

Exploring the IRF Pattern in Corpus Data from 5th Grade EFL Lessons

OLAF JÄKEL

Europa-Universität di Flensburg, Germania

Abstract

This paper focuses on one of the most frequent patterns of classroom discourse to be found across all subjects: The typical three-part teacher elicit exchange (Sinclair/Coulthard 1992: 14; cf. 1975: 34) structures many plenary phases through the famous Initiation – Response – Follow up (IRF) pattern, in which the teacher has not only the first, but also the third turn. What can be seen in the authentic classroom data from the Flensburg English Classroom Corpus (FLECC) is that in EFL teaching, this IRF pattern is not only frequent, but highly useful for a number of purposes. This will be explored in sample analyses of classroom discourse from two 5th year EFL classes. In addition, students' evaluations of seminar work with the FLECC material will be presented, followed by an outlook on the potential of the FLECC and the possibilities of using it for diverse purposes in academic teacher training.

Keywords: EFL teaching; teacher-pupil interaction; classroom discourse; IRF pattern; teacher education.