

## Sequential Organization in Different Speech Exchange Systems

### 4.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter first develops a general outline of the practices that constitute interactional competence, then shows how members' practices vary in terms of the sequential organization that characterizes three speech exchange systems that are of particular interest to SLA researchers: ordinary conversation, traditional classrooms, and non-traditional classrooms. Chapter 5 provides a similar account of how participants orient to different turn-taking procedures in these speech exchange systems, and chapter 6 shows how speakers do repair in the same three speech exchange systems.

### 4.1. INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCE

As Heritage (1987) pointed out, "[t]he central objective of conversation analysis is to uncover the social competences which underlie social interaction, that is, the procedures and expectations through which interaction is produced and understood" (p. 258). Thus, CA's concern with interactional competence converges with sociolinguistic notions of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972). More specifically, under the most recent model of communicative competence proposed by Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell (1995), the notion of interactional competence minimally subsumes the following parts of the model: the conversational structure component of discourse competence, the non-verbal communicative factors component of sociocultural competence, and all of the components of strategic competence (avoidance and reduction strategies, achievement and compensatory

strategies, stalling and time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies and interactional strategies). For purposes here, however, I argue that self-monitoring strategies and interactional strategies are particular instances of the conversational structure component of discourse competence.

At the same time, as I noted in chapter 2, although the principal interest of CA is to explicate the organization of talk-in-interaction in sequential terms, this does not mean that it dismisses the importance of sentence-level linguistic competence. Although CA is agnostic as to how linguistic knowledge is organized in the brain, it nonetheless emphasizes that members continuously use their knowledge of sentence-level grammar to analyze the status of an evolving turn in order to bid for the floor appropriately when current speaker reaches a possible completion point in his or her turn (Sacks et al., 1974). The conversation-analytic position on the role of sentence-level grammar in talk-in-interaction is therefore quite consistent with the Hymesian idea that communicative competence encompasses speakers' abstract knowledge of formal grammar — whatever form that knowledge takes. Furthermore, despite the insistence on the primacy of observable behaviors, this does not mean that CA is not interested in cognition. As Schegloff (1991a) argued, the knowledge to which members orient in order to repair conversational problems may in fact be analyzed as instances of socially shared cognition that are instantiated in members' conversational practices.

Also relevant to this discussion is Anderson and Lynch's (1988) notion that comprehension consists of an interaction between background schematic knowledge of the world and formal systemic knowledge about language. This interaction is mediated by contextual knowledge, or knowledge about a particular communicative situation and the co-text of talk. I have adapted this model of comprehension in Table 4.1.

More specifically, this model consists of four main components: schematic, interactional, systemic, and lexical knowledge. Whereas the schematic and systemic components are the same as in Anderson and Lynch's original model, I replace contextual knowledge with interactional knowledge to invoke CA's strict formulation of context (see the discussion of this issue in chapter 2) and I add the component of lexical knowledge because of the importance which adult L2 learners attach to learning new vocabulary (see Hatch, 1978).

Thus, when people talk, they orient to and display whatever schematic or background knowledge about the world (e.g., factual,



# Conversation Analysis

Numa Markee

The final camera copy for this work was prepared by the author, and therefore the publisher takes no responsibility for consistency or correctness of typographical style. However, this arrangement helps to make publication of this kind of scholarship possible.

Copyright © 2000 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.  
All rights reserved. No part of the book may be reproduced in any form, by photostat, microfilm, retrieval system, or any other means, without prior written permission of the publisher.

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers  
10 Industrial Avenue  
Mahwah, NJ 07430

Cover design by Kathryn Houghtaling Lacey

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Markee, Numa.

Conversation analysis / Numa Markee

p. cm. — (SLA research)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8058-1999-1 © : alk. paper). — ISBN 0-8058-2000-0 (pbk. : alk. paper).

1. Conversation analysis. 2. Second language acquisition I. Title. II. Series.

P95.45.M35 2000

302.3'46—dc21

99-39744

CIP

Books published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates are printed on acid-free paper, and their bindings are chosen for strength and durability.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

TABLE 4.1 A model of listening comprehension

*Note:* Adapted from A. Anderson & T. Lynch (1988, p. 13).  
 Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press from  
 Language Teaching: Listening by Anne Anderson and Tony Lynch  
 © Oxford University Press 1988

<b>Schematic Knowledge</b>
Background knowledge about the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• factual</li> <li>• sociocultural</li> <li>• personal</li> </ul>
<b>Interactional Knowledge</b>
Knowledge of how language is used in talk-in-interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sequential organization of talk-in-interaction</li> <li>• turn-taking organization of talk-in-interaction</li> <li>• organization of repair in talk-in-interaction</li> </ul>
Knowledge of communicative strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoidance/reduction</li> <li>• achievement/compensatory</li> <li>• stalling/time-gaining</li> </ul>
Knowledge of how verbal and non-verbal communicative factors interact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gestures</li> <li>• eye gaze</li> </ul>
<b>Systemic Knowledge</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• syntactic</li> <li>• semantic</li> <li>• phonological</li> <li>• morphological</li> </ul>
<b>Lexical Knowledge</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• syntactic restrictions on vocabulary</li> <li>• individual vocabulary items (including lexicalized verb forms)</li> <li>• idiomatic phrases</li> <li>• collocations</li> <li>• proverbs</li> <li>• metaphors and other forms of symbolic speech</li> </ul>



n  
 , p. 13).  
 s from  
 ny Lynch

sociocultural, personal information, etc.) that is relevant at particular moments in a particular conversation to achieve that conversation successfully. They also "do" or perform interactional knowledge by orienting to a sequential organization of talk, which is characterized by specifiable turn-taking and repair practices. These practices also organize the deployment of communicative strategies (e.g., the avoidance and reduction strategies, the achievement and compensatory strategies and the stalling and time-gaining strategies identified by Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). Verbal practices also interact with a variety of non-verbal communicative factors such as gestures and eye gaze (Goodwin, 1979).

In addition, members use their knowledge of syntax, semantics, phonology and morphology to parse current speaker's turn for an appropriate place to start speaking. Finally, they also invoke lexical knowledge. To a certain extent, there is some overlap here between systemic and lexical knowledge, as speaker-hearers must pay attention to whatever syntactic restrictions may operate on particular vocabulary items. Beyond this, a knowledge of lexis involves orienting to the appropriate use of individual vocabulary items (including lexicalized verb forms), idiomatic phrases, collocations, proverbs and metaphors, and other forms of symbolic speech. This final component of the model is potentially interesting in SLA terms, as the incidental acquisition of vocabulary through talk has historically been an under-researched area (Ellis, 1994, though see Wesche & Paribhakt, 1999, for recent developments in this area). As Hatch et al. (1990) also pointed out, next to no research has been done on the acquisition of symbolic lexical meanings.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the interactional knowledge that participants deploy as they construct meaningful talk. More specifically, I review how sequences are organized in different speech exchange systems. I show how the organizational particulars of classroom talk differ (or at times do not differ) from those of ordinary conversation, so that researchers can avoid attributing institutional characteristics to classroom talk that may in fact also be typical of other speech exchange systems (see Lerner, 1995, for a discussion of this issue).

#### 4.1.1. Sequential Organization in Equal Power Speech Exchange Systems

Before providing a technical specification of how members organize talk in terms of sequences, I first clarify what I mean by equal and unequal power speech exchange systems. As shown in more detail later

interact

terms)

on in this chapter and in chapter 5, speech exchange systems differ from one another in terms of whether members have equal rights to participate in talk or not. In ordinary conversation, for example, all participants are peers and therefore have equal rights to speak. Mundane conversation is thus an example of talk that is achieved as an equal power speech exchange system. Similarly, talk that occurs between student peers during small group work is typically much closer to the practices to which members orient during ordinary conversation.<sup>1</sup> Such talk is treated here, therefore, as an instance of a slightly modified equal power speech exchange system. In contrast, in teacher-student talk, teachers have privileged rights not only to speak but also to distribute turns to learners, whereas students have much more restricted participation rights. Teacher-student talk is therefore massively, though not exclusively,<sup>2</sup> achieved as an unequal power speech exchange system. This technical specification of teacher-student talk is equivalent to the lay characterization of a class as instantiating a "traditional" teacher-fronted style of pedagogy. Finally, talk between student peers is equivalent to the lay characterization of a class as instantiating a "non-traditional" student-centered style of pedagogy.<sup>3</sup> I now specify how members organize their talk into sequences in equal power discourse.

From a CA perspective, talk-in-interaction is organized in terms of *sequences*, of which the most basic example is the *adjacency pair* (Schegloff, 1972, 1979; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Adjacency pair sequences involve sequences that are (a) physically adjacent to each other (b) produced by two different speakers (3) constructed in terms of *first* and *second pair parts* (4) constructed such that Speaker 1's first pair part makes it *conditionally relevant* for Speaker 2 to respond with an appropriate second pair part.

The idea that Speaker 1's first pair part sets up an expected response by Speaker 2 in the second pair part slot is an example of a type of structure that is ubiquitous in talk-in-interaction, namely the *preference organization* of talk.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, in ordinary conversation, an invitation properly requires an acceptance or a refusal, a greeting properly requires another greeting in return, and a question or a summons properly require an answer. Note that adjacency pairs are a universal characteristic of the organization of all conversational interaction, irrespective of the particular language that is being spoken.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, from an SLA perspective, this kind of sequential structure may provide L2 learners with important resources for understanding what kinds of social acts fluent speakers of the target language are accomplishing as they talk, even if the learners do not initially understand the details of what is being said to them.

Question-answer adjacency pair sequences are particularly interesting conversational objects in that, as Excerpt 4.1 illustrates, they show rather clearly how participants achieve an equal power as opposed to an unequal power speech exchange system.<sup>6</sup>

### Excerpt 4.1

- 135 L6: Q1 what [ə]spur means? how do you how do you pronounce it s-p-u-r  
 136 T: A1 spur:  
 137 L6: spur.=  
 138 T: =//uh huh, <h>//  
 139 L6: Q2 //what does this mean.//  
 140 T: Q3 can I see the sentence?  
 141 L6: A3 sure  
 142 T: Q4 it depends on (1) uh::m (1) where was it again down here somewhere,  
 143 (+)  
 144 L6: A4 it's supposed to be here (+) uh:m (++) <hhh>  
 145 L5: (hhhhh) ((L5 laughs under his breath))  
 146 L6: A4 uh:: oh, oh. (+) yeah its here  
 147 (+)  
 148 T: A2 ok (3) to: in this case it's to encourage  
 149 ...  
 (NM: Class 1, Group 1)

More specifically, in this excerpt, L6 asks two questions in his turn at line 135, the first relating to the meaning of the word *spur* and the second relating to the pronunciation of this word. At line 136, T (the teacher) answers the sequentially latest question and models the pronunciation of *spur*. Thus, L6 and T have constructed a prototypical question-answer adjacency pair (as shown by the Q1-A1 notation in the margin).

However, looking at the continuation of this excerpt, notice that T does not answer L6's next question (Q2) at line 139; note also that Q2 repeats the first part of the two-part question (Q1) that L6 asked at line 135. Instead of giving an answer as before, T asks a question of her own (Q3) at line 140 to clarify where the word *spur* occurs in L6's reading passage so that she can see its discursive context before replying. Thus, the talk that occurs between lines 140 and 146 takes on the character of a necessary conversational detour, technically known as an insertion sequence (IS). This IS is itself organized into two sets of adjacency pairs (the first pair consisting of the Q3-A3 turns at lines 140-141, and the second of the Q4-A4 turns at lines 142, 144, and 146 respectively). In summary, the purpose of this IS is to obtain information that is conditionally relevant to T providing an answer (A2, at line 148) that appropriately responds to



the first part of L6's initial question (Q1) at line 135 and to the repetition of this question (Q2) at line 139.

This is an important point: Although the turns at lines 135/139 and 148 are demonstrably physically separated from each other, this does not constitute an empirical counterexample to the theoretical notion that adjacency pairs constitute a fundamental resource for understanding the sequential structure of conversation. To the contrary, these data demonstrate that, even though conversationalists may need to do other, prior work in order to answer an initial question appropriately, they are still oriented to the necessity of providing an adequate answer to that first question. Indeed, if they do not answer this initial question appropriately, conversationalists may justifiably be held accountable for this omission in subsequent talk (Schegloff, 1972).

#### **4.1.2. Sequential Organization in Unequal Power Speech Exchange Systems**

As noted earlier, an important issue in CA is how the structure of institutional talk systematically differs from that of ordinary conversation. To the extent that talk in L2 classrooms is achieved as a variety of institutional talk, L2 classroom research can usefully be informed by a CA perspective. As I now demonstrate, CA is a methodology that can illuminate not just the structural differences between ordinary conversation and institutional talk, but, potentially, the ways in which naturalistic SLA differs from instructed SLA.

As I have already noted, ordinary conversation is a type of talk-in-interaction in which all conversationalists have equal rights to engage in a wide range of behaviors. Thus, any party to a conversation has the right to initiate a question-answer sequence. In contrast, research carried out in traditional (i.e., teacher-fronted) L1 secondary classrooms in Britain has shown that the prototypical mode of teacher-student interaction consists of recurring Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, 1992). The same three-part conversational object, which Mehan (1979) calls Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequences and McHoul (1978) Question-Answer-Comment (QAC) sequences, has been observed in an elementary bilingual language arts classroom in the United States and an L1 high school geography classroom in Australia, respectively. Finally, the same organizational structure has been found in American L2 classrooms (Fanselow, 1977). As shown in the data displayed in Excerpt 4.2, QAC sequences are a prototypical locus of talk that displays participants' orientation to a distinctively

institutional variety of talk, in which members construct their differential status on a moment by moment basis.<sup>7</sup>

### Excerpt 4.2

- 1 T: Q Can you tell me why do you eat all that food?  
 2       Yes  
 3 P: A To keep you strong.  
 4 T: C To keep you strong. Yes. To keep you strong.  
 5       Q Why do you want to be strong?  
 (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992, pp. 2-3)

More specifically, Excerpt 4.2 shows that teachers and learners implement a teacher-fronted pedagogical speech exchange system by orienting to an initial question-answer adjacency pair sequence, which is immediately followed by a second adjacency pair constituted by the answer and commenting turns (Mehan, 1979). That is, just as the initial question turn sequentially sets up the following answer turn, so the answer turn sequentially sets up the commenting turn.

Furthermore, there is a specific distribution of turn types among participants in this speech exchange system. Unlike ordinary conversation, this speech exchange system is characterized by unequal power relationships. Thus, teachers initiate pedagogical talk with Q turns (see line 1 of Excerpt 4.2), learners contingently respond with an A turn or turns (see line 3), and teachers close these QA sequences with an evaluative C turn (see line 4). These C turns provide learners with evaluative feedback concerning the adequacy of their responses in the preceding turn. Teachers then initiate the next QAC sequence with another Q turn (see line 5), and this process proceeds recursively for the duration of the lesson-as-speech-event.

To summarize the argument thus far, whereas ordinary conversation is an open-ended, locally managed speech exchange system, pedagogical talk in traditional classrooms is characterized by a considerable amount of pre-allocation of turns. Teachers maintain control over the moment-by-moment content and direction of classroom talk by reserving the right to ask questions. Students are thereby sequentially obligated to respond with answers. Furthermore, by reserving the right to do Q turns, teachers put themselves in a privileged sequential position that enables them to evaluate the quality of the student's answer in the third position C turn. This third turn can either close the sequence or can serve as the launch pad for requests by teachers that learners do further elaborative work. Teachers and learners jointly accomplish these elaborations through the vehicle of further QAC sequences.

In SLA terms, both speech exchange systems potentially provide for extensive scaffolding and modeling of target language structure, lexis, and phonology by teachers. However, the two speech exchange systems differ considerably in terms of learners' opportunities to initiate and restructure talk through the use of repairs such as clarification requests, comprehension checks, and confirmation checks. Furthermore, they differ not only in terms of the numbers of questions that learners initiate but also the kinds of questions that teachers typically ask.

Learners typically ask few questions in teacher-fronted lessons (see Carlsen, 1991; Dillon, 1981, 1988, for quantitative analyses of the numbers of questions asked by teachers and learners in L1 classrooms and a similar analysis of ESL teacher and learner questioning behaviors by White & Lightbown, 1984).<sup>8</sup> Teachers ask far more display (known information) questions than referential (new information) questions (Long & Sato, 1983; Pica & Long, 1986. See Koshik, 1999, and, to a lesser extent, Banbrook & Skehan, 1990; Markee, 1995, for a critique of this distinction between display and referential questions). This teacher behavior has an important effect on students' responses because referential questions seem to promote more syntactically complex and connected student answers than do display questions (Brock, 1986). For these reasons, Pica (1987) claimed that the unequal power relationships that typify traditional

**Option 1: Sequential trajectory for a teacher  
using an A strategy**

Ownership of the turn:	(L)	(T)	(L)
Sequential structure:	Q	A	C

**Option 2: Sequential trajectory for a teacher  
using a CQ(R) strategy**

Ownership of the turn:	(L)	(T)	(L/T)	(T)	(L)
Sequential structure:	Q1	CQ(R)	A/CQ(R)	A1	C

Q      Question turn  
 A      Answer turn  
 C      Commenting turn  
 CQ     Counter Question turn  
 CQ(R) Counter Question turn done as a referential question

FIG. 4.1 Two alternative trajectories for teachers' answering students' questions.



classroom discourse may hamper the process of SLA by limiting learners' opportunities to modify their interactions with teachers.

This conclusion obviously suggests that non-traditional instruction (e.g., small group-oriented, task-based language teaching) might provide a better environment for language learning. Whereas such a claim cannot yet be made, the difficulty of implementing small group-oriented, task-based language teaching in non-traditional ways can be documented. For example, student-student interaction during task-based, small group work should look different from teacher-student talk because teachers can exercise much less direct control over what learners say and how they talk during group work. However, the fact that learner-learner patterns of interaction are qualitatively different does not mean that the quality of teacher-student interaction during small group-mediated tasks also changes (Markee, 1995). In fact, teachers tend to revert to a traditional form of unequal power discourse, even when students are ostensibly supposed to be "in charge" of the talk. To illustrate this point, I show how three different teachers and their respective students reconstructed QAC sequences when students did not know a word that they had encountered in a reading passage.

When students ask teachers a question, teachers have to decide how to respond. The decision(s) teachers make at this juncture in talk can have a surprisingly wide variety of sequential consequences. As already shown in Excerpt 4.1, teachers can either answer a student's question directly or ask for clarifying information before answering the student's question. Following Markee (1995), the first option is called an A strategy. To complexify the analysis of Excerpt 4.1, the second is called a Counter-Question (CQ) strategy that employs a Referential (R) question format. The sequential trajectories of these two options are shown in Fig. 4.1.

Option 1 shows that, on the surface, the basic QAC structure of classroom talk is preserved when a teacher uses an A strategy to respond to student questions. However, closer examination reveals that it is now Learner X who, by owning the initial Q turn, is in topical control of the talk. In addition, it is also Learner X who is in sequential control of the talk, as he or she now owns both the Q and C turns in the sequence.<sup>9</sup> The result, as shown in Excerpt 4.3 (which is the full version of the talk partially shown in Excerpt 4.1) is that L6 controls the moment-by-moment content and direction of classroom talk over 5 main sequences: Main sequence 1 (MS1) at lines 135-138, MS2 at lines 139 and 148-151, MS3 at lines 152-158 and 160, MS4 at lines 159 and 161-169, and MS5 at lines 170-172 (note that IS1 at lines 140-146 has already been discussed in relation to Excerpt 4.1).

potentially  
at language  
two speech  
' learners'  
e of repairs  
onfirmation  
numbers of  
estions that

ted lessons  
analyses of  
ers in L1  
nd learner  
eachers ask  
ential (new  
1986. See  
han, 1990;  
display and  
rtant effect  
to promote  
rs than do  
'ica (1987)  
traditional

) (L)  
1 C

g students'



## Excerpt 4.3

- 135 L6: MS1 what [ə]spur means? how do you how do you pronounce it s-p-u-r  
 136 T: MS1 spu:r  
 137 L6: MS1 spur=  
 138 T: MS1 =//uh huh, <h>//  
 139 L6: MS2 //what does this mean.//  
 140 T: IS1 can I see the sentence?  
 141 L6: IS1 sure  
 142 T: IS1 it depends on (1) uh::m (1) where was it again down here somewhere,  
 143 (+)  
 144 L6: IS1 it's supposed to be here (+) uh:m (++) <hhh>  
 145 L5: (hhhhh) ((L5 laughs under his breath))  
 146 L6: IS1 uh:: oh, oh. (+) yeah its here  
 147 (+)  
 148 T: MS2 ok (3) to: in this case it's to encourage  
 149 (+)  
 150 L6: MS2 to en//courage//  
 151 T: MS2 //to ((unintelligible)) (into)// courage <hh>  
 152 L6: MS3 does it have another meaning too  
 153 T: MS3 yeah you know uh on a ho:rse (+) uhm (+) when you're riding (+) you  
 154 MS3 have on you::r (hh) (+) on your shoe a sp//ur//  
 155 L6: MS3 //yeah//  
 156 T: MS3 and you use that to:  
 157 L6: MS3 ok //I understand//  
 158 T: MS3 //make the horse// go faster <hhh>it comes from //there it's//  
 159 L6: MS4 //excuse me//  
 160 T: MS3 called a spu:r (+) and so the verb (1) here to spur would be to encourage  
 161 L6: MS4 so is it //a: verb//  
 162 L5: MS4 //<hhh>//  
 163 L6: MS4 and noun too yeah=  
 164 T: MS4 =yeah a spur (+) //is//  
 165 L6: MS4 //sp//ur=  
 166 T: MS4 on your shoe=  
 167 L6: MS4 =is a noun  
 168 (+)  
 169 T: MS4 and to spur- it could be to spur or to spur on is to encourage  
 170 L6: MS5 so you pronounce it [ə]spur  
 171 T: MS5 spur (+) uh //huh//  
 172 L6: MS5 //ok//  
 173 (1)  
 (NM: Class 1, Group 1)

What is remarkable about Option 1 in Fig. 4.1 and its exemplars in Excerpt 4.3 is that the "pedagogical" talk done by L6 and T has been naturalized, that is, made similar to ordinary conversation, to such an extent that the teacher is no longer in control of the interaction.<sup>10</sup> Thus, on the basis of the evidence reviewed so far, it might be understood that the structure of

teacher-student interaction during task-based, small group-based instruction approximates the open-ended, locally managed organization of ordinary conversation. If sustainable, such a conclusion would obviously be exciting, both for SLA specialists and for researchers interested in developing an empirically based theory of teaching because it would imply that teachers and learners were constructing the kind of equal power discourse that is thought to be conducive to SLA (Pica, 1987). However, reaching such a conclusion is unfortunately premature (Markee, 1995).

Teachers in fact rarely select Option 1 as a response strategy. Indeed, the data displayed in Excerpt 4.3 represent the overwhelming majority of cases in which an A strategy is used by any of the teachers in my database of four completely transcribed classes. What prototypically happens instead is that teachers (including the one whose talk is reproduced in Excerpts 4.1/4.3) respond with a CQ turn that employs a Display (D) question format. The resulting trajectory for this type of sequence is displayed in Option 3 of Fig. 4.2.

### Option 3: Sequential trajectory for a teacher using a CQ(D) strategy

<b>Ownership of the turn:</b>	(L)	(T)	(L)	(T)
<b>Sequential structure:</b>	Q	CQ(D)	A	C

- Q Question turn  
 A Answer turn  
 C Commenting turn  
 CQ Counter Question turn  
 CQ(D) Counter Question turn done as a display question

FIG. 4.2 The effect of CQ(D) turns on the sequential structure of QAC sequences.

More specifically, CQ(D) turns are a resource that all three teachers in the database use to regain topical and sequential control of classroom talk. As illustrated in Excerpts 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6, teachers insert CQ(D) turns (at lines 242 and 245-246 of Excerpt 4.4, at lines 337 and 341 of Excerpt 4.5, and at line 77 of Excerpt 4.6)<sup>11</sup> immediately after learners' initial Q turns (at lines 237 and 240 of Excerpt 4.4, at lines 338 and 340 of Excerpt 4.5, and at line 77 of Excerpt 4.6). According to the preference rules that organize this speech exchange system, this puts learners in the position of having to do A turns in response (at lines 247-248 of Excerpt 4.4; at lines

339–341 and lines 351 and 353–354 of Excerpt 4.5; and at lines 78–81 of Excerpt 4.6). At the same time, the use of a CQ(D) turn also puts these teachers back in sequential position to do C turns (at line 249 of Excerpt 4.4, at lines 342 and 356–357 of Excerpt 4.5, and at line 82 of Excerpt 4.6).

#### Excerpt 4.4

- 237 L13: Q ... what's that mean (1) coastal vulnerability  
 238 (1)  
 239 L14: fulnerability is:  
 240 L13: Q coastal vulnera- vulnerability  
 241 T: ((T overhears L13 and L14 as she approaches the dyad))  
 242 CQ(D) what d'you think it means  
 243 (1.3)  
 244 L14: uh?  
 245 T: CQ(D) what what d'you think a- where are areas of coastal  
 246 CQ(D) vulnerability (++) <h> if you think about uh:m  
 247 L14: A it's not safe[t] (+) areas which are not safe[t] (1) right?  
 248 L13: A It's it's very easy to be:: (+) damage  
 249 T: C yea:h (+) especially by (+) water, (+) by flooding,  
 (NM: Class 1, Group 4)

#### Excerpt 4.5

- 331 L6: there is a problem here she //doesn't// underst(h) and  
 332 L15: //(huh h)//  
 333 L7: (huh)  
 334 L6: Q and we don't understand what <h> //what means exactly this//  
 335 L15: //why we can't get auswit[ ]// (+) oh  
 336 L6: Q we cannot get by ausch[v]itz  
 337 T: CQ(D) ok (+) what d'you think it might mean  
 338 L15: (uh huh) (+) (uh huh //h)//  
 339 L6: A //it// might [b]ean (+) probably u:h we:: (+)  
 340 A cannot have another Ausch[v]itz again if uh germany unites o:r  
 341 A maybe <hh>  
 342 T: C/CQ(D) does it mean that?  
 ((9 lines of transcript omitted))  
 351 L14: A does it mean that u:hm <hh>  
 ((1 line of transcript omitted))  
 353 L14: A that if the uni- if (+) the germany unite again <h> the ausch[v]it  
 354 A might exist, <hhh>  
 355 (+)  
 356 T: C yeah. that's ba- we can't- when you can't get by something that's  
 357 C <hh> you can never forget.  
 (NM: Class 2, Phase 2, Group 2)

#### Excerpt 4.6

- 75 L7: Q I don't understand stake //what does it// mean  
 76 T: //stake//

nd at lines  
CQ(D) turn  
C turns (at  
rpt 4.5, and

- 77 CQ(D) who can define stake  
78 L8: A stake is something that uh what's at stake wha- what are you going  
79 A to give up //or//  
80 L12 A //what's// the point  
81 L8: A how are you going to get something  
82 T: C (what's th-) uh huh right or what is the purpose  
(NM: Class 3, Phase 1, Group 2)

## 4.2. SUMMARY

To summarize the revised argument to date, at the decision point under consideration, the use of an A response by teachers to learner's Q turns (see Option 1 and Excerpts 4.1/4.3) is conversationally dispreferred, in the technical sense of being marked instructional language behavior that results in a loss of topical and sequential control by the teacher. Preferred teacher behavior consists of doing a CQ(D) turn immediately after a learner's Q turn.<sup>12</sup> In so doing, teachers are able to regain the conversational initiative and thus control how the rest of the lesson unfolds on a moment-by-moment basis. This analysis shows that, during teacher-student interaction that occurs in the context of task-based, small group instruction, teachers and students prototypically orient to a speech exchange organization that is specifically different from that of ordinary conversation and technically indistinguishable from that of traditional, teacher-fronted instruction. That is, teachers retain — indeed, forcefully re-assert — the right to ask questions and evaluate learners, while students can, as in traditional classroom talk, only properly provide answers to teachers' questions.<sup>13</sup>

## 4.3. CONCLUSION

What are the implications of these results from an SLA perspective? It is easy to find at least two kinds of supporting evidence in the database from which the excerpts analyzed are extracted for Pica's (1987) claim that unequal power discourse is acquisitionally restrictive for students. For example, with one or two exceptions, learners had in fact already done considerable amounts of unsuccessful definition work in their small groups prior to asking for the teachers' help. Thus, the teachers' use of a CQ(D) strategy effectively forced these students to try to solve problems that, unbeknownst to the teachers, they had already failed to resolve. Furthermore, the use of a CQ(D) strategy also required learners to solve these problems by orienting to a speech exchange system that inhibits conversational restructuring and is therefore acquisitionally less useful than the more open-ended speech



exchange system to which they had been orienting in the teachers' absence.

Despite the fact that conversational restructuring seems to be a necessary factor in the acquisition of some types of language structure, very little is known about the processes through which new linguistic knowledge emerges from conversation and becomes incorporated into learners' evolving interlanguage systems. Thus, it may be that the way in which a teacher constructs a CQ(D) turn can trigger sequences that, in conjunction with other sequences in which participants are orienting to a more locally managed turn taking system, contain material that is acquisitionally useful. This is the position that I argue in chapter 7. However, before I develop this idea further, I discuss in greater detail how turn-taking and repair work in different speech exchange systems.

## NOTES

1. Of course, there are times when students' orientation to an equal power speech exchange system during small group work changes. For example, if a group secretary is appointed, either by the teacher or by the learners themselves, the group secretary may function as a kind of proxy teacher who arrogates to himself or herself the teacher's delegated rights to privileged access to the floor. But such modifications to an equal power speech exchange system must, in all cases, be achieved and validated as accountable acts by all participants.
2. See Excerpt 4.1 and note 6.
3. The distinction between lay and technical specifications of "traditional" and "nontraditional" classrooms is important because it problematizes the understanding of everyday behaviors, whose complexity, because they are so familiar, might otherwise be overlooked.
4. In linguistic terminology, the conditional relevance that binds first and second pair parts of adjacency pairs together can be considered as a form of coherence (Schegloff, 1990). However, the domain of preference rules is not limited to issues of coherence. In invitation sequences, for example, there is evidence that the preferred response to an invitation is an acceptance, the dispreferred response a refusal (Davidson, 1984; Schegloff, 1980). In this sense, preferred and dispreferred responses are similar to the linguistic notions of unmarked and marked responses, respectively (Levinson, 1983).

ie teachers'  
ms to be a  
ge structure,  
w linguistic  
porated into  
hat the way  
uences that,  
re orienting  
erial that is  
1 chapter 7.  
reater detail  
ge systems.

to an equal  
anges. For  
acher or by  
as a kind of  
e teacher's  
But such  
must, in all  
articipants.

ications of  
t because it  
ors, whose  
herwise be

t binds first  
sidered as a  
domain of  
n invitation  
ed response  
se a refusal  
ffered and  
f unmarked

5. Of course, I do not mean to claim that all speech acts are accomplished in exactly the same way in different languages. For example, whereas greeting sequences are typically short and simple in English, they tend to be long and elaborate in Arabic. Nonetheless, the basic adjacency pair organization of one greeting requiring another greeting in return obtains in both languages.

6. Although this datum is an example of teacher–student talk, the adjacency pair organization of this excerpt does not reflect an orientation by L6 to the norms of unequal power discourse. This example illustrates the principle that a particular instance of talk cannot be characterized a priori as “traditional” or “non-traditional” just because of the biographies of the participants. Teacher–student roles are achieved on a moment-by-moment basis in and through the talk of participants. In this particular example, the teacher is not able to assert her role as teacher, and the talk therefore “comes off” as an instance of relatively equal power discourse (see also note 9). For another example of this phenomenon, see the well-known transcript of Igor’s talk in Allwright (1980).

7. For an alternative account of QAC sequences and their relationship to ordinary conversation, see Tsui (1989, 1994).

8. Obviously, this observation does not mean that learners never ask any questions; however, when they do ask questions, this behavior is typically previously invited by the teacher.

9. The final C turn is shared by both the teacher and the learner in Excerpt 4.1. More specifically, L6’s commenting turn at line 137 is a repetition of T’s pronunciation modeling turn at line 136. Furthermore, L6 pronounces the word “spur” with a decisive downward intonation, indicating that he is ready to move on to his next question. With exquisite timing, T latches her response at line 138 (=//uh huh, <h>//) in a bid to assert her right to provide evaluative commentary. However, L6 retains control over the trajectory of the conversation by overlapping T’s turn with his next Q turn (//what does this mean.//) at line 139. In other words, T is orienting to doing pedagogical talk, whereas L6 (who eventually “wins” this competition) is orienting to doing a kind of talk in which power is distributed more equally than in pedagogical talk.

10. There is nothing distinctively pedagogical about the achievement of CQ(R) sequences located in positions 2 and 3 of Option 2 in Fig. 4.1

(see also the IS at lines 140–146 of Excerpt 4.3), as this type of object is endemic not only in ordinary conversation (Schegloff, 1972) but also in service encounters (Merritt, 1976).

11. The CQ(D) turn at line 244 of Excerpt 4.4 is an elaborated repeat of T's first CQ(D) turn at line 241, and the CQ(D) turn at line 341 of Excerpt 4.5 functions both as a commenting turn that indicates that L6's answer is unsatisfactory and as a Q turn that simultaneously asks for another, more satisfactory answer.

12. A CQ(R) sequence may also be used to set up a subsequent CQ(D) sequence (Markee, 1995). The trajectories of such sequences are shown in Option 4 of Fig. 4.3.

#### Option 4: Trajectory of a (CQ(R) + CQ(D) turn sequence

<b>Ownership of the turn:</b>	(L)	(T)	(T)	(L)	(T)
<b>Sequential structure:</b>	Q	CQ(R)	CQ(D)	A	C
		(+ IS)			

Q Question turn  
 A Answer turn  
 C Commenting turn  
 CQ Counter Question turn  
 CQ(D) Counter Question turn done as a display question  
 CQ(R) Counter Question turn done as a referential question  
 IS Insertion sequence

FIG. 4.3 An alternative trajectory for a CQ(R) sequence.

Excerpt 4A further illustrates how CQ(R)-->CQ(D) sequences are achieved. L10 does a Q turn at line 187 to which T responds with a CQ(R) turn at line 189. This marks the beginning of a short CQ(R)1-->A1 insertion sequence at lines 189–191. However, instead of responding to L10's initial question with an A turn (as in Option 1 of Fig. 4.1 and Excerpt 4.1/4.3), T does a CQ(D) turn at line 193, which skews the rest of the talk in the usual way.

#### Excerpt 4A

187 L10: Q excuse me what is c-o-r-a-l  
 188 (+)  
 189 T: CQ(R)1 can I: (+) open //(h)// <h> (++) get an idea (+) see where's that <h>  
 190 L10: //(h)//  
 191 L10: A1 I don't know whether the-

- 192 (+)  
 193 T: CQ(D) corals (+) does anyone know? (+) where you find corals?  
 (NM: Class 1, Group 3)

13. This analysis implies that learners do not have the right to ask teachers questions that might be interpreted as CQ(D) turns. As shown in Excerpt 4B, this is, in fact, correct.

#### Excerpt 4B

- 198 L9: ((formally)) ((T's name))?  
 199 T: uh huh?  
 200 L9: your input plea//(h huh //huh// huh)//  
 201 T: //huh//  
 202 L11: //(h huh //huh// huh// huh) <huh>  
 203 L9: Q there is this e::h (+) some sort of an idiom you pretend to pay us  
 204 Q and we pretend to work  
 205 T: CQ(D)1 ok. what do you think that could be: (+) do you have any idea?  
 206 L11: CQ(D)2 do you know what the word pretend means  
 207 (+)  
 208 T: CQ(D)3 do I know what the word pretend means  
 209 L11: A yeah (+) I- I [dawt] (+) I don't know that see  
 210 T: CQ(D)4 oh ok who- do- does anybody know what the word pretend means.  
 211 ...  
 (NM: Class 2, Phase 1, Group 3)

Things proceed normally as far as line 205: L9 does a Q turn at lines 203–204 and T does a CQ(D)1 turn in response at line 205. L6 then does a turn at line 206 which T interprets as a CQ(D)2 turn. T reacts very negatively to this turn, treating it as a challenge to her authority as a native speaker and teacher (see line 208); she achieves this by doing another CQ(D)3 turn of her own. T's turn triggers the A turn at line 209 (this A turn is the second pair part of an IS, in which L6 attends to repairing the talk at line 206 that he now understands T to have interpreted as a challenge to her authority). Having accepted L6's explanation that he did not know the problem item in the first part of her next turn, T then proceeds to do another CQ(D)4 turn at line 210 and the rest of the sequence (not reproduced here) runs off smoothly. See also note 6 in chapter 7.