

## Keynote Speech 8 (10:15 to 11:00 HKT, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024/D1-LP-02)

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### Agency: Possibilities for action in a post-human world

#### Abstract

In this talk I will examine how recent advances in artificial intelligence challenge us to rethink our understanding of human agency — with particular reference to learner and teacher agency in language education. While traditional humanist conceptualisations of agency are no longer tenable, more recent posthuman conceptualisations, which describe how agency ‘emerges’ from the ‘entanglement’ of human and non-human actors (e.g. Barad, 2007) are sometimes difficult to apply in meaningful ways to real-life practices of teaching and learning, especially when it comes to integrating new technologies into classroom activities. I suggest a framework for thinking about agency which focuses on the development of critical posthuman literacies. It involves working with students to examine the *interfaces* through which they inter(intra)act with technologies, to understand how to form *inferences* about technologies through processes of prompting and probing, and how to critically engage with the *imaginaries* they formulate about technologies and to understand how they enable or constrain their opportunities for learning.

*Barad, K. (2007). Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning. Duke University Press.*

#### Biography

Rodney H. Jones is Professor of Sociolinguistics in the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics at the University of Reading. His research interests include language and digital media, health communication, language and sexuality, and language and creativity. His recent books include *Understanding Digital Literacies: A practical introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Routledge, 2021) *Viral Discourse* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), and *Introducing Language and Society*, (Cambridge University Press, 2022). His new book, *Innovations and Challenges in Digital Literacies*, will soon be published by Routledge.

