas that have become 'naturalized', notions that are no longer questioned" (Pennycook, 2021, p. 28).

In light of the discussion above, I propose that Thomson's model of L2 classroom discourse competence be extended by such a critical element. In short, L2 teachers should be able to question the L2 classroom discourse practices in their classrooms to find in what way they are conducive to fostering social justice in their classrooms and beyond. This goal necessitates another layer of the knowledge, skill and awareness components in Thomson's model. Table 1 suggests which aspects could be added to each component, without claiming to be exhaustive:

Table 1: Aspects of critical L2 classroom discourse competence

Critical Components of L2 CDC		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Critical L2 Discourse Awareness**
• L2 classrooms as *multi-layered* discourse spaces • L2 classrooms and their *connections* to the world outside the classroom • *issues of social (in)justice* in classroom and society, e.g. regarding categories such as race and gender • *discourse practices* that are (not) conducive to empowering learners and fostering social justice	• *discover* 'naturalised' practices of L2 classroom discourse • *deconstruct* these practices in their relation to social (in)justice • *re-shape* practices if they are not conducive to social justice	• awareness of one's *decisive role* in shaping L2 classroom discourse • awareness of one's *agency* in fostering social justice in and beyond one's L2 classroom • awareness of how one's own discourse practices on a macro- and a micro-level can be a *model* of in- or exclusive, empowering or disempowering discourse • awareness of *one's own pedagogical convictions* and how these influence one's perception and evaluation of classroom discourse

The knowledge component proposed here adds crucial aspects discussed above to the overall framework of L2 CDC and provides the basis for the skills and awareness components. This connection is inspired by the concept of professional vision that goes back to Goodwin (1994), who argues that members of professional communities are able to *read* reality in different ways as a result of the professional knowledge they possess. Thus, the elements listed in the knowledge column potentially enable educators to *discover* naturalised practices on the macro- and micro-level of their L2 classroom discourse as well as to engage in a reasoning process about these practices (Bechtel & Mayer, 2019; Seidel & Stürmer, 2014; Uličná, 2017; Weger, 2019). For this reasoning process, I propose the operator *deconstruct*: In line with frameworks of critical literacy (e.g. Leander & Burriss, 2020; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004), teachers would "analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices" (Luke, 2014, p. 21) of their classroom by asking questions such as:

- Who is present and who is missing in my L2 classroom discourse?
- How do power and privilege operate in my L2 classroom discourse? In what way is this related to power relations in the world outside the classroom?
- What stereotypical notions concerning certain groups are communicated and, thus, perpetuated?
- Who receives a voice in my L2 classroom – and who is silenced?

As part of working towards a more socially just L2 classroom discourse, discovery and deconstruction have to culminate in *re-shaping* those practices that have been identified as not conducive to reaching this goal.

In order to take action in such a way, teachers have to be aware of their decisive role in shaping L2 classroom discourse, and of their agency in working towards social justice: Empowered teachers can empower their learners. This includes being aware of how teachers serve as a model not only for language acquisition in a narrow sense, but of socially just discourse practices in general (Conklin, 2008). I propose the term *Critical L2 CDC Awareness* for this concept.

In order to be profoundly *critical*, though, this concept also has to include an awareness of how one's own professional vision is deeply influenced by one's own convictions regarding goals and practices of discourse in L2 classrooms. For example, Table 1 proposes knowledge, skill and critical awareness components that are all geared towards the goal of social justice in and beyond the L2 classroom. While this goal appears convincing to me in present social conditions, it may not be shared by all readers of this article or it may become less significant in future days. As constant scepticism is part of a critical agenda, it has to be part of a critical awareness that always re-assesses its very own foundations.

4 Critical L2 classroom discourse competence in practice

In order to provide the model just proposed with empirical grounding, this section applies the model to a small selection of examples from L2 classroom discourse. The data (see Table 2) was collected in the English lessons of (highly) diverse learner groups and is part of a larger project on classroom discourse patterns in the context of cooperative learning sequences.

Table 2: Overview of the data (SL = single lesson, DL = double lesson)

No.	Teacher	Date	Year	Topic	Methods Related to Cooperative Learning
I	A	2017 (SL)	5	Buying a Present	Working with a partner: solving a puzzle
II		2017 (DL)	5	A Birthday Party	Learning centres: positive (inter)dependencies and peer-assistance, practicing to work in changing constellations
III		2017 (DL)	5	Planning Our Holidays I (Lexis: clothes, activities, weather)	Learning centres: rules of collaboration, peer-assistance
IV		2017 (DL)	5	Planning Our Holidays II – Writers' Conference	Writers' conference: peer-review and text revision
V		2018 (DL)	6	Bullying	Placemat

VI		2018 (DL)	6	What we (don't) like: Food	Analysing a survey and poster presentation
VII		2018 (DL)	9	Job Interview	Portfolio work in groups, final product: job interview
VIII		2018 (DL)	9		
IX	B	2019 (DL)	5	Seasons of the Year	Peer-check in groups, pairwork
X	C	2011 (DL)	5	Going on Holiday	Expert-group-jigsaw, gallery walk

Teachers A and B work at a comprehensive school in North-Rhine Westphalia and kindly allowed me to videotape English lessons in which they made use of methods related to cooperative learning. Teacher C's video is publicly available via a project conducted by the QUA-LiS NRW.[7] The lesson also features a diverse learner group (from a secondary school, in that case) and cooperative learning methods.

4.1 Macro- and micro-level practices

The choice of cooperative learning methods is an instance of structuring classroom discourse on a macro-level: Using an expert-group jigsaw linked to a gallery walk, for example, establishes a framework of who interacts with whom for what purpose and in what context. This framework is supposed to be active until the working phase draws to a close. One aim of cooperative methods is to shift the focus away from the teacher to the students in order to empower them to take responsibility for their own learning. Example 1 shows how teacher A introduces a phase of station learning:

```
01  T: you can say | i start with listening and then i will read the story
02     aloud and then i will look up vocabulary | or you can say | no i start
03     with vocabulary and then i […] do the listening job and then i will
04     read aloud | you can pick your own jobs in your own [order?; P.S.] as
05     you like
```

Example 1: Introduction to station learning (teacher A, lesson II)[8]

The teacher highlights the students' responsibility and agency by declaring the tasks as "jobs". Additionally, the students are asked to determine their own learning route and the teacher provides examples of what that could look like. Providing agency in such a way can be read as a means of shifting the power balance in the classroom: While the teacher clearly is (and remains) responsible for setting the scene, the students take charge of their learning process in the framework that is provided on a macro-level.

A second example concerns the interactional practice *brain – book – buddy – boss* (Schildhauer, 2019). Essentially, it states how learners are supposed to solve problems occurring in their work: first by thinking themselves, then by consulting, e.g., a glossary in their textbook, followed by asking a peer. As the last instance, the teacher can be consulted. While the corpus does not contain the sequence in which this pattern was established, there are several micro-level interactions that refer to and re-establish this macro-level rule. In Example 2, it is the teacher who reminds a learner of this pattern, putting emphasis on the fact that she is the last to be consulted.

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[7] The video sequences are available here: https://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/cms/angebote/egs/unterric htsvideos/filmsequenzen-film-5/filmsequenzen-film-5.html (accessed 01.03.2023).
[8] The transcripts follow the GAT2 standard (Selting et al., 2009, p. 2). While Example 1 employs the chief conventions for the minimal transcript, the following examples follow the rules for the basic transcript, enhanced where possible by multimodal annotations.

```
01   S1:  was heißt im MEER?
02   T:   (-)äh=BRAIN,
03        (-)BOOK,
04   S1:  BUDdy;
05   T:   (-) BUDdy,
06   S1:  BOSS;
07   T:   and BOSS;
08   S1:  BRILliant;
09   T:   S1=i'm the LAST;
```

Example 2: Teacher's reminder of the brain-book-buddy-boss practice (teacher A, les-
son IV)

In Example 3, the student addresses the teacher again, explicitly referring to the estab-
lished practice. Thus, the practice is re-confirmed on a micro-level while the student at
the same time claims the right to consult the teacher now.

```
     S1:  ((waiting while T is speaking to another student))
01        was heißt MEER auf englisch;
02        weil im BUCH steht das nicht;
03        und   S2   und   <<dim>   S3   und   S4   wissen
          das AUCH nicht>;
04   T:   Okay-
          ((walks to chalk board with S1, writes the translation on the
          board))
```

Example 3: Student claiming the right to ask the teacher (teacher A, lesson IV)

In other words: In the established framework, the student receives the power to claim
access to the teacher's knowledge. Both examples illustrate how interactions on a micro-
level link back to what was established on a macro-level in a framework that attempts to
tip the power balance from teacher- to student-centred interactions.

4.2 Turn-taking patterns – asymmetry in the IRE[9] sequence

However, there are also instances in which macro- and micro-level do not converge. In
Example 4, a learner with the special educational need "learning" receives assistance
with a vocabulary task: In a short text about going on holiday, the learners are asked to
underline "all activities in blue".[10]

```
01 T: ((sits down next to S1))
02    |rIght=S1;
      |gazes at worksheet
03    (1.0) all (.) TU <<acc>wörter>,
04    all VERBS=oKAY,
05    (1.0) so=WHICH one is it hEre,=
06    =i usually GET up lAte,
07    WO is das tUwort;
08    (6.0)
09    <<all>bei |dIEsem satz><<len> i Usually get up late> WO ist das tU
      wort
                |points at something on the worksheet
10    ((6.0, gazes at S1))
11 S1: WEIß ich nIcht-
12 T: okay=nich schlImm was HEIßt denn das I;
13 S1: (1.67) ICH-
14 T: |good und Usually,
      |nods
15    wEIßt du was das HEIßt?
16 S1: ((shakes head))
17 T: das heißt geWÖHNlich;
18    und get UP,
      ((lowers head, turns gaze from worksheet directly to S1))
19 S1: hä=ich weiß was UP bedEUtet aber get up late (inaudible)-
20 T: okAY (0.56) und gEt up late heißt SPÄT aufstEhen;=
```

```
21     =also DAS (hier) müsstest du schon mal blAU machen;
22 S1: also |das=also DEN ganzen sAtz?
            |points at worksheet
23 T:  |nEIn NUR get up late;
       |shakes head
```

Example 4: Teacher A supporting a student (lesson III)

The teacher has sat down next to the learner and asks them to identify a verb. The teacher switches to German to ask for a *"tUwort"*, i.e. an activity word. This question is repeated after a break of six seconds, and the teacher underlines the focus by pointing, using a demonstrative pronoun (*"dIEsem"*) and reading out the sentence. The student is selected as the next speaker (Sacks et al., 1974) as the teacher gazes directly at them. Additionally, the notable pause of six seconds indicates that it is S1's turn to speak now. S1 takes the turn and points out a knowledge deficit as a dis-preferred answer. The teacher responds with a face-saving act (*"okay=nich schlimm"*) and changes to a minute questioning strategy of the individual constituents of the sentence. The correct translation of *I* is praised, followed immediately by focusing on the next word. The teacher uses an indirect speech act (l. 15) and thus provides the learner with an option of providing a dis-preferred answer. As the learner shakes their head, the teacher provides the translation and moves on to the core phrase – *get up*. The learner signals comprehension of one part of the phrase, which prompts the teacher to present the translation of the entire phrase *get up late*. The teacher then quickly moves on to the task as such – underlining activities in blue (l. 21). The learner self-selects (Sacks et al., 1974) and asks the teacher to specify what exactly they are to underline.

The key pattern that underlies this sequence is the IRE practice of teacher initiation (I), learner response (R), teacher evaluation (E). The teacher asks a series of questions and a number of indicators such as pauses, gaze etc. make it clear that the learner is supposed to answer these. In Example 4, this practice is slightly modified: The learner receives (and uses) the option of stating knowledge gaps (e.g., l. 15). However, this does not fundamentally change the underlying practice.

The same practice underlies Example 5 featuring teacher C. In the reading phase as part of an expert group jigsaw puzzle, one student has difficulty taking the required notes:[11]

```
01 T:  na=WHERE is it;
02 S2: ((looking questioningly, gaze moving down))
03 T:  what is WHERE in German;
04 S2: WO-
05 T:  |WO;
       |nods
06     so=[WHERE do they say-
07 S2:    [ach so |weil NORTHgate da hab ich gedacht das wär dieser Ort;
                   |points to worksheet
08 T:  |NO,
       |distinct head shake
09     no (.) you are talking about the |GUPtas,=
                                         |points to heading of a text in
                                          front of S
10     =where do they LIVe the gUptas in which tOwn in england do they live;
11 S2: ENGland;
12 T:  ENGland is not a tOwn;
13     this is a [COUNtry;
14 S2:           [che-
15 T2: ((forms affricate sound with her lips, gazes at S))
16 S2: CHESter;
17 T:  |in CHESter;
       |nods
18 T:  do they |(.) go by PLANe somewhEre,=
               |slight waving gesture
```

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[11] Vgl. https://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/cms/angebote/egs/unterrichtsvideos/filmsequenzen-film-5/film-5-sequenz-4-working-alone-reading-and-note-taking.html, 3:09ff.

```
19     =or do they go by CAR somewhEre,=
20     =or do they stAY in CHESter;
21 S2: ((gazes down, slight hand movement))
22 T:  (..) the GUPtas [|(.) in the hOlidays;
23 S2:                 [|searching gaze
24 T:  what have the gUptas GOT;
25 S2: a REStaurant;
26 T:  |a REStaurant;
       |slight nod
27     can they [CLOSe it in the hOlidays,
28 S2:          [°hh |äh ja ich weiß [(unintelligable)
                     |several pointing gestures to the worksheet with pen
29 T:                                [so=i think |here you (could) just
                                      write CHESter;
                                                 |points to worksheet
```

Example 5: Teacher C providing task support

The IRE cycle is run through various times, and the teacher even moves from open to closed questions (l. 18ff; l. 27). An early student initiative to articulate a former misconception in their thinking (l. 07) is hardly taken up. The teacher continues the IRE pattern (l. 10), missing the opportunity to discuss that Northgate is a leisure destination within Chester itself. While teacher A (Example 4) modified the initiation move in a face-saving way, teacher C does not do so.

The IRE practice can serve important functions in classroom discourse such as assessing/identifying the students' knowledge, praising, and providing corrective feedback as well as scaffolding (Jäkel, 2022). In both examples, the teachers use the IRE sequence to lead the students through a reasoning process.

At the same time, the practice is highly asymmetrical: The teacher not only selects who speaks next, but essentially also determines what the next speaker has to say. Instead of opening discourse spaces for an exchange about learning, the IRE sequence closes them and disempowers learners.

In Examples 4 and 5, this becomes notable by the high frequency of display questions that constitute the initiation move. Additionally, both students metaphorically and literally lose their voices at several instances: They simply do not respond (Example 4, l. 08) or display confusion by gaze and facial expression (Example 5, ll. 21 and 23). This may be due to the fact that both sequences are marked by the absence of what Little et al. (2017) called "metacognitive talk" or what Breen and Littlejohn (2000) label "procedural negotiation": In neither sequence are there turns that try to determine the exact problem and negotiate ways of solving it based on the learner's needs or preferences. While procedural negotiation would have empowered the students in both instances by providing them with agency, the asymmetrical IRE sequence disempowers the students by reducing their agency instead.

In Example 5, this power imbalance is mirrored on a non-verbal level, too. While teacher A (Example 4) sits down next to S1, teacher C stands above and looks down on S2 (see Fig. 2 on the next page).

Thus, both examples show how practices established on a macro-level intended to shift the power balance in the L2 classroom can be counteracted in a micro-level interaction.

IRE can be considered a canonical practice of classroom discourse. It is so deeply entrenched that all interactants involved apparently consider it rather natural and only seldom escape the script it provides. Critical L2 CDC as outlined in Table 1 would enable teachers to know about and re-shape this naturalised practice: In each case, asking open, genuine questions targeted at the learning process would be more conducive to modelling socially just, empowering discourse patterns. The power parity inherent in such an exchange could be underlined by the teacher literally lowering themselves to eyelevel with their student, just as exemplified by teacher A.

Figure 2: Teacher C's position relative to student (see Example 5)

4.3 Addressing facets of diversity: gender

The examples discussed so far indicate that the micro-level of L2 classroom discourse may be particularly vital to establishing and modelling socially just discourse patterns: Every single interaction has the potential to perpetuate or challenge existing patterns. This also holds true regarding the way facets of diversity are addressed on this level. While Güllü and Gerlach (pp. 23–39 in this volume) provide a critical analysis of how the category *race* is addressed in teaching material and micro-level classroom discourse, I focus on the category *gender* here as another sensitive aspect of classroom discourse (Merse, 2020).

Several decades of research have highlighted the fact that gender as a category constitutes a socio-cultural construction (see e.g. König, 2018, for a comprehensive summary). Traditionally, this follows a binary pattern in which *girl/woman* contrasts with *boy/man* based on (stereo)typical features. The underlying thinking pattern can be grasped by the label heteronormativity: It considers a clear binary opposition between male and female as well as heterosexuality as the norm. Merse (2020) rightfully points out that this thinking pattern "creates and perpetuates a hierarchy which marginalises and devalues everything that does not conform to its logic" (Merse, 2020, p. 114).[12] Hence, challenging heteronormativity in L2 classroom discourse is highly relevant to the goal of achieving social justice and modelling socially just discourse patterns – above all due to its relevance in adolescent identity formation (König, 2018).

Indeed, my corpus contains several instances in which gender is discursively highlighted, i.e. made relevant (see Table 3 on the next page).

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[12] The original reads as follows: "eine Hierarchie […], die alles 'Andere' marginalisiert und abwertet, was nicht ihrer eigenen Logik entspricht."

Table 3: Gender in classroom discourse (including teacher identifier and lesson number, cf. Table 2)

Classroom management	1. so triangle group means just wait one girl two boys so we to we have to find out if it might fit one girl two boys worksheet (B) 2. I'm glad to see the taller boys in the back so I can see the smaller girls at the front (A, IX) 3. no ask someone else please ask a girl (A, IV) 4. choose one of the girls okay (B) 5. Luka, can you choose a girl to go on (C) 6. Alina, can you already choose a boy (C)
Competition	7. but you have to hurry guys […] I just wanted to say the girls are faster than the boys […] boys versus girls and obviously girls are winning (A, V)
Praise	8. good girl (A, I) 9. good boy (A, IV)
Reproach	10. come on boys you are all lazy (A, III) 11. you boys are not doing your job (A, IV)

Table 3 shows that all teachers in the corpus use gender to organise the classroom. Items (1) and (2) both employ gender as a way of arranging the positioning of bodies in the room, namely in group work (1) and in a plenary phase (2). Items (3) to (6) all follow the same pattern: The teachers hand over the right to allocate turns to the students, which can be characterised as a student-centred practice that shifts the power balance towards the students. As a pattern that is established for a certain lesson phase, or that even spans true for several lessons, this can be characterised as a macro-level move. On the micro-level, however, all teachers interfere with the process of selecting the next speaker by clearly stating which (binary) gender the next speaker is supposed to be. It can be assumed that this practice is employed to ensure gender parity in turn-taking. At the same time, in particular teacher C employs this practice from the very beginning when no gender imparity could have arisen, thus immediately subverting the macro-level move of handing over the power of turn-allocation to the students.

All the items (1) to (6) enforce heteronormativity and stereotypical gender expectations in the L2 classroom. What is more, students are forced to allocate themselves and each other to either of the categories, with immediate consequences to seating arrangements, group formation and participation in the lesson (turn-taking). Considering that the students – and especially the year 9 students in item (2) – may be in the process of finding their own, potentially non-binary gender identity (König, 2018), this practice is problematic: It allocates the power of deciding over one's own gender identity to others, normalises a binary concept and thereby marginalises anyone who does not identify as either a *boy* or a *girl*. Non-binary students are missing, and thus excluded, from this discourse practice.

This becomes more problematic still when the gender terms are connected to stereotypical features: Item (2) projects gender on body characteristics (here: height), while items (7) to (11) re-enforce stereotypes of studious girls and "lazy" boys (even though item (9) shows that teacher A uses "boy" also in connection to praise).

These results suggest that gender as a category is regularly foregrounded in the L2 classroom discourse of the present corpus, often in relation to apparently naturalised practices of praising and reproaching students as well as organising the classroom. With this particular focus, a Critical L2 CDC should contain:

- knowledge about gender as a socio-culturally constructed category (and its significance in adolescent life-worlds),
- skills of identifying, deconstructing, and re-shaping naturalised, gender-related practices as exemplified in the discussion above,
- a Critical L2 Classroom Discourse Awareness that includes an awareness of the teacher's potential impact on modelling gender-sensitive discourse patterns that do not marginalise and/or exclude non-binary students.

5   Conclusions and outlook

In this paper, I have developed a proposal for a Critical L2 CDC on the basis of the comprehensive L2 CDC model recently suggested by Thomson (Thomson, 2022a). The knowledge, skills, and critical awareness that are the constituents of this Critical L2 CDC have been exemplified by a critical analysis of several L2 classroom discourse examples. In its essence, Critical L2 CDC aims at empowering language teachers to work towards the goal of social justice as a vision of equal distribution of resources and "opportunity for achieving social esteem" (Fraser, 1998, p. 10) for all participants in and out of the classroom – above all those most vulnerable to being marginalised and excluded.

The critical analysis of classroom discourse examples has revealed what challenge the development of Critical L2 CDC possibly constitutes as it adds several knowledge, skill, and awareness components to the already existing L2 CDC model. However, if "Embracing everyone" (Küchler & Roters, 2014) is not supposed to be an empty slogan for the L2 classroom, I consider a Critical L2 CDC the *conditio sine qua non* for not only preaching, but also executing and, hence, modelling inclusive practices.

The obvious starting point is teacher education, which has to "prepare teachers who are willing and able to work within and outside of their classrooms to change the inequities that exist both in schooling and the wider society" (Zeichner, 2011, p. 7). One strategy that could be employed in teacher education is inquiry-based learning aimed at developing the critical knowledge, skills, and awareness by closely working with classroom videos and transcripts (Glaser, 2022; Schildhauer, submitted; Thomson, 2022d). Even more importantly, teacher educators have to live Critical L2 CDC themselves and model the very discourse practices as well as reflection processes they would like their students as future language teachers to employ (Conklin, 2008; Little et al., 2017; Louloudi & Schildhauer, submitted). With Güllü & Gerlach (pp. 23–39 in this volume), it can be argued that student-teachers have to be offered the opportunity of developing a language teacher identity (Kanno & Stuart, 2011) that embraces the critical – for a better L2 classroom and a better world.

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