

Schindelegger, Veronika. 2009. *The IRF sequence in CLIL and EFL classrooms*. MA Thesis, University of Vienna.

## **Abstract**

The IRF sequence (initiation - response - feedback/follow-up), also known as Triadic Dialogue, is considered the most dominant discourse format in classroom interaction. However, so far studies of classroom interaction have paid little attention as to how the IRF sequence is realized in different classroom settings. What is more, the role of the students in the IRF sequence is a largely neglected area of research. This paper's objective is to compare the use of the IRF sequence in CLIL classrooms to that in EFL classrooms by means of a quantitative cum qualitative analysis of four CLIL and four EFL lesson transcripts. The results show that the IRF sequence is indeed pervasive in both classroom settings. However, teacher-initiated IRF sequences are found to be far more frequent in the investigated CLIL lessons than in the EFL lessons. What is more, student-initiated IRF sequences are also clearly more common in the CLIL than in the EFL lessons with students occasionally following up the teacher's response. In the EFL lessons, on the contrary, student follow-up is notably absent. As for the individual turns of the sequence, student responses share similar characteristics in terms of their form and function, being short and simple in both classroom contexts. The close analysis of the teacher's follow-up move, on the other hand, shows clear differences between the two settings since the third turn of the sequence in the CLIL lessons serves a range of discoursal functions and also allows for student comments. On the basis of these results, it is concluded that the students in the CLIL lessons are conceded more interactional space than the students in the EFL lessons.