

## Turn Control and the Right to Speak in the Moroccan Classroom A Critical Discourse Analysis

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### Abstract

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This article aims at studying how talk is distributed among the participants in the classrooms observed. It considers both the structure of turn-taking and the propositional content of participants' turns. The focus is finding out in what ways the turn-taking system in the classroom reflects a certain power structure that bears on the observation of human rights principles inside the classroom; namely, the right to speak, to self-express, to argue, to hold and voice a different opinion, and other related rights. The turn-taking sequence is analysed in light of Rymes' (2009) analytical framework. There are three main dimensions to this analysis of turn-taking, namely, the interactional context, the social context, and individual agency. The study shows that teachers tend to strictly maintain T-S-T exchange patterns, ask largely closed questions, and allow relatively short thinking time; a situation which would endanger the spirit of dialogue and the students' sense of "I" in the target classes.

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**Key words:** Classroom – discourse – turn-taking – right – agency – dialogue – power.

### Introduction

The present study investigates the different components of the interactional context; namely, who is asking the questions? What is the turn-taking pattern? How is the turn-taking pattern functioning? What kinds of questions are being asked? And who has the answers? In addition, this article considers how individual agency varies across data from the three different classrooms that were observed and videotaped. In this regard, answers to two main questions: do turn-taking patterns ensure that learning is challenging and inclusive? And whose goals are they accomplishing – the teacher's, the learners' or the textbook's goals? The content of teachers' and students' turns at talk is also taken into account to find out whether they enhance genuine exchange of meaning or they merely vehicle a 'procedural display' (Rymes, 2009).

### 1. The impact of teacher turn control on the learners' right to speak in the classroom

"How students think—indeed the extent to which they really need to think in school—and consequently what they can learn depend a lot on how their teachers respond to their students' responses." Martin Nystrand (1997: 29)

This article provides an analysis of turn-taking in classroom talk – those responses to responses that Nystrand (1997) describes as critical to thinking in classrooms. Taking turns, asking and answering questions, providing feedback and encouraging more thinking are the discourse elements that build a classroom's intellectual life. According to Rymes (2009: 155), questions asked in classrooms can spark dramatic outbursts and cacophony, deathly silences, or discussions bursting with multiple perspectives, problem-solving, and growing curiosity. She argues that as students and teachers learn to take turns in classroom talk, the patterns they construct together regulate what teachers and students can say and what they do not say.

The underlying structure of a classroom conversation is often: (a) Teacher Question or Initiation, (b) Student Response, and (c) Teacher Evaluation or Feedback. This pattern is often abbreviated as I-R-E (Initiation – Response – evaluation) and also I-R-F (Initiation-Response-Feedback) sequences or referred to as the asking of known information questions. Though this structure is often breached, repairs are instantly made.

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Invoking an I-R-E sequence indexes a social institution as well as constitutes roles for people to adopt (Bloome *et al.* 2005: 32). Attention, most importantly, must be paid to the pattern of turn-taking rather than to simple counts of turns and similar items.

### 1.1. The interactional context of turn-taking in T1's classroom

Hugh Mehan's (1979) well-known research in classroom interaction, with its categories of Initiation, Response, and Evaluation, is based on the idea that it is up to the teacher to initiate turns to speak. Of the three categories, only response consists of student speech; the opening and closing acts of initiation and evaluation belong to the teacher. What follows is a study of teachers' and students' management of turn-taking in the three different middle school Islamic education classrooms which we observed and videotaped. The IRE model is used as an analytical tool. The interactional context of turn-taking is studied to find answers to the following questions: Who asks the questions in the classroom? What type of questions are they? And what is the turn taking pattern? Answers to these questions are sought in each of the three target classrooms with a view to unravelling the extent to which the learners' speaking-related rights are fully observed within the target classrooms.

#### 1.1.1. The teacher's exclusive use of questions

Learner-centred pedagogy where the learners can express themselves, raise questions and make comments is not only necessary for meaningful learning to take place, but also one of the rights that learners must be entitled to in the classroom setting if education as a whole is to raise citizens to be fully active in their communities. In the following extract from the classroom of teacher one (T1), the focus is on who asks the questions and what type of questions they are. The teacher initiates a lesson where Islam and health is the subject. She is trying to elucidate the link that binds Islam to health.

#### Extract 1/T1

- |     |                       |    |  |
|-----|-----------------------|----|--|
| 1.  | Initiation            | T  | <b>ɖarsna ljawm huwa (.) ↑lʔisla:m</b><br>Our lesson today is (.) Islam?   |
| 2.  | Response              | Ls | <b>ʔalʔisla:amu wa ʃʃihha</b><br>Islam and health  |
| 3.  | Evaluation/Initiation | T  | (0.) <b>↑ma:da yaʃni lʔisla:m wa ʃʃihha</b><br>What does 'Islam and health' mean?  |
| 4.  | Response              | L  | (0.2) <i>(no answer from the learners)</i>   |
| 5.  | Initiation            | T  | <b>jaʃni (.) ʃala:qat lʔisla:m ↑wa</b><br>It means (.) the relation of Islam with?   |
| 6.  | Response              | Ls | (.) <b>ʃʃihha</b><br>(.) Health  |
| 7.  | Evaluation/Initiation | T  | <b>wa ʃʃihha gəlna ʔama:natunʔaʃta:ha LLa:h ↑wa jazibu</b><br>And health we said a deposit God gave and we must be?  |
| 8.  | Response              | Ls | <b>lmuħa:faɖatuʃalajha:=</b><br>Preserving it=   |
| 9.  | Evaluation            | T  | <b>=lmuħa:faɖatuʃalajha:</b><br>=preserving it<br><i>(T1 reads out a statement of the prophet Muhammad)</i>  |
| 10. | Initiation            | T  | <b>rrasu:l ʃaLLa ↑naʃəm</b> <i>((she points to a student who had a hand up))</i><br>The prophet peace yes?   |
| 11. | Initiation            | L  | <b>↑nəqra nnaʃʃ</b><br>I read the text?  |
| 12. | Response              | T  | <i>(rather disapprovingly)</i> <b>tanʃrah lhadi:θ</b><br>I explain the statement first   |
| 13. | Initiation            | T  | <b>ʔarrasu:lʃaLLa LLa:hu ʃalajhi wa sallam fi hadalħadi:θ jubajjin (.)</b><br><b>la:baʔsa bilyina: (.) la:baʔs fi:ʔan jaku:na ↑lʔinsa:nu</b><br>The prophet Muhammad peace be upon him in this statement shows there is no harm in being rich (.) It's ok to be? |
| 14. | Response              | Ls | <b>yanijjan</b><br>Rich  |
| 15. | Evaluation/Initiation | T  | <b>yanijjanʃari:tataʔʔaf jku:n mʃa lyina:</b><br>Wealthy provided what? What goes with wealth?   |

16. Response L *Ḥattaqwa:*  
Piety
17. Evaluation/Initiation T *na:Ḥəm Ḥattaqwa: (.) ↑ma:da taḤni ttaqwa:a. geltha: likum gətli:kum bqa:w Ḥa:qli:n Ḥəl ttaqwa:*  
Yes piety (...) what does piety mean? I told you that and I told you to remember piety

In T1's classroom, it is obviously a frequent occurrence for the teacher to initiate turns to speak. Her initiations usually appear in question form. As many as 9 questions are asked in this extract. They all appear in bold letters in the transcription. Out of 17 turns at talk, 9 sound interrogative, which is evidently a high portion. Eight out of these 9 questions are teacher-put. She takes a total of 10 turns to speak in this extract. The latter represents the start-up of the whole lesson. On 8 occasions out of 10, she asks questions. This can be enough to get an idea of the power balance and the locus of control of talk in the classroom. S/he who secures the power to ask questions cannot only screen the answers but can also predetermine the subsequent discourse and guide the exchange to any desired point. S/he can also cast light on certain points and ignore others. In a word, s/he is in a more comfortable position than those who are expected to answer. So, in this extract, T1 appears in full control of talk in her class both in terms of the question asking and the length of talk – two major sources of power.

### 1.1.2. Known-answer questions and the right to think

It is also remarkable in extract1/T1 how short the learners' responses are. In turns 6, 14, and 16, the learners answer with one word 'ḤḤihha, Ḥanijjan, Ḥattaqwa:' (health, rich, piety) respectively, and in turn 8, they provide a two-word answer 'Imuha:faḤatu Ḥalajha:' (preserving it). This is a normal artefact of the fact that most questions are confirmation-seeking questions. In question turns 1, 5, 7, 13, and 15, the teacher's interest seems to be in the learners' reiteration of bits and pieces of the statements of the Prophet that they have just read or in their recalling of information from previous lessons. A question like '*darsn aljam bowa (...)* ↑*Risla:m*' (our lesson today is (...) Islam?) may sound interrogative, but it is not basically information-seeking. The answer to it does not need any deep thought or research on the part of students. Besides, it is not targeting understanding, thus, not targeting meaning. The answer is there in bold letters in the title of the lesson '*ḤalḤisla:mu waḤḤihha*' (Islam and health). The fact that students collectively respond to question turns 2, 6, 8, and 14 further indicates that these questions are not seeking to measure comprehension or instigate thought, but simply seeking confirmation that the learners are following and mentally present. Also, almost all the questions in the extract are known-answer questions. This seems clear from the answers they garner, which are one and the same for all students across the board. Moreover, the teacher's quick transition from one question to another, satisfied with one answer to each question is a natural consequence of the closed and known-answer question type that she uses. The alternative could have been the use of more open-ended or information-seeking questions such as (in what ways can Islam and health be related to each other?) in place of (What does 'Islam and health' mean?) that appears in turn (10). In this case, the teacher would have to allow more time and space for varied answers. Open-ended questions are meant for comprehension, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and so forth. That is why they require the asker to allow longer 'thinking time' and take more than one answer.

T1 asks two questions that do not appear to be confirmation-seeking. They are '*↑ma:da yaḤni Risla:m waḤḤihha*' (what does Islam and health mean?) (turn 3) and '*↑ma:da taḤni ttaqwa:*' (what does piety mean?) (turn 17). Though the teacher already knows the answer, the two questions sound open-ended. For the question about the meaning of piety, the students can synthesize their previous knowledge and personal experiences to come up with idiosyncratic definitions. However, the teacher remains faithful to her approach of putting closed questions. She tails her question with a reminder of her previous warning '*geltha: likum getli:kum bqa:w Ḥa:qli:n Ḥəlttaqwa:*' (I told you that, I told you to remember piety). The learners, as a result, are not invited to use their minds to try to build their own understandings and then compare them with what the others would have to say. They are caged within a 'binding' definition established in earlier classes. This analysis is not driving at the necessity of a wholesale rejection of all knowledge that is established without the active involvement of the learners.

However, it is strongly held throughout this research that authoritative academic knowledge can never fully and efficiently substitute the learners' own purposeful involvement in the act of thinking. Further discussion of the significance of dialogically constructed student understanding and the body of research supporting it comes in the discussion of the findings later in this article.

### 1.1.3. The turn-taking pattern in T1's classroom

It is evident in extract 1/T1 above that both initiation and evaluation turns are concomitantly related to the teacher. She seems in full control of how the lesson proceeds. Numerically speaking, out of 17 turns at talk, the learners talk only 7 times, which is a fairly acceptable portion, given the predominantly imperative nature of the subject matter taught, Islamic education, together with the relative novelty of the topic of the lesson, 'Islam and health'. Nonetheless, mere counts of learner turns fall short of giving a realistic picture of the real weight of learner participation in the proceedings of the lesson. On 4 occasions out of 7, the learners speak all at once. And even if they speak all at once, they say something intelligible since they are prompted by the teacher towards producing uniform predetermined responses. They have apparently been drilled to produce such knee-jerk collective answers. The difference in length and meaning between the students' and the teacher's turns at talk are too conspicuous to go unnoticed. Three learner turns out of 7 consist of single-word utterances (turns 6, 14, 16), and 1 consists of two-word utterances (turn 9). Still, T1 seems well-at-ease with such mechanical exchanges geared toward eliciting a predictable sort of responses. All along the extract, there are three typical IREs where the teacher initiates, students respond, and then the teacher evaluates. Note how the teacher gets fully content with single to two-word responses and moves on to the next initiation. The teacher is comfortable once the students meet the meaning she has in mind regardless of whether they understand what they say or if they really mean it. The teacher sometimes builds on the students' responses to hastily make her next initiation. The recurrence of such gap-filling discursive behaviour may impinge on the learners' ability to make full-fledged utterances and sustainable arguments in the long run. The learners would less often bother about adequately fleshing out their arguments relying on an instilled feeling that despite their fragmented discourse, the interlocutor would understand what they mean.

Alpert (1991) acknowledged the ability of students to take over the turn-assignment process. Nonetheless, it is an infrequent occurrence for T1's students to take control of turn-taking; and if on occasion they try their hands at holding the floor or initiating a talk, their turns are either overwhelmed by the teacher's speech or simply go unattended to. Extract (2) shows two learners' failure to initiate turns at talk and build an argument that does not necessarily align with their teacher's predicted turn-taking pattern. In this extract, T1 criticizes Morocco and Muslim countries in general, which according to her, do not fully meet the hygienic requirements of the Islamic religion.

### **Extract 2/T1**

1. Initiation T    ↑waf ha:di bla:d ʔislamija () maʕandhumʃʕala:qa mʕa lʔisla:m  
Is this an Islamic land? () they have no relation with Islam
2. Response Ls    (*yell out responses all at once*)
3. Initiation T    [↑wəlyari:b]  
[WHAT IS STRANGE]
4. Initiation L    [ssaʕudija ssaʕudija nqija ʔastada]  
[Saudi Arabia Saudi Arabia is clean, teacher]
5. Initiation T    [lyari:b]  
[what is strange]
6. Initiation L    [lʔima:ra:t]  
[Emirates]
7. Initiation T    lyari:b ʔannana: nahnu lmuslimi:n ʔaxadna: masa:wi? lhaq:ra:t  
lʔuru:ppijja ʔuhuma lʕaks (.) xda:w lʕami:l wəlhəsan mina lʔisla:m (.) xda:w lʔafja:ʔ lʕami:la  
mina lʔisla:m (.) xda:w utqadmu uhna xdi:na lha:ʕa:t lxajba  
What is strange is that we Muslims have taken the drawbacks of the uh uh uh European  
cultures; they, on the contrary, (.) have taken the beautiful and good from Islam, (.) they  
have taken the beautiful things from Islam (.), they've taken and developed and we've taken  
the bad things
8. Response L    na:ʕəm  
Yes
9. Initiation T    ʔiden faqulna: ʔannahu mina lwiqaja ʔalmuħa:faq: ʕala: naq:fat lʕism () warraʕu:l ʕaLLa LLahu  
ʕalajhi wasallama jaqu:l lawla: ʔan ʔafuqqa ʕala: ʔummati laʔamartuhum bissiwaki ʕinda  
kulli ʕala:t (*then she explains the statement of the Prophet in the vernacular for 18 seconds*)  
So we've said that part of prevention is the maintenance of body cleanliness (.) and the  
prophet peace be upon him says if I did not choose not to be hard on my people I'd order  
them to clean their teeth before every prayer

So we've said that part of prevention is the maintenance of body cleanliness ( ) and the prophet peace be upon him says if I did not choose not to be hard on my people I'd order them to clean their teeth before every prayer

In turns (4) and (6) two learners try to gainsay the teacher's premise that all Muslim countries are not clean by voicing two counter examples, 'Saudi Arabia' then 'Emirates', which they think are clean. In turn (4) the learner's attempt to initiate talk is made through a full-fledged meaningful sentence. In terms of coherence, the statement that '*ssaʕudija naqija ʔastada*' (Saudi Arabia is clean, teacher) is exactly relevant to the point of the lesson that T1 is elaborating. Concerning audibility, the learner possesses a strong voice (he takes part in the school theatre and I had a chance of seeing him on stage). He spoke loud enough to be heard all around the class. Despite all this, the teacher does not seem to be willing to respond to him. The same goes for turn (6) where another learner tries to object to the teacher's overgeneralization that all '*bla:d ʔislamija*' (Islamic land) is not clean by citing the example of '*ʔima:ra:t*' referring to the United Arab Emirates as a clean country. Desperate that his turn at talk would face the same doom as his previous classmate's, he condensed his turn in the single word '*ʔima:ra:t*'. This learner happened to be seated at the other far end of the classroom from the point where I was sitting; still, my little camera caught his voice quite clearly. It is also noteworthy that in turns (3), (5), and (7) the adjective '*ʔari:b*' (what is strange) appears at the onset of each of these teacher turns. It means that the teacher insistently wants to make the same argument but is intercepted at the first two trials by two learners who also want to build up their own arguments. The teacher's stubborn reiteration of the same word at the beginning of her argument is an indirect call on her part to all the other voices to stop in order to let her finish her argument. It is a floor maintenance strategy employed by the teacher. This again testifies to the teacher's unwillingness to unleash the reins of turn-taking control to her students. A further evidence to T1's hegemony over the discourse in her class is her blunt movement in (9) to the recapitulation of what she had said, beginning her talk with the conclusive '*ʔidan faqulna:*' (so we've said). As a result of being heard but denied the floor to build their arguments, these two learners appear to have talked out of turn at a time when it is T1 who is, in fact, talking out of turn by holding the floor much longer than learner-centred participatory education would actually put up with. It is true that for a researcher, every single voice in the classroom counts. Unheeded voices sometimes count more than heeded ones. But from a learning/teaching perspective, only heeded voices make the lesson. The teacher is usually the one who holds that screening power. It is the power to legitimize a turn and mute another. Turning a deaf ear to a student's discourse-initiating turn dooms it to illegitimacy, thus, unimportance.

All in all, it seems that T1 is in full control of the turn-taking system in her class, not in the constructive sense of equally distributing turns at talk across both active participants and potential ones, but in the direction of dominating the talk and evaluating only those voices that seem to complement the messages she tries to convey. She also maintains the question-asking power, asking predominantly known-answer questions and receiving largely short collective answers. The lesson, then, though rich in common sense ideas, is on the whole univocal. In T1's classroom, students seem far away from enjoying their inalienable classroom rights to think, talk, argue, differ, and the right to be themselves.

## 1.2. The interactional context of turn-taking in T2's classroom

After the class discussed some reasons why Karim's family had to go through hard times due to the feud that broke out between its members, they moved on to interact over the foundations on which families should be built in the Islamic faith. This interaction is transcribed in the extract below.

### Extract 3/T2

1. Initiation T **ʔidan fnaɖarkum fhad nnuqta ↑ma:hija lʔusus llati: tanbani: ʕalajha: lʔuʕra flʔisla:m**  
So, in your opinion, in this point, what are the foundations on which family in Islam is built?
2. Response L1 ʔattafa:hum  
Mutual understanding
3. Evaluation T ↑ʔattafa:hum. naʕam  
Mutual understanding? Yes
4. Initiation T **ki:n wahəd lʔasa:as ʔajɖan mohim ziddan**  
There is a foundation also very important
5. Response L2 tarbijat lʔa (*besitates*) lʔawla:d  
Educating (*besitates*) children
6. Evaluation T (*T2 sounds uncomfortable with the answer*) tarbijat lʔawla:d  
Educating children

7. Response L3  $\text{ʕadam ttafa:hum waʕadam lhiwa:r}$   
Lack of understanding and lack of dialogue
8. Evaluation T  $\uparrow\text{ʕadam ttafa:hum waʕadam lhiwa:r}$  (*exclamatively*)  
Lack of understanding and lack of dialogue?
9. Response L4  $\text{ʔattazawwuz liʔanna}$  (*inaudible*)  $\text{bisabab lwa:lidajn jaku:nu lʔabna:ʔ}$   
Marriage because (*inaudible*) thanks to parents there are children
10. Evaluation T (*he sounds dissatisfied*)  $\text{°naʕam°}$   
Yes
11. Response L5  $\text{taħammul lʔab limasʔu:lijat ʔabna:ʔih}$   
The father assuming the responsibility of his children
12. Evaluation T (*he writes the answer on the board*)  $\text{naʕam taħammul lʔab lmasʔu:lija}$   
Yes the father assumes responsibility
13. Response L6  $\text{taħammulʔannaafaqa}$   
Taking charge of family expenses
14. Evaluation T  $\emptyset$
15. Initiation T  **$\text{ki:n wahəd lʔasa:s muhim ʔiddan}$**   
There is a very important foundation
16. Response L7  $\text{liħtira:m}$   
Respect
17. Initiation T  $\text{ʔazzawa:ʔu ʕʕarʕi: jusamma: \uparrowʔazzawa:ʔu}$   
Religious marriage, it's called marriage?
18. Response Ls  $\text{ʔaʕʕarʕi:}$   
religious
19. Initiation T  **$\uparrow\text{ma:da: naqʕid bizzawa:ʔi ʕʕarʕi:. ma:da: naqʕid bizzawa:ʔi ʕʕarʕi:}$**   
What do we mean by religious marriage (*repeated twice*)?
20. Response L8  $\text{lqa:nu:ni}$   
Lawful
21. Evaluation T  $\text{lqa:nu:ni ʔahəh}$   
Lawful yes
22. Response L1  $\text{zzawa:ʔ ʕabra ʕaqdin maktu:b}$   
Marriage by a written contract
23. Evaluation T  $\text{ʕabra ʕaqdin maktu:b walakin (.) rah qad jaku:nu ʕabra ʕaqdin maktu:b walakin qad}$   
 $\text{la:jaku:nu ʕarʕijjan (.) jqadru jdi:ru lʕaqd walakin hada:k zawa:ʔ makajtsamma:ʕʕarʕi hada:k lʕaqd}$   
 $\text{kajmʕi fnaħijja lqa:nu:nija walakin mən \uparrow naħijja ʕarʕija}$   
By a written contract but (.) it might be by a written contract but it may not be religious (.) they may have a written contract but it may not be religious. That contract may serve the legal process, but the religious process?
24. Response L9  $\text{wifqa ʕarʕi lla:h}$   
According to God's law
25. Evaluation/Initiation T  $\text{wifqa ʕarʕi lla:h (.) lamma: naqu:l wifqa ʕarʕi lla:h \uparrow mada naqʕid}$   
According to God's law (.) when we say according to God's law, what do we mean?
26. Response L5  $\text{ʕala ʕari:qa nnabawija}$   
In the Prophet's way
27. Evaluation T  $\text{ʕala ʕari:qa nnabawija \uparrow zid}$   
In the Prophet's way, what else?
28. Response Ls  $(.)$
29. Evaluation T  $\text{ʕala ʕu:ra nnabawija ʕaħi:h}$   
In The Prophet's manner, true

### 1.2.1. Fewer questions, longer thinking for more learner participation

Apparently, few questions are asked by T2 in this extract. Unlike T1, whose classroom discourse is replete with questions, T2 does not seem to allocate similar importance to questioning.

To him questions tend to serve as transition markers more than as essential components of the exchange. Interaction between T2 and his students is capable of surviving even with a low frequency of questions from him. T2 seems to give more importance to listening to the learners than to confusing them with over-questioning.

He asks questions on five occasions; namely, in turns (1, 4, 15, 19 and 25). They all appear in bold letters in the extract. The question in turn (15) is a verbatim reiteration of the question in turn (4) '*ki:n wabəð Pasa:s muhim ʒiddan*' (There is a very important foundation). They are both refresh prosodic questions corroborating the initial question in turn (1) '*ʔidan fnaḍarkum fhadnnuḡta ↑ma:bi:ja Pusu:llati: tanbani: ʕalajba: Pusu:ra fPisla:m*' (so, in your opinion, in this point, what are the foundations on which family in Islam is built?). It follows that the three first questions boil down to almost the same area of interest; the foundations of family in Islam. In turn (19), the question '*↑ma:da: naqʕid bi:ʕawa:ʕi fʕarʕi:*' (what do we mean by religious marriage?) can be considered the second authentic and independent question put by T2. In addition, the question in turn (25) '*lamma: naqu:l wi:ʕa ʕarʕi lla:h ↑mada naqʕid*' (when we say according to God's law, what do we mean?) is an instance of generative feedback (Wells, 1986) directed to the learners in reaction to the learner's response in turn (24), who advances that religiously legal marriage is the one that comes into being (according to God's law) '*wi:ʕa ʕarʕi lla:h*'. Thus, the last question in the extract, though it is again teacher-put, is by no means superimposed on the teacher-student exchange, but a vivid byproduct of the exchange itself. It testifies to an interactive meaning scaffolding within the classroom. The interaction in T2's classroom is still highly structured, for in no single instance do we have a student asking a question or making a transition. Though frugally used, the power to question remains within the hands of the teacher.

### 1.2.2. The recurrence of open-ended questions in T2's classroom

The teacher's initiating question in turn (1) '*ʔidan fnaḍarkum ↑ma:bi:ja Pusu:llati: tanbani: ʕalajba: Pusu:ra fPisla:m*' (So, in your opinion, what are the foundations on which family in Islam is built?) is an information-seeking question (ISQ), since it invites the learners' personal opinions and standpoints about the foundations on which the family in Islam should be built. It is a wh-question since information seeking questions correspond to what is referred to in the literature as wh-questions or open-ended questions (see Danet *et al*, 1980; Woodbury, 1984). Moreover, the teacher's exchange-initiating question is not information-seeking only owing to the way it is worded, but also given the multiple responses it yields. It receives up to eight responses (turns: 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 16) in addition to a teacher's own response in turn (17). What also makes T2's question (turn 1) open-ended both in structure and content is his tolerance of varied responses from the learners even when they sound utterly irrelevant as is the case in turn (5) '*tarbijat Pamlad*' (educating children), which is essentially a parents' duty not a foundation on which the family in Islam should be built. Furthermore, so as to maintain the flow of learner participation going on, T2 refreshes the exchange on two separate occasions, in turns (4) and (15), reiterating the prosodic question '*ki:n wabəð Pasa:s muhim ʒiddan*' (there is a very important foundation). Prosodic questions to Woodbury (1984) are declaratives with a question intonation, and they are one of five question types that Woodbury (1984) subsumes under the category of confirmation-seeking questions (CSQs). Nonetheless, and taking into account the learners' response that ensues the prosodic question '*ki:n wabəð Pasa:s muhim ʒiddan*' (there is a very important foundation), it is in effect hard to describe such a refresh question as merely confirmation-seeking since it breeds '*lihtira:m*' (respect) as an authentic response to it rather than a mere reiteration or assertion of a pre-established one.

To add, the teacher's question in turn (19) '*↑ma:da: naqʕid bi:ʕawa:ʕi fʕarʕi:*' (what do we mean by religious marriage?) tends to produce a similar picture of copious learner responses and supportive teacher evaluation, which also raises the question to the level of open-endedness. The teacher receives three different answers to it (turns 20, 22, 24). His third question in turn (25) '*wi:ʕa ʕarʕi lla:h (.) lamma: naqu:l wi:ʕa ʕarʕi lla:h ↑mada naqʕid*' (according to God's law, when we say according to God's law, what do we mean?) is essentially a feedback turn. This is because in turn (24), a learner answers that a religious marriage is the one which is '*wi:ʕa ʕarʕi lla:h*' (according to God's law). The teacher builds up on the learner's answer and draws more focus to it by redirecting it to the learners in an interrogative mode. Unlike evaluation turns, feedback turns, while still evaluative, are not oriented towards closure. The teacher's initiating questions function as prompts for students to think on their own and to develop possible solutions, rather than to unthinkingly voice out answers the teacher would anoint as "correct".

### 1.2.3. The pattern of turn taking in T2's classroom

An outstanding feature concerning the structure of turn-taking in T2's classroom compared to T1 is the low occurrence of initiation turns. Though they are always teacher-controlled, their low frequency compared to the length of the oral exchange indicates that much more room is left for other turns; namely, response and evaluation/feedback turns. After his first initiating turn '*ki:n wabəð Pasa:s ʔajḍan muhim ʒiddan*' (There is a foundation also very important), T2 allows time and space for five different responses occurring in turns (5, 7, 9, 11, and 13).

Apparently, the teacher tries to involve the learners in the making of the lesson by taking as many as possible of their responses. The exchange above does not represent a typical IRE model, since one initiation can take more than one response. Numerically, the exchange consists of 3 initiation turns, 12 response turns, 12 evaluation turns, and 2 compound evaluation and initiation (feedback turns). Though the learners are still restricted to responding to externally initiated talk, a considerable chance seems to be offered to them to talk, contrary to T1 where the recurrence of teacher initiations tends to abort the variety of what the learners have to contribute to the exchange. The talking time ratio in T2's class does not seem to largely vary between the teacher and the learners, though it is a little in favor of the teacher. Another remarkable feature of this exchange is that in 9 out of the 14 evaluation turns, the teacher restates the learners' responses. By so doing, first, he highlights the response, especially for the other learners who fail to hear it. Second, he seems to value the learners' responses by reiterating them, even when they are entirely irrelevant as in turns (7) where the learner responds that *'Adam ttajfa:hum waAdam lbhiva:'* (lack of understanding and lack of dialogue) is one of the foundations on which marriage should be built.

In turn (23), T2 builds up on a learner's response (turn 22) that a religious marriage means *'zawa:3 ʕabra ʕaqdin maktu:b'* (marriage by a written contract) and comments on it, inviting the learner to think it over and provide another response. T2's evaluation turn (23) *'ʕabra ʕaqdin maktu:b walakin (.) rah qad jaku:nu ʕabra ʕaqdin maktu:b walakin qad la: jaku:nu ʕarʕijjan (.) jquadru jdi:ru lʕaqd walakin hada:k zawa:3 makajtsamma:f ʕarʕi hada:k lʕaqd kajmfi fnnahijja lqa:nu:nija walakin ʔmənnaħijja ʕarʕija'* (By a written contract but (.) it might be by a written contract but it may not be religiously legal (.) they may have a written contract but it may not be religiously legal. That contract may serve the legal process but the religious process?) can be subsumed under "high-level evaluation" comment (Nystrand, 1997) that incites further thinking and interaction.

All in all, T2 is in full control of the lock and keys of oral exchange in his class, which are the initiation and evaluation turns. He is the sole initiator and evaluator of what is formally said in his class. Nonetheless, he does not seem to misuse the discourse power he has secured for himself. The learners seem to enjoy enough freedom of talk, though just within the response area that is sliced out for them. A variety of learner responses is produced thanks to the teacher's intention to explore what the learners know and can contribute to the lesson rather than herding them to meet pre-established answers and modes of being fixed in the textbook or in the teacher's head (see T1 above). This seems to be manifest in qualitatively different kinds of sequences: more genuine questions, though not highly thought-provoking, more wait time, and less praise without feedback. On the structural level of turn taking, the exchange seems strictly teacher-controlled, but not completely to the detriment of the learners' right to speak and hold an opinion.

### 1.3. The interactional context of turn-taking in T3's classroom

The learners write down in their copybooks details of the target problem situation where Zayd owns a lot of money, but he squanders it all around. After that, the teacher invites them to express their standpoints about the situation at hand. Then he asks them to determine the exact problem of the situation under study.

#### *Extract 4/T3*

1. Initiation T2 *hi:nama: nuri:d ʔan nuri:d ʔan nuħallila ha:dihi lwaɖʕija la:budda min ʔistixra:3 lmuʕkila (.) ʔidan fraʔjkum huna:k muʕkila da:xil lwaɖʕija (.) ʔma:ħijja lmuʕkila lmaʔru:ħa da:xil lwaɖʕija*  
When we want to analyze this situation, it is necessary to extract the problem (.) so in your opinion there is a problem inside the situation (.) what is the problem at stake inside the situation?
2. Response L1 *ʕabduLLah la: jaʕrifu=*  
AbduLLah doesn't know=
3. Response Ls =Zajd (*correcting the mistaken name L1 used*)
4. Initiation T = *xalliwha tkəmmal la:tahum lʔasma:ʔ xalliwha tkəmmal*  
Let her finish, names do not matter, let her finish
5. Response L1 *zajd la: yaʕrifu kajfa jataʕarrafu filʔamwa:l llati: ʔaʕta:ħa lahu rabbuh*  
Zayd does not know how to handle the money given to him by his Lord
6. Initiation T *ʔida: ʔaradna: ʔan nuʕammim lmuʕkila biʕakl ʕa:m (.) lmoʕkila lmaʔru:ħa da:xil lwaɖʕija biʕakl ʕa:m du:na ʔan nadkura ʔasma:ʔ ʔma:da sanaqu:l*  
If we want to talk in general about the problem without mentioning names, what shall we say?
7. Response L2 *zahlu zajd liʔamri LLa:h*

- Zayd's ignorance of God's command
8. Evaluation T1a? ntabihu (.) du:na du:na ?an tatkura ?asma:?=  
No, pay attention (.) without without mentioning names=
9. Response Ls =((hands up calling out for turns to speak))
10. Evaluation T ?a?id xal xaliwh j?awd ?a?id ?ijja?at  
Repeat let let him repeat, reformulate
11. Response L2 ?ahlu l?insa:n bitta?arrufi fil?amwa:l kama: ?amarana: LLa:h  
Man's ignorance of how to deal with money as God ordained
12. Evaluation T ?asan  
Good

### 1.3.1. T3's control of the questioning power in the classroom

It is quite clear from the exchange above (Extract 4) that the teacher is indisputably the sole participant who is in charge of asking questions. He initiates the exchange with the question '*ma:bija lmu?kila lma?ru:ha da:xil lwa??ija*' (what is the problem at stake inside the situation?) (turn 1) and then takes the problem from specific to general scope by posing the question '*?ida: ?aradna: ?an nu?ammim lmu?kila (.) du:na ?an nadkura ?asma:? ma:da sanaqu:l*' (if we want to talk in general about the problem without mentioning names, what will we say?) (turn 6). The whole class discussed the issue of how Muslims, especially the rich, should deal with their money. However, we notice no single instance where a learner snatched a chance to direct a question to the teacher or to the class about something s/he does not quite grasp in the lesson or would like to know more about. As is the case with the two previous teachers, in T3's class, all the questions asked are exclusively the teacher's. Yet, compared to the length of the exchange and the length of learner turns in it, questions seem to determine the exchange's overall frame with little interference on the part of the teacher into its content.

### 1.3.2. The prevalence of known-answer questions in T3's classroom

The question '*ma:bija lmu?kila lma?ru:ha da:xil lwa??ija*' (what is the problem at stake inside the situation?) can be subsumed under the category of closed questions. It is closed because pinpointing the problem posed in the situation would not require high level thinking or different interpretations. The learners know quite well the problem situation to which they need to find solutions since it is well-outlined and named in their textbooks. The teacher seems quite reassured that the learners know the problem in the situation to be studied, especially that he allows only one answer (in turn 5) to his question, though it was interrupted twice (by turns 3 and 4). Also closed is the second question '*?ida: ?aradna: ?an nu?ammim lmu?kila (.) du:na ?an nadkura ?asma:? ma:da sanaqu:l*' (if we want to talk in general about the problem without mentioning names, what will we say?). It is not an open-ended question as the learners are not required to imagine, explore or invent anything. All they need to do is reiterate the problem in the situation at hand replacing the particular 'Zayd' with the general '*?insa:n*' (mankind) or '*nna:s*' (people). Also, both questions are known-answer questions. The answers to them can largely be predicted. Also, the teacher knows the answers in advance, and on the basis of those previously known answers he evaluates the learners'. By asking closed questions, the teacher does not provide opportunity for students to speak more or express their opinions. By so doing, he limits the array of expected student answers. This situation reveals the extent to which the teacher is in control of discourse in his classroom.

### 1.3.3. The turn taking pattern in T3's classroom

The turn taking pattern in the exchange (extract 4) would smoothly fit within the IRE sequence, the centuries old "pattern of authority" in classrooms as Blommaert (2005) described it. The teacher is in full control of the initiation and evaluation turns. That is, he is the instigator and screener of knowledge around which the lesson revolves. There is not always a one-to-one relationship between the different components of the IRE pattern. As is the case in initiation turns (1) and (6), they receive more than one response. Some responses, in turn, may go unevaluated as is the case with the response turn (5). However, the tendency of the learners to voice their responses all at once in the same way that was noticed with T1's learners seems to largely drop in T3's classroom. The turn distribution map would look like the following: T-S-S-T-S-T-S-T-S-T-S-T-S-T, where S stands for student and T for teacher. Obviously, the teacher is in control of the opening as well as the closing turns of the exchange. Every learner's turn is bound to a teacher evaluating turn. That is, the teacher is in full surveillance of the flow of discourse in class. All the talk is either teacher-student or student-teacher directed. Student-student interaction, a prerequisite in collaborative learning, is all but nonexistent. The function of turn (3), where some learners address another learner, is meant to correct a false information that L1 gave in turn (2) by using the name 'Sabdullah' in place of 'Zayd' to refer to the main character in the problematic situation around which the lesson revolves.

In sum, domination is obvious in the classroom discourse analyzed. This is the case since all interactions are initiated by the teacher through questions or instructions or statements. A teacher-initiated utterance receives response from the students, followed by an acceptance or acknowledgement by the teacher. In other words, the teacher-student interaction is organized according to the teacher-initiated ‘move’ (using Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) concepts), followed by student response/reaction and teacher acceptance. Thus, the interactive movement of this classroom discourse can be structured into 3 parts: teacher initial move – student response – teacher acceptance (explicit or implicit), or alternatively T-S-T.

#### 1.4. Individual agency in classroom turn-taking

In the multidimensional analysis of classroom discourse that Rymes (2009) suggests, there are questions related to what she refers to as ‘individual agency’ in the interaction. By individual agency, she means personal control, the ability to act in ways that produce desired outcomes or contribute to our own personal goals and projects (p. 63). She puts forward a number of questions the answers to which can give us an idea about the shape of individual agency in a classroom interaction. Questions like ‘do turn-taking patterns ensure learning is challenging and inclusive and whose goals are they accomplishing’ contribute to responding to the general question of whether or not the classroom exchange is supportive of the learners’ establishment of their individual agencies within the classroom. As we go back to T1’s question put in turn (3), extract 1/T1, *↑ma:da yaʕni ʔisla:m naʕʕibbaʕ* (what does Islam and health mean?), it sounds too general and abstract. Health is manifold, mental, physical, psychological, and so on. Likewise, Islam is a whole-life-embracing religion, including set beliefs and a long vista of practical rites, in addition to the fact that every single daily act or thought must align with its teachings and principles. Figuring out how the ‘world’ of health can relate to the ‘world’ of Islam is not actually an easily accessible task for 7<sup>th</sup> graders, especially at such an early stage of the lesson. The teacher’s question in turn 17 *↑ma:da taʕni ttaqwa:* (what does piety mean?) seems to be similarly exclusive of the learners. It relies on the pursuit of a takeaway terminological definition of ‘piety’ rather than working to tame that pursuit in a question form that responds to the learners’ innate drive to concretize the intangible to be able to grasp it.

To promote full participation by the learners, an alternative wording of the question could be *↑ma:da:jumkinu ʔan jafʕala ʔinsa:n lijaku:na taqijjan* (what can a person do to be pious?) or *↑ma:da:jafʕalu ʔaʔatqijja:ʔlladi:na taʕrif* (what do the pious people that you know do?). What really counts in piety is not what it is but what it takes to be so. In this case, students can come across the answer by drawing on their life experiences with people that they really know or hear of. Requesting the learners to define piety, however, tends to detach them from themselves and their social contexts, since definitions are both reductive and rather perfectionistic. The act of defining is synthetic *par excellence*. It is the compacting of multiple layers of meanings into general terms. Nonetheless, in education in general and human rights education (HRE) in particular, details do count more than general concepts. Rather than toiling to sum up what we can perceive and do (and often what we ignore) into reductive definitions and umbrella concepts, education would more fruitfully go the other way round.

Condensing (sometimes to the extent of distortion) whole experiences, behaviors, acts, together with the time and space they take into definitions or macro-words best serves the goals of quantity-oriented education where the aim is to ‘fill in’ the learners with as much knowledge as possible. The more generalized language we use, the more space we think we save within the ‘empty vessels’ (learners) for more pudding. It suffices in ‘jam and cram education’ for learners to define piety as fulfilling God’s commands and shunning his prohibitions. Quality or meaningful education, on the contrary, would take more interest in going through those commands and prohibitions and understanding the reasons why they are so. In empowering education, acting according to a definition counts more than rote learning it. In Rymes (2009), certain “big talkers” word their responses as self-evident truths rather than possibilities that function not only to answer the question, but also to block out other students’ possible responses (p. 86). In fact, not only do certain respondents tend to do so, but some askers as well. The way T1 put her questions (turns 3 and 17) in extract 1/T1 above seems to pack up details in ‘rigorous’ definitions, excluding personal viewpoints and ‘stories’ of the learners. Working on definitions and terminology can be inclusive and participation-inducing when they are inductively built up, but not so when they are deductively approached. Inductively forged definitions usually crop up in participatory climates of give and take where all agents do have roles to play and words to say. Moving down the way from a definition to what it defines shackles participation and limits creativity, while setting the teacher as the gatekeeper of ‘correct’ knowledge to which the learners must attain, and where the wrong-knowers must seek purification – epistemological catharsis – from the bearer of the ‘right’ knowledge, the teacher. The latter, ironically, is also hemmed in within predetermined meaning contours of the definition being worked on.

The following extract maps the follow-up of T1's question about the meaning of piety. It shows the teacher as the knower, the strongly present agent who has the ultimate say.

**Extract 5/T1** (follow-up of Extract 1/T1)

1. Initiation T naʕəm ʔattaqwa: (.)↑ma:da taʕni ttaqwa:. geltha: likum gətli:kum bqa:w ʕa:qli:n ʕəl ttaqwa:  
Yes piety (.) what does piety mean? I told you that and I told you to remember piety
2. Response L hija ttiqa:ʔ LLa:h  
It's prevention from God's wrath
3. Evaluation/Initiation T ʔtaqwa LLa:h ↑ma: maʕna ttaqwa°. (*louder*)ʔubqi:tu tketbu fi:ha: zəʕma  
ramayatsawha:ʃ  
Piety to God, what does piety mean? You kept writing it down AS IF  
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO FORGET IT
4. Response L ttaqarrub ʔila LLa:h  
Drawing near to God
5. Evaluation T lla  
No
6. Response L ʃokro l-la:h  
Thanking God
7. Evaluation T lla  
No  
Ls (5)
8. Response L ʕiba:dat l-lah  
Worshiping God

The learners in turns (2, 4, 6, and 8) try to meet the requirements of the definition of piety which the teacher taught them in a previous class. She wants to hear that and only that definition which she urges to be learned by rote. The nominalized short-lived answers provided by the learners are obviously the logical outcome of the way T1 chose to word her question '↑ma:da taʕni ttaqwa:' (what does piety mean?). It is an exclusive wording that would work better for testing not teaching/learning purposes even though recent research into testing itself exhorts testers to consider how their tests would feed into learning/teaching through what they call the 'washback effect' (Bachman, 1990). All the answers that the learners provided touch on the meaning of piety in a way or another. In turn (2), the learner's answer 'hija ttiqa:ʔ LLa:h' (it's prevention from God's wrath) can be a plausible definition. In turn (4), 'ttaqarrub ʔila LLa:h' (drawing near to God) also tends to sum up what piety is all about. Yet, T1 rejects it with a muffling 'no'. In turn (6), a learner considers piety as 'ʃokru LLa:h' (thanking God), which is a fairly tenable view; but T1 is still unconvinced. The question that arises here is why T1 firmly rejects all these attempts to explain what piety means, given that they are not at all irrelevant. In fact, the learners' idiosyncratic definitions are not flawed in themselves but defective in cloning *the* definition T1 inculcated earlier and would like her students to faithfully reproduce.

By individual agency in turn-taking, Rymes (2009) refers to personal control, the ability to act in ways that produce desired outcomes or contribute to one's own personal goals and projects (p. 63). In this respect, T1 worded her question (what does piety mean?) in an exclusive, abstract, and unchallenging way so that she could control the outcome responses to serve her own intended goal of hammering textbook knowledge into the students' heads, though the cost might be blocking the learners' thinking abilities. The individual agency sub-questions of whether turn-taking patterns ensure learning is challenging and inclusive and whose goals are they accomplishing have been partly answered in this section and receive more light and analysis in the discussion section within the current study.

Nonetheless, a convincing argument about what is happening and the meaning it has in and through a classroom event cannot be made through analysis of structure alone (Bloome *et al.*, 2005). Closer analyses of teacher-student conversations in diverse situations have shown that although a conversation may be characterizable as having an I-R-E structure, the meaningfulness of that conversation may be underestimated when the analysis does not go beyond the I-R-E structure itself (Wells, 1993). Although the IRE pattern that predominates the teacher-initiated interaction (Mehan, 1979) reflects an asymmetric relationship between teacher and students, Wells points out that IRE sequences need not be totally restrictive. The quality of IRE sequences may differ, depending on the type of question that constitutes the initiation.

With open-ended, communicative or referential questions, the IRE may be less restricting than with the customary instruction questions (Hall, that raises the level of thinking (Wells, 1993). Similarly, through the ways teachers initiate a topic or a question (2000: 210). Through the ways that teachers engage in the evaluation phase, they may be providing students with important verbal models for engaging in an academic register (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993), or providing feedback, they may provoke students to engage ideas in a different and perhaps more critical manner. Through how teachers link one I-R-E structure to another or to other instructional conversations, they may be encouraging students to pull together many different topics or perspectives (Bloome *et al.*, 2005). Under the next heading is a look into the communicative weight of students' participation in the lesson through what has been described as a rigidly teacher-lead IRE turn-taking pattern.

## Discussion and recommendations

The rules controlling turn exchanges have been the subject of interest for many scientists and those who are interested in what conversations reveal about interpersonal relationships. Participant structure, various typologies of turn transitions, and asymmetry of conversational rules (such as interruptions) are only some of the elements that affect class interaction (Maroni *et al.*, 2008: 62). Verbal interaction in this context is fundamental because it is used as a primary medium for the teaching-learning process (Pontecorvo, 1999; Clifton, 2004). Studying and analyzing the management of turn-taking is, therefore, a further step into understanding the process of socialization (Maroni *et al.*, 2008: 62).

### 1.5. The significant effect of questioning on learning

According to McKenzie (1999), questions may be the most powerful technology we have ever created. Questions and questioning allow us to make sense of a confusing world. They are the tools that lead to insight and understanding. Yet, there is a serious misgiving that questioning in the classroom ultimately results in insight and understanding. In reviewing multiple studies, Cazden (1972) found that once we consider aspects of the learning interaction like topic, task, who is asking the questions, and how they are framed, students are better able to contribute meaningful responses. Both sociocultural theory and research in classroom interaction confirm that waiting, allowing students to think through reading miscues or questions asked by a teacher or peer, raises the level of learning in a classroom (Owocki & Goodman, 2002; Rowe, 1986). Rymes (2009), however, notifies that students who are habituated to typical known-answer questions embedded in the IRE sequence might come to see all questions as teacher-centered – “guess what I'm thinking?” questions – and not questions about students' own thoughts and experiences. Rymes notes that when a new teacher or a new kind of lesson or curriculum encourages students to respond in new ways, and provide unanticipated answers, children who are not used to this interactional format may not realize initially that they are being asked to think critically—to do more than simply decipher what the teacher thinks they should say. IRE in schools should basically help familiarize the learners with such practices. Rymes suggests that teachers should record and analyze discourse in their own classrooms to start gaining awareness about how habits of responses are generated initially through interaction in classrooms. She argues that it may be possible to make significant changes in our classrooms simply by changing a question here or there (Rymes, 2009: 163).

T1 maintains the question-asking power, asking predominantly known-answer questions and receiving largely short whole-class answers. Almost all her questions required the learners to recall what someone else thought, not to articulate, examine, elaborate, or revise what they themselves thought. The lesson, then, though rich in terms of ideas, is on the whole unilaterally made. However, in T2's class, a variety of learners' responses is produced thanks to qualitatively different kinds of sequences: more genuine questions, though not highly thought-provoking, longer wait time, and less praise without feedback. In addition, T2 positively evaluates learners' contributions and relies less on initiation turns that, when overused, usually scatter the learners' attention. He manages to somehow explore what the learners know and can contribute to the lesson. T3, on the other hand, asks predominantly closed questions. He does not provide opportunity for students to think about the appropriate answers. Students' right to free thought and imagination seems not to be adequately catered for because the teacher limits the array of expected answers.

### 1.6. Impact of I-R-E sequences on constructive classroom dialogue

According to Skidmore & Gallagher (2005), one particular contribution that Wells (1999) makes is his re-evaluation of the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) sequence, a characteristic structure of classroom discourse which previous research has often criticized (Wells, 1999: 167). In an analysis of a series of episodes from a science investigation, he argues that this exchange structure can be put to different uses. As much previous research has documented, the follow-up (F) move is often used to provide an immediate evaluation of the student's response (e.g. 'Correct!'),

producing a pattern of teacher-led recitation which tends to reinforce the teacher's authority as the transmitter of received wisdom and severely restricts the possibilities open to students to contribute thoughtfully to classroom talk. However, Wells shows that the teacher's follow-up move can also be used to clarify, exemplify, expand, explain, or justify a student's response; or to request the student to do any of these things.

In the following example from Extract 3/T2, the teacher asks the students about the meaning of 'religious marriage'. The teacher builds on L9's response '*wifqa jarfi lla:h*' (according to God's law) to ask the class another question '*lamma: naqu:l wifqa jarfi lla:h ↑mada naqsid*' (when we say according to God's law, what do we mean?). The teacher seems to be facilitating the learners' independent access to meaning, instead of dictating one.

1. Response L9 *wifqajarfi lla:h*  
According to God's law
2. Evaluation/Initiation T *wifqa jarfi lla:h (.) lamma: naqu:l wifqa jarfi lla:h ↑mada naqsid*  
According to God's law (.) when we say according to God's law, what do we mean?
3. Response L5 *ƣala ttari:qa nnabawija*  
In the Prophet's way

When this kind of exchange is found in classroom discourse, it may indeed result in a quiz which requires students to do little more than display their recall of knowledge got by rote; but it can also be used by the teacher to help students plan ahead for a task they are about to carry out, or to review and generalize lessons learnt from tasks they have already performed. Wells' point is that, within limits, teachers have the discretion to choose between alternative modes of interaction which affect the climate of learning in the classroom, for example, by adopting a style of speaking which minimizes or maximizes the social distance between participants. Otherwise, it would be hard for the right to education and human rights in education to fully crystallize in non-participatory teaching methodologies.

### 1.7. Linking dialogic discourse to useful learning

Rymes (2009: 57) assumes that non-traditional classrooms are founded on an understanding that while much of interaction is predictable, there is also a great deal that is not predictable, and teachers need to be ready to wait through those silences or unexpected answers to discover what our students know that we could never have predicted. Non-traditional approach to classroom discourse has been the cornerstone of Karen Gallas's approach to analyzing discourse in her own classroom. As a teacher/researcher who routinely analyzed classroom discourse with her primary school students, Gallas spent years thinking about and changing the way she starts science discussions in her classroom. One way she developed to foment students' natural curiosity about science was to have students suggest discussion-initiating questions (Gallas, 1995, 1998). Students originally came up with questions like the following ones:

What is gravity?  
How do plants grow?  
Why do leaves change color?  
Where do dreams come from?

These were questions which all the children agreed they were interested in exploring during science time. However, Gallas found that, in practice, discussions that began with these questions consistently led to silence on the part of a predictable group of students. When the science questions which her students posed were not fomenting the kinds of inclusive discussions Gallas had hoped for, she began to look closely at the interactional effects of certain questions. After trial and error – and much recording and discussing of Science Talks – Gallas found that there were better ways to frame the initiating questions: For example, the question, "What is gravity?" worked better as "Why, when you jump, do you come down?"; "Where do dreams come from?" worked better as "How do dreams get into our heads?" (Gallas, 1995: 95). How do the two options differ? Gallas found that questions that used *overdetermined* science terminology (like "gravity") invited talk from some students, who were already familiar with those terms, but excluded students who did not have this familiarity (see also Rymes, 2009: 58). Even though the question was originally offered up by students, it functioned more like a known-answer question in a traditional classroom:

Question: What is gravity?  
Students: ((*silence*))

When this question was reframed as a question about everyday ordinary experience, rather than one that implied previous knowledge of science terminology, more students participated. Why then did not a question like, “Where do dreams come from?” work? It does not use any science terminology or presuppose science knowledge. Gallas found that the problem instead was in the abstract nature of the question. When she rephrased it using a personal pronoun (How do dreams get into OUR heads), students were able to address their own experience of dreams in their responses, rather than generalizations about the dreaming metaphysics. In her comment, Gallas states that “it seemed as if every child was invited to contribute his or her personal idea” (1995: 95).

Retrieved from the data of the present study, questions like “*↑ma:da yaʕni Pislam waʕṣibba*” (What does Islam and health mean?) (Extract 1/T1), “*↑ma:da taʕni ttaqwa*” (what does piety mean?) (Extract1/T1) or “*↑ma:da naqṣid biʕzama:ʕi ʕṣarʕi*” (What do we mean by religiously legal marriage?) (Extract 3/T2) are worded in ways that put individual agency outside the learners. Almost no personal control seems to be allowed to the learners over the answers to these questions since the teacher knows and anticipates particular ones. They are questions that elicit generalizations and abstract language away from the learners’ immediate life experiences. It would be informative to invoke, in this respect, the pedagogic principles of the Peruvian Institute for Education in Human Rights and Peace (IPEDHP), which emphasize the integration of cognitive and affective learning in its education for grassroots community leaders. These principles sum up most of the ideas that have been elaborated in this article:

**Principle 1: Start from Reality** — All learning must be based on the needs, interests, experiences, and problems of the participants.

**Principle 2: Activity** — Learning must be active - through a combination of individual and group activity.

**Principle 3: Horizontal Communication** — Learning takes place through dialogue in which people share thoughts, feelings, and emotions in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

**Principle 4: Developing the Ability to be Critical** — One must develop the capacity to be critical and to evaluate ideas, people, and acts in a serious fashion.

**Principle 5: Promoting the Development and Expression of Feelings** —It is only possible to learn values if the training methodologies consider participants’ feelings.

**Principle 6: Promoting Participation** — The best way to learn is by participating, being consulted, and taking part in making decisions.

**Principle 7: Integration** — Learning is most effective when the head, the body, and the heart are integrated in the learning process (Bernbaum, 1999).

It can be inferred from these principles that learning in HRE is meant to be holistic/integrative in that it appeals to all the components of the person: mind, affect, body, and so on. It is also meant to be authentic, bridging the gap that may exist between schooling and the learners’ everyday reality, interests, fears, worries, needs, questions, and the like. It needs to be dialogic as well; a space where the learners can share their thoughts, feelings, and emotions in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Critical learning is another objective whereby the learners would evaluate ideas, people, and acts in a serious fashion. Last, it needs to be participatory. Not all communicative education is essentially participatory. The students may talk a lot even more than the teacher but have little effect on how the lesson is constructed and on what decisions are made in class. The National Program for HRE in Morocco, in turn, sets as its sixth objective enabling the learners “to behave according to the principle of tolerance which means acceptance of difference, respect of the other, seeking constructive dialogue between individuals and societies, and opening onto different cultures” (NPHRE newsletter, 1998). However, the data that was collected and analyzed indicates that the fulfillment of such goals in the classroom and thence into society at large is still awaiting more work and involvement by all stakeholders.

For too long now, debates about curriculum and instruction and mental life in classrooms have been polarized about which is better: teacher control or student control, direct instruction or collaborative learning. Indeed, a long tradition of research and polemic pitting of teacher versus student as the appropriate theoretical center for understanding curriculum and instruction has precluded our understanding that more basic than either teacher or student is *the relationship between them* (Nystrand, 1997: 6). Lifeless instruction and reluctant student engagement and thinking may be viewed as fundamental problems of instructional discourse – of the kind of language that defines students’ interactions with their teachers, peers, and texts. Instruction is “orderly but lifeless” when the teacher predetermines most of its content, scope, and direction (ibid).

Al Intissar (2002) put forward a list of what he describes as rights that all students must be entitled to within the classroom. They are reproduced as follows:

1. The right to attend school
2. The right to think
3. The right to self-liberate
4. The right to doubt
5. The right to question
6. The right to criticize
7. The right to argue
8. The right to 'I'
9. The right to differ

In brief, the accomplishment of Al Intissar's taxonomy of classroom rights is contingent upon dialogic education. Therefore, dialogue is pivotal for the students to fully enjoy their classroom rights and also, as was established earlier, a fundamental step for better learning and school achievement that few students and teachers would sufficiently know about.

### Conclusion

Domination is predominantly, though variably, characteristic of teachers' discourse behavior in the three target classes. All interaction is initiated by the teachers through questions, instructions or statements. The teachers also keep the 'evaluation power' largely for themselves, enhancing a T-S-T exchange sequence. Strictly maintained T-S-T exchange patterns seem to endanger the spirit of dialogue in the target classes, given that dialogic discourse is believed to have a strong positive effect on learners' psycho-social well-being, as well as on their overall academic achievement. On the other hand, by asking largely closed questions and allowing relatively short thinking time, the teachers tend to jeopardize their students' rights to free thought, imagination, in addition to their rights to differ and argue.

With regards to individual agency in turn-taking, it has been established that when teachers' initiations (usually questions) are worded in an exclusive, abstract, and unchallenging way (especially for T1), the learners' participation seems to drop both in quantity and quality. Moreover, the high frequency of closed questions on the part of the teacher in addition to the pervasiveness of firm T-S-T exchange sequences tend to leave little room for the learners to set and achieve their own learning goals, to self-liberate, and to fully establish their individual senses of "I" as basic classroom rights.

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