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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Interactional Practices and Normative Expectations in EFL Classrooms: A Conversation Analysis Approach to Turn-Taking

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explores the interactional practices and normative expectations of teachers and students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, with a focus on turn-taking and conversational dynamics. Addressing a gap in understanding how institutional norms shape classroom interactions, the research employs Conversation Analysis (CA) as its methodological framework, emphasizing the systematic organization of talk-in-interaction. Data were collected from two recorded classroom sessions, including one conducted at the American Language Center in Rabat, Morocco, and another source from a publicly available YouTube video. The transcriptions, adhering to Jefferson's (1988) system, were analyzed to uncover patterns of turn-taking, repair initiators, and backchanneling in teacher-student exchanges. The findings reveal that teachers use strategies such as other-initiated self-repair, scaffolding, and missing units to guide student contributions while managing conversational flow. Additionally, students demonstrated clear expectations for feedback, often signaled through transition relevance places. These practices underline the collaborative nature of EFL classroom interactions and the critical role of teachers in fostering language learning. The study highlights the pedagogical value of interactional competence and offers insights for improving teacher training and classroom engagement strategies.

**KEYWORDS**

Interactional Practices, Turn-Taking, Conversation Analysis, EFL Classroom, Teacher-Student Interaction

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### 1. Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in human life, serving as a means of communication and interaction within social communities regardless of beliefs, attitudes, or values. Interaction is realized through exchanges of talk between two or more individuals. One method of analyzing such interactions is Conversation Analysis (CA), which systematically examines everyday interactional practices. CA relies on audio recordings of naturally occurring data, rejecting artificially produced data and intuitive generalizations based on analysts' personal experiences (Wooffitt, 2005). This methodology provides a robust framework for understanding oral language practices in both formal and informal settings.

Turn-taking is a key aspect of CA, essential for analyzing everyday conversations. Though often perceived as a simple skill, it is a complex process governed by specific structures. Turn-constructive units (TCUs), the building blocks of turns, rarely overlap, and gaps between them are uncommon, ensuring smooth transitions regardless of utterance length or conversation participants (Wooffitt, 2005). Analysts are particularly interested in the orderly manner in which turns are allocated without predesigned plans.

In formal contexts such as classrooms, turn-taking follows specific rules distinct from those in casual conversations. Teachers and students have asymmetrical roles, with teachers driving turn allocation by deciding who speaks, when, and about what (Sari, 2020). This creates a hierarchical interaction dynamic where the teacher acts as the floor manager, controlling classroom discourse.

McHoul (1990) identified turn-taking structures in classroom settings. When the teacher is the current speaker, they can select the next speaker. The selected students must then take their turn, while others remain silent. If no student is selected, the teacher may continue speaking until a student self-selects and gains approval to speak (Sari, 2020). These dynamics highlight the structured yet fluid nature of classroom interactions.

Despite extensive research on turn-taking, there remains a need to explore how these patterns operate in classroom contexts characterized by diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Understanding the specific dynamics of turn-taking in such environments can shed light on the interactional challenges and opportunities faced by both teachers and students. This study addresses this gap by examining how turn-taking structures are negotiated in English classrooms, focusing on the interplay between teacher-driven control and student participation. It aims to provide insights into the implicit rules and expectations that govern classroom discourse, contributing to a deeper understanding of institutional interaction.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conversation Analysis: A Short Overview**

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a methodology for social research that examines the sequential organization of talk to understand participants' collaborative means of organizing natural forms of social interaction (Hutchby, 2019). A distinctive feature of CA is its reliance on real-time recordings of naturally occurring interactions, providing authentic data for analysis. According to Schegloff (2000), CA emerged with the work of Harvey Sacks, who investigated a corpus of recorded telephone calls to the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center (Wooffitt, 2005). At its core, CA views conversational interaction as an institutional order, with the rights and obligations of interaction tied to individual face, identity, and macro-social institutions (Heritage, 1998). It primarily focuses on mundane conversations, treating talk as a social institution with its own structures. Studying talk-in-interaction involves exploring fundamental questions about the nature of human sociality.

Garfinkel (1967) argued that conversational analysts, building on Goffman's emphasis, should complement their analysis of informal institutions by recognizing the importance of intersubjectivity. This involves focusing on how participants continuously refer to interaction rules and practices to develop a shared understanding of "where they are" in social interaction (Heritage, 1998). Conversation serves as a medium for establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, exchanging information, and conducting social affairs in various contexts, from home to the workplace. Hutchby (2019) emphasized that CA prioritizes explicating the ways interlocutors display their understanding of their actions and the context of these activities, rather than relying on theoretically driven assumptions about what participants might be doing or how context might predetermine their actions.

### **2.2 Turn-Taking Organizations**

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) found that all interactions employ some form of turn-taking organization. Many types of institutional interactions use the same turn-taking structure as ordinary speech (Heritage, 1998). However, some contexts include highly explicit and systematic modifications to conversational turn-taking methods. These unique turn-taking systems are particularly useful in studying institutional interaction because they alter the participants' options for action and reframe the interpretation of nearly every aspect of the structured activities. For instance, McHoul (1980) demonstrated that turn-taking procedures in a formal classroom setting significantly influence opportunities to initiate actions, the meanings of these actions, and their subsequent interpretations (Heritage, 1998).

Additionally, Heritage (1998) concluded that much of what we say, do, or the order in which we act is not predetermined in conversation. Conversations are inherently unpredictable, as participants do not know in advance how turns will be allocated. Regardless of the number of participants, the duration of their contributions, or the topics discussed, turns are typically taken in a smooth and successive manner.

In recent decades, the growing interest in formal turn-taking systems has highlighted their methodological significance (Heritage, 1998). Turn-taking organizations are fundamental and generic components of interactional organization, characterized by their recurrence throughout a single interactional event. This recurring nature gives turn-taking systems unique methodological value in studying institutional contexts. In institutional settings such as classrooms, participants organize their turn-taking distinctively from ordinary conversations. This behavior demonstrates how they structure their conduct to display and maintain the institutional character of the interaction over time, doing so in a recurrent and pervasive manner. Such conduct also fulfills Schegloff's "relevance" requirement in a comprehensive way (Heritage, 1998).

### 2.3 Difference Between Institutional and Ordinary Settings

Conversations differ significantly depending on their context. Formal settings adhere to specific rules that do not generally apply in informal contexts. Early works in conversation analysis (CA) primarily focused on "ordinary conversation," which describes interactions not bound to specialized contexts or tasks. Ordinary talk is often defined negatively: for example, wedding ceremonies, judicial processes, and news interviews are not "ordinary conversation" (Heritage, 1998).

Research on "institutional talk" began emerging in the late 1970s and focused on environments where participants have specific goals and operate under restricted interactional norms. According to Heritage and Drew (1992), institutional talk is governed by limitations unique to the institution and event, with participants often sharing specific inference frameworks.

The relationship between ordinary conversation and institutional talk can be viewed as one between a master institution and a localized, more restrictive variant. Compared to ordinary conversation, institutional interactions, such as legal proceedings, classroom discourse, or doctor-patient exchanges, are highly formalized and structured. These institutional frameworks have evolved over time and tend to reflect societal changes. Ordinary conversations, however, remain relatively stable, both in individual lives and across societies. Interactional maneuvers in Shakespeare's plays, for instance, remain comprehensible centuries later (Heritage, 1998).

Ordinary conversation encompasses a broad range of rules and practices that support various social objectives. These rules offer an indefinite range of inferential frameworks. In contrast, Drew and Heritage (1992) argue that institutional interaction typically involves a reduction in the scope of interactive practices, limitations in their deployment, and specialization of roles. These restrictions are often accompanied by respect for the relevance of institutional practitioners (Heritage, 1998). These constraints can sometimes feel bothersome or even threatening to lay participants.

### 2.4 Rules and Procedures of Turn-Taking

Conversation turn-taking is governed by a set of rules designed to coordinate turn allocation and minimize gaps or overlaps during exchanges. According to Wooffitt (2005), the procedures for turn allocation are divided into two main mechanisms: the current speaker selecting the next speaker, and the next speaker self-selecting. These procedures determine what happens at a turn's initial transition-relevance site, which is a moment when the transition to a new speaker is possible.

- **Rule 1(a):** If the turn-so-far is constructed to employ a "current speaker selects next" technique, then the selected party takes the next turn to speak. In this case, no one else has the right or obligation to speak, and the transfer occurs at that point.
- **Rule 1(b):** If the turn-so-far is structured such that the current speaker does not select the next speaker, self-selection becomes relevant but not mandatory. The first participant to self-select takes the turn, and the transfer occurs at that point.
- **Rule 1(c):** If no one self-selects, the current speaker may continue speaking but is not obligated to do so, provided the turn-so-far does not involve a "current speaker selects next" technique.
- **Rule 2:** If neither Rule 1(a) nor Rule 1(b) applies at the initial transition-relevance place, and the current speaker continues speaking (as per Rule 1c), the rule set (1a-1c) reapplies at the next transition-relevance place and recursively at each subsequent site until the transfer occurs (Sacks et al, 1974).

These rules highlight two fundamental components of turn-taking: the **turn-constructive component** and the **turn-allocation component** (Sacks et al, 1974).

### 2.5 Turn-Constructive Component:

A speaker constructs a turn using various unit types, such as sentential, clausal, phrasal, or lexical units. These units possess projectability, meaning the speaker's audience can anticipate how long the unit will take to complete and when the next transition-relevance place will occur. Without projectability, these units would lack their organizational function. The initial entitlement to the turn allows the speaker to construct the first possible completion of a unit, which constitutes the initial transition-relevance place.

### 2.6 Turn-Allocation Component:

Two main strategies are used to allocate turns:

- **Speaker-Selects:** The current speaker chooses the next participant.

- **Self-Selects:** A participant claims the turn independently

## **2.7 Turn-Taking in the Classroom**

According to Heritage (1998), context is fundamentally created, invoked, and sustained through interaction. Institutional imperatives, originating outside the interaction, become authentic, enforceable, and meaningful for participants through the process of interaction. In the educational system, interaction plays a pivotal role in facilitating teaching and learning. The classroom serves as a setting where the teacher delivers instruction and imparts knowledge to students. Within this framework of classroom interaction, specific structures and patterns are employed by both teachers and students. Among these features, turn-taking stands out as a critical mechanism of communication, functioning as a cyclical process.

In turn-taking, a conversational organizational unit known as an "adjacency pair" forms the basis of interaction. An adjacency pair involves a sequence where one speaker produces a Turn Constructional Unit (TCU), and the subsequent speaker must respond with another TCU that aligns with the initial one (Sintiani, 2017).

Kim, Ko, and Seo (2012) further elaborate that adjacency pairs consist of two utterances that are adjacent and sequentially ordered as the first and second parts. The first part often dictates the nature of the second, with common examples being *ask-confirm* vs. *response* or *offer/request/suggest* vs. *accept/reject*.

In classroom settings, a widely recognized interactional structure emerges:

1. The teacher initiates by asking a question.
2. The students respond or provide answers.
3. The teacher evaluates or provides feedback.

This structure illustrates the teacher's role as a facilitator, whose primary function is to foster a conducive learning atmosphere within the classroom. Unlike mundane conversations, classroom interactions are marked by patterned exchanges of questions and answers among participants. These interactions not only reflect but also reinforce the institutional context of the classroom.

## **2.8 Adjacency Pairs in Classroom Interactions**

Certain sequences of interaction, known as adjacency pairs, commonly occur in the classroom. These pairs are typically performed through utterances. According to Sacks et al (1974), adjacency pairs can be categorized as follows:

1. **Greeting/Greeting**  
A greeting is a public utterance that expresses goodwill, recognition, and welcome. It often occurs at the beginning of a class in the classroom context. The teacher may greet students with expressions like, "Hello, how are you doing?" and the students respond with an utterance such as, "We're doing fine, what about you?"
2. **Check/Clarification**  
Checking is used to confirm whether something has been understood. In classroom interactions, checking occurs before, during, and after the lesson. Teachers may check students' understanding before the lesson, monitor comprehension during the delivery of the lesson, and ask for feedback or opinions at the end of the lesson to gauge their grasp of the material.
3. **Question/Answer**  
Asking questions is one of the most common techniques teachers use to engage students and elicit responses. Questions followed by answers help motivate students and foster interaction in the classroom. Students may also ask questions to clarify or gain further insight into a lesson or specific topic.
4. **Request/Acceptance**  
Teachers often ask students by name to perform a task, either for the teacher or for themselves. For example, students may be asked to repeat a word, describe an event, or adjust how they use certain collocations. These requests encourage active participation and interaction in the classroom, as they are typically accepted by students.
5. **Instruction/Compliance**  
Instruction refers to sequences of commands or directives. Teachers use various methods to capture students' attention during lessons. When an instructor asks a student to do or say something, such as answering a question, the student is expected to respond or, at the very least, express uncertainty if they do not know the answer.

All of the above pairs contribute to effective turn-taking between instructors and learners in the classroom, leading to successful and engaging interactions. Consequently, the classroom serves as a formal setting with established communication norms. The teacher functions as a moderator, facilitator, and controller, encouraging active student participation and interaction throughout the learning and teaching processes.

### 3. Methodology

#### 4.1 Research Approach

The present study adopts **Conversation Analysis (CA)** as its methodological framework. In CA, human linguistic interaction is understood to be systematically organized. Classroom interactions, as institutional settings, provide a unique environment where turn-taking is rigidly constrained. CA focuses on the naturally occurring data to identify the social actions performed through talk. It helps reveal the underlying structures and principles governing interactional practices in a given context, such as a classroom.

#### 4.2 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are some normative practices the teacher expects from students during classroom interactions?
2. What do students expect from their teacher during conversation?
3. What are some of the characteristics associated with these practices?

#### 4.3 Data Collection

For the purposes of this study, two class sessions in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms were selected as the primary data sources. The data was collected through audio and video recordings, which are typical methods in CA research as they provide rich, naturally occurring interaction data.

1. Session  
The first session was recorded at the American Language Center in Rabat, Morocco, on 28/05/2022. The class lasted for 1 hour and 20 minutes and included 14 Moroccan students and one Mauritanian student. All participants provided consent for the session to be recorded.
2. Session  
The second session was recorded by a Moroccan teacher and posted on YouTube in 2016. Although participant identities are unknown, the video's conversation flow remains naturally structured, which is sufficient for the aims of this study. As per CA guidelines, the identities or the specific context of participants are not integrated into the analysis, as the focus is on the interaction itself.

#### 4.4 Data Analysis

The recorded sessions were transcribed using InqScribe, a software program that facilitates detailed transcription of spoken language. Following this, the transcriptions adhered to Jefferson's (1988) transcription system, which is the standard for CA studies. This system ensures that all verbal and non-verbal features of interaction, such as pauses, overlaps, and intonation, are captured for fine-grained analysis.

The transcribed data were then subjected to a turn-taking analysis, which is the central focus of this study. The organization of turn-taking within these classroom interactions will be examined to identify the normative practices in play. The analysis will focus on how teachers and students manage their conversations, what is expected from both parties, and how these expectations shape the structure and flow of classroom talk.

#### 4.5 Ethical Considerations

All participants in the first recorded session were informed of the purpose of the recording and gave their consent. The second session, being publicly available on YouTube, was assumed to be within the public domain, but participant anonymity remains a key ethical consideration in the study. The identities and specific contexts of the participants in both sessions are not revealed or analyzed in line with the CA approach.

## 5. Findings

Multiple viewings of the data under investigation reveal that the majority of classroom interactions follow a fundamental three-part exchange: initiation, response, and feedback (IRF). This interactional structure makes participants in this institutional setting particularly sensitive to a couple of key norms. Among these are: (a) the missing unit and (b) backchanneling as an assessment.

### The Missing Unit

In this section, the aim is to precisely characterize the missing units initiated by the teacher during classroom interactions. Instead of providing a direct answer or correction to the trouble source immediately, the teacher engages in a strategy called 'cluing', where hints are offered gradually to lead students to self-correct or complete the response on their own. This technique encourages student involvement in the repair process, fostering greater autonomy in learning.

#### Example 1

- 1 T: What are these? ((T holds up two pens))  
2 L: This are a pen.  
3 T: These are...  
4 L: Are pens.  
5 T: What is this? ((T holds up a ruler))  
6 L: This is a ruler.  
7 T: What are these? ((T holds up two rulers))  
8 L: This is a.. are .. this are a rulers.  
9 T: These are rulers. What are these?  
10 L: This are a rulers.  
11 T: Not 'a'. These are..  
12 L : Rulers

In the chunk of conversation above, we observe that the teacher's responses "these are..." in lines (3) and (11) occur after the student makes a grammatical error in lines (2) ('this are a pen') and (8) ('this are a rulers'), which positions these teacher utterances as repair initiators. The teacher does not directly provide the student with the correct form immediately (except in line 9), but instead repeats part of the phrase ("these are...") to indirectly guide the student toward self-correction. The teacher's intention is to lead the student to the correct grammatical form through this subtle prompting.

This type of interaction is an example of other-initiated self-repair, where the teacher initiates the repair by repeating part of the student's incorrect utterance, thereby prompting the student to correct their own error. The teacher's repetition serves as a clue, signaling that the student should attempt to self-correct.

It is important to note that missing units are not repair initiators. In this case, the teacher is not omitting any part of the utterance but is instead helping the student to complete or correct their utterance through repetition. Missing units typically occur when part of an utterance is left out and is understood to be implied, rather than explicitly initiated by the teacher.

In this interaction, the teacher's strategy of repeating the incorrect form and allowing the students to correct themselves aligns with the pedagogical technique of scaffolding, where the teacher provides minimal support that gradually leads to more independent student responses.

#### Example 2

- 1 S2: U::m he gi- e::r he had a lot of money and he give um something to schools and hospitals (.) so- u::m the u::m.  
2 T: [SH::]  
3 S2: [So-] some man of the five towns want to give him a:: a picture=  
4 T: =As what as 1a: (.) as 1a:  
5 S3: As [a gift.  
6 S2: [ A gift.  
7 T: [As a gift

(Break in the interactional sequence)

In the chunk of conversation above, we see that in line (4), the teacher produces what seems to be a repair initiator: "as 1a:". This utterance is incomplete, missing the phrase "a gift," which is then provided by the students in lines (5) and (6). The teacher's utterance "as 1a:" does not indicate an error on the part of the student but instead appears to be a prompt or a cue for the student to complete their own utterance. This sequence highlights the role of missing units, where part of the utterance is intentionally left unspoken by the teacher, anticipating the student's completion.

The teacher's waiting period of less than two-tenths of a second before the student responds suggests that the teacher is providing a minimal cue, allowing the student to fill in the gap. Importantly, this is not a repair initiator in the traditional sense, as there is no prior mistake that requires correction. Instead, it is a deliberate missing unit, where the teacher's partial utterance invites the student to continue or complete the phrase.

The overlap in lines (5), (6), and (7) is also noteworthy. This overlap can be understood as a result of the teacher not specifically selecting one student to take the turn. By leaving the opportunity open, the teacher allows any student who has the correct answer to participate, which creates a form of open turn-taking where multiple students can contribute simultaneously. This is a typical feature of classroom interaction, where the floor is shared and students are encouraged to collaborate in constructing the discourse.

### Example 3

- 1 Teacher: So: (.) we start with appearance please.  
 2 Students: °Dye [my hair]°.  
 3 Teacher: [So dye] my hair  
 4 Students: Grow a beard=  
 5 Teacher: =grow a beard (.) pierce 1m:y..  
 6 Students: Ea.rs.  
 7 Teacher: Wear con1ta:ct..  
 8 Students: Lenses.

In this chunk, we observe that in lines 4, 5, and 7, the teacher produces incomplete linguistic forms with a rising tone and the lengthening of the final syllable, prompting the students to complete the utterance. These instances are not preceded by any errors on the part of the students but instead involve missing units, where the teacher leaves part of the phrase unspoken, inviting the student to fill in the gap (as seen in lines 6, 8, and 5).

This structure is a form of paired sequence, where the teacher initiates a partial utterance and the student completes it, thus enabling a smooth turn-taking exchange. The teacher's tone and incomplete utterance indicate a normative expectation for the student to complete the thought, which is a common practice in classroom interactions.

The question arises: what would happen if the student did not complete the utterance or remained silent? The next example would likely explore how the teacher would handle such silence or an unexpected response, underscoring the importance of turn completion in classroom interaction.

### Example 4

- 1 Teacher: By the way here guys we we have um we will have different answers no-  
 3 not necessarily 2 the same answers (.) but one important thing they  
 4 mentioned is that 1the:y  
 5 (3.2)  
 6 Teacher: They didn't get along when they first met (.) you heard this or not ?  
 5 Students: yes.  
 6 Teacher: what does it mean to mee- to get along with someone? (.)1ge::t.  
 7 (3.4)  
 8 Teacher: It's a phrasal verb (.) get along (.) hhh okay.

In this example, we observe that in line (4), the teacher produces "1the:y" with a rising tone and lengthened syllable. Unlike the previous examples where the teacher's utterances are paired with a student's response, here the utterance is not followed by an immediate student reply. Instead, it is followed by a pause (3.2 seconds in line 5). This gap can be interpreted as a normative feature in classroom exchanges, where the teacher's turn is not immediately taken by a student.

After this gap, the teacher continues his turn by repeating the beginning of the phrasal verb "get along" with emphasis ("1ge::t") in line (6), followed by another pause (3.4 seconds in line 7). The repeated incomplete utterance indicates the missing unit, as the teacher is inviting the students to complete the thought.

The gap in the conversation highlights a transition relevance place where the teacher expects the student to take over, but in this case, the teacher resumes the turn when no student responds. This reflects the institutional norms in classroom interaction, where the teacher can continue their turn if the expected response is not provided by the students.

### **Backchanneling as assessment**

According to Yngve (1970) backchanneling during conversation occurs when the participant, having the turn receives verbal or non-verbal responses from the listener indicating her/his interest in, understanding of, or agreement with what is being said. Furthermore, backchanneling is assumed to be part of basic human interaction, and therefore, it has its place within classroom interaction. The assumption becomes clear as we move to illustrate our observations in the following example of classroom interaction.

#### **Example 1**

- 1 Teacher: okey (1.0) time is up let's get start (0.5) Lmhdi ↑can you start 2 (.) the five changes  
3 Student.1: (2.0) the first ↓ sentence  
4 Teacher: (0.2) yes  
5 Student.1: with the present tens:e (0.4) I am not in a university ↓(anymore)  
7 Teacher: (.)good  
8 Student.1: and with the simple past tense (0.2) I moved to my own ↓()  
10 Teacher: (0.2) excellent (.) good (0.5) ↑Nihad  
11 Student.2: I am not in the same house ↓any more  
12 Teacher: (0.5) ehum  
13 Student.2: I bought a ↓new car (0.5) I:: have just cut my hair  
14 Teacher: very good (1.0) °very good° (1.0) yes ↑ Abdelhak  
15 Student.3: I have just bought a new fraizer  
16 Teacher: (0.5) Freezer (0.5) very good (0.5) hahaha

In this example, the teacher asks the students to provide sentences using different tenses. Focusing on the turn-taking structure, we see that the students' responses in lines (5), (11), and (13) exhibit common features such as falling tones at the end of their utterances and pauses with slight variation in length. These characteristics signal a transition relevance place (TRP), where the teacher expects to take the turn, and these moments are clearly indicated by the students' final intonation and pauses.

For instance, in line (6), the student ends their utterance with a falling tone, and the teacher immediately takes the turn in line (7) after a brief pause of less than two-tenths of a second. The same pattern occurs in lines (9), (11), and (13). These transition points indicate that the students are expecting a response from the teacher, whether it is backchanneling to confirm the students' answers or evaluative feedback. The teacher's quick response in these moments indicates the teacher's normative role in reinforcing or validating the students' contributions, thus adhering to the institutional norms of classroom interaction.

In line (15), for example, Student 3 provides a response, and the teacher corrects the student with "Freezer" in line (16), after a short pause. This correction is part of the teacher's role in maintaining the flow of the conversation and guiding the students toward accurate language use.

#### **Example 2**

- 1 Teacher: Yes continue  
2 Student-3: I finished (0.2) I finished my: (1.0) fifty-five years (1.5)  
3 Student 3: ↑is it correct  
4 Teacher: yes (0.3) ehum

In this example, we observe the normative expectation of backchanneling in classroom interaction. In line (2), after the student completes their turn, they expect a response from the teacher. However, after a pause of (1.5) seconds with no feedback from the teacher, the student initiates another turn in line (3), explicitly seeking confirmation by asking, "Is it correct?" This signals that the student anticipates some form of assessment from the teacher, a common expectation in classroom discourse.

The teacher's lack of response initially (during the pause in line 2) highlights the student's normative expectation for feedback. When no immediate feedback is given, the student self-initiates the assessment, seeking validation. This illustrates that students are attuned to the teacher's role in providing feedback and corrections, which are essential for their learning process.

Additionally, the situation raises the question of why, in other instances (such as the pause and falling tone in line 13), there is no turn transfer or assessment from the teacher. A possible explanation is that, since the student continues with a multi-turn unit, the teacher understands that the student's statement is part of an ongoing contribution. According to Tolins (2014), this shows the optionality of backchanneling, where feedback may not always be immediate or required at every turn.



## 6. Discussion

### Turn-Taking and Its Role in Classroom Interactions

The turn-taking organization observed in the classroom largely follows the basic principles described by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). Particularly, the classroom setting clearly highlights patterns of speech allocation where the teacher initiated most turns, with students self-selecting when called upon or responding to prompts. This proves that classrooms interactions are quite different from ordinary interactions or daily ones as long as they are governed by a specific set of institutional imperatives and rules (Heritage & Drew, 1992).

The progression of turn-taking in the classroom further motivates the argument that conversational rules are shaped by institutional frameworks (Heritage, 1998). The teacher, as the primary institutional authority, exerts significant control over the turn-taking structure. However, students' opportunities for self-selection and response (as governed by the "speaker selects" and "self-selects" mechanisms outlined by Wooffitt, 2005) demonstrate the voluntary nature of classroom communication. These organized patterns reflect a balance between structured authority and student engagement, as turn-taking rules prioritize maintaining the relevance of institutional hierarchies (Heritage, 1998).

### Adjacency Pairs and Their Impact on Interaction

One of the main aspects of classroom turn-taking is the pivotal role of adjacency pairs. As observed in the results reached, the study noted a bunch of adjacency pairs, including *question/answer*, *request/acceptance*, and *instruction/compliance*, which are completely in line with the findings of Sacks et al. (1974) and Sintiani (2017). This taking of conversational sequences is quite important in facilitating communication between the teacher and students, reinforcing the institutional setting of the classroom and the rules governing its framework. In this regard, the *question/answer* adjacency pair was the most prevalent, implying the teacher's reliance on eliciting student responses to guide the lesson's progress.

The use of adjacency pairs in classrooms is a tool for promoting learning opportunities and maintaining relationships. Consistently with Kim, Ko, and Seo (2012), adjacency pairs in educational contexts serve not only to exchange of information but also to build and maintain the teacher-student relationship. This was evident in the data, where each response from students was an opportunity for feedback, clarification, and encouragement. Similarly to Heritage (1998), these pairs are significant for creating an atmosphere in classrooms where the boundaries of acceptable participation are established.

### Classroom Interaction as a Medium for Institutional Identity

The findings of the study reflect the broader layer and the theoretical perspectives on the crucial role of conversation in institutional settings. As discussed by Garfinkel (1967) and Heritage (1998), the interactions that take place in classrooms involve participants' continuous efforts to align their actions with the expectations of the institution. This study puts solid evidence that strongly motivates the fact that classroom conversation is not just a series of spontaneous exchanges but also a well-organized activity designed to maintain the legitimacy of the educational institution.

Putting this into context, the use of adjacency pairs points out that participants, including teachers and students, draw, consciously, upon shared understandings of the classroom's institutional goals. Once the teacher and students start engaging in sequential turn-taking, they immediately contribute to the construction of the classroom as a space for learning, governed by a set of rules that both reflect and perpetuate social structures. In this sense, McHoul (1980) highlighted that turn-taking in classroom contexts can reshape the interpretation of actions and their associated meanings.

## 7. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the normative practices and expectations of teachers and students during classroom interactions in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Adopting Conversation Analysis (CA) as the methodological framework, the research focused on naturally occurring classroom interactions to uncover the structures governing turn-taking and interactional practices. Data were collected from two classroom sessions: one recorded at the American Language Center in Rabat, Morocco, and the other from a publicly available YouTube video. The sessions were transcribed using Jefferson's (1972) transcription system and analyzed to explore the turn-taking dynamics between teachers and students.

The findings highlight several key aspects of classroom interactions. Teachers often employ strategies such as other-initiated self-repair and scaffolding to guide students toward self-correction. The use of missing units and incomplete utterances serves as prompts for students to actively participate in constructing utterances, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Additionally, backchanneling and the teacher's responses to transition relevance places (TRPs) underscore the institutional norms of providing feedback and maintaining interactional flow. In cases where students encounter delays or silences, the findings suggest that both teachers and students adjust their contributions to sustain classroom discourse.

However, studying is not without limitations. The small sample size and focus on only two sessions limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the use of publicly available data for one session restricts contextual information about participants. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable implications for pedagogy and teacher training. By shedding light on the nuanced practices that facilitate student engagement and language learning, the findings underscore the importance of fostering interactional competence in both teachers and students. Future research could expand the dataset, include diverse classroom contexts, and explore the longitudinal effects of interactional strategies on learning outcomes.

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## Appendices

### The first session:

The students were already required in the previous session to prepare some exercises.

\*the beginning

T: Ok shall we start everyone?

(4.02)

T: Let's go

(5.07)

T: Douha you start ?

S1: ok e::r I dress e::r differently now [ and um]

T: [ ye::s so]

S1: I haven't e::r change my hair still (.) hair style

T: It's the same

S1: I have met um more new friends

T: Uhum

S1: Um I don't got a pit because e::r I don't like it

T: Yes you didn't get a um you didn't get a pet right ?

S: No I don't [like u:m]

T: [you don't] have it (.) yes

S1: e::r I have joined gym recently

T: And you go or you don't go?

S1: I [()]

T: [A:haha

S1: U::m I am more outgoing than before. I am not in a:: school anymore. My life it's more difficult now

T: O::[:H HAHAAH]A my life it's more difficult now

S2: [HAHAHA]

T: Well actually GUYS it's (.) she is absolutely right [sometimes]

S3: [yea:h]

T: Sometimes you think that when you get a jo::b and you get the money things will be eas::y it's the opposite

(2.6)

T: When I [ was]

S5: [ yeah]  
T: When I was a student I (.) it dates back to two thousand and eleven my life was super simple.  
(2.5)  
T: I do nothing  
S4: You can [feel]  
T: [what]  
S4: You can [feel ()]  
T: [fee::l happy:: [no ca::r] no responsibilities::s no rent no stre::s.  
S5: [no stress]  
(3.2)  
T: . hh now guys imagine that m::y day needs more than twenty four hours.  
S1: yes  
T: Can you imagine (.) yesterday I didn't have a sleep by the way (.) I went to Marrakech and I went back at the same time  
(1.2)  
T: Can you imagine? um and I had a class (.) university LOTS of things at the same time going on. okay but when I was a student (.) in two thousand ten and eleven I had nothing to do I go to Imdina: and hang around I just I just wanna go back to that.  
S1: Just free time [and]  
T: [ I ]go huhuh can you imagine I asked my friend to go and walk  
(1.5)  
T: But now you can't go to Imdina and walk (.) or go to agdal you can't  
S?: It's=  
T: =It's a very tired (.) you finish from here you go there and then it's it's night (.) a:almost midnight you have just the um  
S1: ()  
T: that's too bad.  
(1.2)  
T: O:kay let's let's take somebody else.  
(2.6)  
T: U::m Hiba (.) you go? yes yes  
S5: U:m I dress differently now=  
T: =good  
S5: I have changed my hair style=  
T: =ye::s  
S5: I have met some new friends  
T: Ni::ce  
S5: U:m I don't got a pit  
T: Uhuh  
S5: I don't have to join a gym (.) um I [um I haven't joined a gym]  
T: [w- we say I haven't joined a ]gym  
T: Uhum  
S5: U::m I still in (.) a: (.) partment  
T: Uhum your parents' house ?  
S5: Yes I am more outgoing than before um I am still in highschool (.) my life um (.) I don't know [it's the same]  
Students: [hahahaha]  
T: It's the sa hahahaha it will be difficult in the future  
((banging sound))  
S5: U::m I still (.) am still[ (listing my) ]  
Students: [HAHAHA]  
T: hahaha good I think um I think the only way if you want to be your life easy is that you have to be born in a ve:ry very rich family=  
S1: =yes  
T: You do nothing  
Students: hahaha  
T: Okay you just have everything ready the ca:r the mane:y the the hou:se the foo:d you go to gym build muscles go and travel and go back home (.)  
I think this is the only [thing] this is the only thing  
S5: [just ()]  
T: Just think about it  
S5: You need money  
T: yes ?  
T: You do nothing (.) yes u:m it's a:: (.) this is life.  
(3.2)  
T: Okay let's see::  
(2)  
T: Someone else please (.) Rida you go?  
(2.3)  
T: UHUH Abdelhaq no no I will take Abdelhaq Hahaha .hhh one of you it's no problem.  
S6: I dressed differently now um (.) I have changed my hair style (.) I made a new friend I:: I don't got um  
T: it means that you < didn't> you didn't get a pet  
S6: I didn't get [a pet]  
T: [ a pet] Uhum very good  
S6: I haven't um (.) I haven't joined gym (.) I moved into my own um into my own apartment I am more outgoing than before I am not in highschool anymore (.) my life it's hard now  
T: Uhum yeah  
S6: I have ()  
T: Yeah that's the best thing ever.

Students: HAHA[HAHAHA]

T: [hahah] .hh

T: GOOD U::M who else u::m si- since everybody is talking about difficult life now can somebody:y can somebody tell us the opposite (.) somebody whose life got easier now rather than difficult in the past.

Students: HAHA[HAHAH]

S7: [of course]

T: It haven't started\_It hasn't started sorry

S7: No its um

T: Anybody else ? (.) of course not (.) it's impossible hahaha .hh .hh

(2.5)

T: I want you please guys to write five sentences (.) describing other changes in your life (.) apart from this within the five years (.) what are the five changes in your life? and then I want you to compare with your friends.

(1.3)

T: Please make sure to use the four types present tense past tense present perfect or with comparatives (.) I would be happy if you use the four of them okay.

\*After that, the students were given some time to prepare the sentences

T: Are you guys ready?

(2.07)

T: shall we start?

(8.23)

T: I think they are just five they don't take a lo::t of time

(6.26)

T: ok who is ready to start?

(6.06)

T: ignoring me means that you havn't finished right (.) [hahaha] .hh

S1: [hahah]ahaha

T: It's like you do for me seen messages

(10.07)

T: ((clearing throat))

\* Because they did not finish, they were given extra time.

T: okey (1.0) time is up let's get start (0.5) Lmhdi 1can you start (.) the five changes

S.1: (2.0) the first ↓ sentence

T: (0.2) yes

S.1: with the present tens::e (0.4) I am not in a university ↓(anymore)

T: (.)good

S.1: and with the simple past tense (0.2) I moved to my own ↓()

T: (0.2) excellent (.) good (0.5) 1Nihad

S.2: I am not in the same house 1any more

T: (0.5) ehum

S.2: I bought a 1new car (0.5) I:: have just cut my hair

T: very good (1.0) \*very good\* (1.0) yes 1 Abdelhak

S.3: I have just bought a new fraizer

T: (0.5) Freezer (0.5) very good (0.5) hahaha

\*After this there was a short conversation but we did not transcribe it for time reasons.

T: Yes continue

S.3: I finished (0.2) I finished my: (1.0) fifty-five years

(1.5)

S.3: 1is it correct

T: yes (0.3) ehum

\* After this there was a long conversation that we did not transcribe, for time reasons.

\*Then, they started another task.

T: So: (.) we start with appearance please.

Ss: \*Dye [my hair]\*.

T: [So dye] my hair.

Ss : Grow a beard=

T: =grow a beard (.) pierce 1m:y.

Ss: Ea:rs.

T: wear con1ta:ct.

Ss: lense:s.

T: get=

Ss: =a hair cut

T: yeah get a hair cut o::r

S1: change u:m style

T: change?

S1: style

T: sty:le uhum very good

S2: dross=

T: =dress better (.) what did you add? what did you add?

S3: try new makeup

T: tr:y new makeu:::p good Douha yes (.) Marwa what do you add? you try new makeup hahaha .hh no ?

S4: new piercing

T: new piercing very good (.) um we have piercing and u:m nose ring right you know what is a nose ring?

S2: nose ring ?

T: yea:h it's the one we put here right (.) yes you wanna try that piercing is good but u:::m parents don't accept (.) what about tattoos? (.) can you have tattoos?

S4: it's beautiful  
T: it's ve::ry beautiful hahaha but-  
S2: you think you can remove it but actually it's\_it's hard  
T: it's hard ° yeh° (.) can you do u::m what is it called the temporary one not a permanent  
S2: it's still hard  
T: yeah (.) it's from (.) from this side\_from this religious side I don't see what's\_waht's um harmful in that  
Ss: ()  
T: That's a big debate actually (.) what about money?  
Ss: get a bank ()  
T: get a bank loan?  
Ss: yeah ()  
T: haha .hh get a credit card (.) get a pay (.) [raise] what is a pay raise guys ?  
Ss: [raise] < () >  
T: very good an increase in your salary (.) OPEN a saving=  
Ss: =account  
T: we talked about savings last time?  
Ss: ye[:s]  
T: [you] still remember?  
S2: yes  
T: yes(.) u::m what can you do\_what can you get sorry  
S3: a new business  
T: a new business (.) support a charity and get a:: mortgage (.) mortgage means that about loan for your house (.) okay  
(1.3)  
T: skills  
S2: improve my [English]  
T: [improve] my English vocabulary  
S5: learn um  
T: learn a new sport (.) learn how=  
Ss: =to dance=  
T: =to dance (.) anybody taking dancing classes?  
S4: dancing classes (.) in gym  
T: no (.) like special dancing classes (.) ok some people go to study dancing  
S5: or to learn  
T: or to learn dancing (.) start a new online course what can you add?  
S2: start ()  
T: cooking cla:ss  
S2: learn um learn new software  
T: new software (.) learn how to paint °yeah paint yes or draw° (.) taking music classes piano for example (.) okay .hhh hh u::m for you guys (.) what are the changes (.) what what area of changes can you talk about in here (.) appearance money or skills for you.  
(2.4)  
S2: skills  
T: skills example?  
S2: ()  
T: haha[ha  
Ss: [hahaha  
T: but I think\_I think you have change in the three areas (.) okay (.) which one can you choose from this for example let's take appearance (.) which one would you choose?  
(3.2)  
S1: choose=  
T: =from the list which one can you choose? (.) [and it applies to you]  
S1: [pierce my ears] pierce my ears  
T: ye:s pierce your ears and I think you do this guys at an early age  
Ss: yes  
T: think it's about four five right (.) [even earlier]  
S4: [I think so]  
S5: six months  
T: <SIX MONTHS?  
Ss: yeah  
T: it's\_it's painful  
S2: no haha we don't remember [it's just  
T: [ haha  
(4.2)  
T: okay u::m and for mone:y?  
S1: u::m get credit card  
T: ye:s get credit card  
S: saving account  
T: saving account hahaha .hh hahaha .hh a saving account that we take money from okay [hahaha  
Ss: [hahaha S1: it's difficult to save [money]  
T: [yeah] saving recently (.) saving recently um° became very hard to be honest° (.) when I star- when I started my first job in two thousand and thirteen=  
((Adhan))  
T: =ALA::HO akbar I still remember hahaha .hh okay it was easy okay because now we spend alot okay we spend um things got um things got expensive and we have in life a lo:ts of things that um bring um (.) spending  
\*Then, there was conversation that we did not transcribe for time reasons.

\*The end.

**The second session**

T: But why (.) why does he want to sell the portrait? (.) yes

S1: teacher::

S2: Mr.Ben is one of the most u::m rich men of the five towns

T: ye:s

S2: U::m he gi- e::r he had a lot of money and he give um something to schools and hospitals (.)so- u::m the- u::m

T: [SH::]

S2: [So-] some man of the five towns want to give him a:: a picture=

T: =As what as 1a: (.) as 1a:

S3: As [a gift

S2: [ A gift

T: [As a gift

((continued))

T: So this is what happened we've got here a very rich man who called what ?

Ss: Sergey

T: yes \_called Ser (1.3) gey a::nd has hospitals (.) a:nd as gratitude from the people of the town they want to give him a present\_a gift so a very famous painter called \_what called

S2: Krisage

T: krisage very good (.) he painted a portrait of Sergey but=

S2: =he didn't got ()

T: years after years he=

S2: =hates it

T: he hated that protrait and he had an agreement with 1a:

S3: u::m

T: with 1a- (.) a burglar.

(Break in the interactional sequence)

\* The remaining part was not transcribed for time reasons. The full video can be accessed through the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11fB359VrBIZPwkqllpdM0x6o7H-9apVA/view?usp=drivesdk>

**Transcription Conventions**

The following transcription symbols are used in transcribing the data

::: Colons indicate stretching the preceding sound or letter. More Colons indicate the extent of the stretching.

(.) A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the speaker's talk less than two tenths of a second.

[] Square brackets between adjacent lines indicate the onset and end of an overlapping talk.

↑ The arrow marks a rising intonation. They are place before the onset of the shift.

Under Underlined fragments indicate a speaker emphasis.

° ° This symbol indicates that the utterance they surround is spoken noticeably quieter than the talk in the same utterance.

Hh 'h' indicates an out-breath. The more 'h's, the longer the in-breath.

= This sign indicates contiguous utterances.

(0.5) The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.

- A dash indicates a sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.