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**LINGUISTIC AND INTERACTIONAL RESOURCES IN PURSUING AN ANSWER  
AND THEIR PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

MEMORIA PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE PROFESORA DE INGLÉS.

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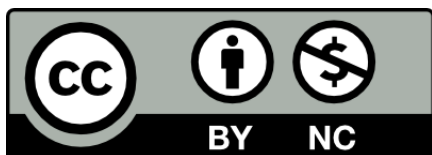
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## **Abstract**

This study uses the approach of Conversation Analysis (CA) to analyse fragments of interaction corresponding to recordings of online and face-to-face classes in EFL classrooms that took place at *Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación* (UMCE) in the years 2021 and 2022. The selected fragments focused on the process of pursuing an answer, with the purpose of identifying the linguistic and interactional resources that teachers use and their pedagogical implications in fostering students' participation. The results showed a variety of linguistic resources such as the use of increments, indefinite pronouns, and negations, along with other interactional resources like offering candidate answers, orientating to maintain the co-participants' 'face', and displaying different levels of epistemic authority. The pedagogical implications in terms of fostering students' participation indicate that these resources mobilise answers to different degrees, offering candidate answers and using negations being the most predominant. However, these resources have a higher possibility of mobilising a response when combined instead of by themselves.

*Keywords:* Conversation Analysis, EFL classroom, pursuing an answer, student participation, negations, face, epistemics.

## Resumen

Este estudio utiliza el enfoque del Análisis de la Conversación (AC) para analizar fragmentos de interacción correspondientes a grabaciones de clases en línea y presenciales en aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) que tuvieron lugar en la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación (UMCE) en los años 2021 y 2022. Los fragmentos seleccionados se centraron en el proceso de búsqueda de una respuesta, con el propósito de identificar los recursos lingüísticos e interaccionales que utilizan las/os docentes y sus implicaciones pedagógicas en el fomento de la participación estudiantil. Los resultados mostraron una variedad de recursos lingüísticos como el uso de incrementos, pronombres indefinidos y negaciones, junto con otros recursos interaccionales como ofrecer posibles respuestas, una orientación a mantener la 'cara' de las/os coparticipantes y mostrar diferentes niveles de autoridad epistémica. Las implicaciones pedagógicas en términos de fomentar la participación estudiantil indican que estos recursos movilizan respuestas en diferentes grados, siendo ofrecer posibles respuestas y utilizar negaciones los más predominantes. Sin embargo, estos recursos tienen una mayor posibilidad de movilizar una respuesta cuando se combinan en lugar de usarse por separado.

*Palabras claves:* Análisis de la Conversación (AC), aulas de inglés como idioma extranjero, búsqueda de una respuesta, participación de estudiantes, negaciones, cara, epistemología.

## Introduction

Substantial research has been conducted in the area where teaching-learning intersects with talk-in-interaction (Chiang, 2011; Dobrzycki, 2021; Gardner, 2013; González Temer, 2021; Kääntä, 2010; Kimura et al., 2018; Koole, 2012; Mehan, 1985, 1979; McHoul, 1978; Svinhufvud, 2015). However, one of the common difficulties teachers have to face is being met with silence. In this sense, as teaching is an ever-evolving vocation, research that builds on strategies to enhance the teaching-learning process are always relevant in the field of education.

As it will be unveiled in the following section, research through Conversation Analysis (CA) has made several contributions to the field of education thanks to its thorough procedures, describing the interactional features that take place in the classroom. Moreover, as it is deliberately centred on the data rather than the analyst's preconceived notions, the context in which the analysed interactions take place is undeniably taken into account. This is relevant given the data analysed for this dissertation unfolds in the classrooms of the English Department at *Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación* (UMCE), where Chilean culture meets English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In this context, this study seeks to identify the linguistic resources used by teachers when pursuing answers in the data collected for this project and analyse the pedagogical impact in terms of effective strategies to enhance student participation in class.

The methodological approach involves Conversation Analysis and multimodal study to identify and analyse relevant sequences; therefore, this study is inherently qualitative analytic. The analysis focuses on recordings of undergraduate classes within the context of a teacher training programme for English as a Foreign Language instruction at UMCE. As aforementioned, the results of this study will be beneficial for participating teachers, as they will provide insights into effective strategies and techniques to encourage greater student participation in class.

The research questions for this dissertation are the following:

- Which linguistic and interactional resources are employed by teachers in pursuing answers in language classes in the context of English as a Foreign Language classrooms at UMCE?
- How do the identified resources contribute pedagogically to fostering student participation in English as a Foreign Language classrooms at UMCE?

The objectives of this study go as follows:

General objective:

To identify the linguistic and interactional resources used by teachers in English as a Foreign Language classrooms at UMCE and analyse their pedagogical implications on fostering student participation.

Specific objectives:

- To identify the linguistic and interactional resources employed by teachers when pursuing answers in English as a Foreign Language classrooms at UMCE.
- To analyse the pedagogical implications of the identified linguistic resources in fostering student participation in English as a Foreign Language classrooms at UMCE.

This dissertation is divided into the following sections: Literature review, which covers the basic components of Conversation Analysis and its institutional form, as well as the literature corresponding to the topics relevant to this study such as pursuing an answer and face; Methodology, where the process of data collection is detailed, as well as the participants and ethical considerations; Analysis, where the collection of selected examples is examined in terms of the linguistic resources identified and the interactional and pedagogical functions they accomplish, including deviant cases; Discussion, where the findings are elaborated and put into

perspective of the aim of the dissertation; Conclusions around the research questions, along with limitations and recommendations for further research.

## **Literature Review**

### **Conversation Analysis and Classroom Interaction**

Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) is an evidence-based domain that seeks to understand the underlying structures and patterns of social interactions, with a focus on the meaning of the spoken words and the actions they perform. Moreover, it “draws attention to the temporal, spatial, and interactional character of naturally occurring talk.” (Ford et al., 2002, p. 3), moving away from prescriptive approaches to conversation. This approach emerged from ethnomethodology in the decades of 1960 and 1970 based on the work of Goffman and Garfinkel by the hand of the main authors, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, with the intent of conveying “an interest in documenting the ongoing collaborative creation of social structure through interaction.” (Ford et al., 2002, p. 5).

According to Pomerantz (1988), the central points where ethnomethodology and conversation analysis converge are:

The first is that the main focus should be on how participants themselves produce and interpret each other's actions. The second is that an analyst must be willing to treat ordinary events as worthy of serious analytic attention. The third is that there is a strong preference for working with naturally occurring interactions rather than experimental or survey data. (p. 360-361)

For CA, conversation is treated as talk-in-interaction. Moreover, interaction can be considered as coordinated “action between people” (Clift, 2016, p. 1), in view of the fact that interactants engage in different actions like inviting, requesting or assessing, among others. These actions are coordinated implicitly by the speakers, it is a collaborative construction of social structure for interaction (Liddicoat, 2007).

In terms of the analysis, the interactions are always situated within a context, paying attention to what is actually occurring instead of carrying preconceived notions to the analysis (Liddicoat, 2007; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). Moreover, the inductive method stripes away the analyst's assumptions and concerns about the data, making the analysis compellingly data-driven (Clift, 2016, p. 98). Along these lines, the bottom-up approach in CA emphasises deriving insights from the actual conversational data rather than starting from theoretical assumptions. The procedure starts with "identifying patterns [and] instances of action through unmotivated looking and then moving to establishing collections of similar actions" (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 10). This inductive approach seeks to establish regularities in the analysed data, in addition to showing the organisation of talk-in-interaction in the particular context and with the particular participants present.

This approach is also divided into basic CA and Institutional CA. Although both are centred on naturally-occurring talk, the contexts in which these conversations happen are different and, as a consequence, pose different characteristics. In the institutional framework, these features translate into institution-specific goals and identities that carry interactional constraints and inferential frameworks to understand what happens in the institutional context (Dobrzycki, 2021; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Kimura et al., 2018). Furthermore, this method has gained an important place within the educational institution. Due to its focus on the empirical description and analysis of the data collected in the classroom, CA can provide evidence-based findings to understand the interactional process of teaching and learning (Dobrzycki, 2021; Kimura et al., 2018).

Kääntä (2010) lays out the features that research on talk-in-interaction in institutional has identified: "i) the overall structural organization of the interaction, ii) the sequential organization of the interaction, iii) turn taking, iv) turn design, v) lexical choices made, and vi) the epistemological asymmetry that commonly exists between the participant of the setting" (p.

20). Out of all these features and bearing in mind the collaborative nature of conversation, the main systems that structure talk-in-interaction and make it coherent are turn-taking and sequence organisation (Clift, 2016); “conversation consists not only of turns, but also of longer sequences of action” (Svinhufvud, 2015, p. 5). These systems hold every participant accountable for carrying out the interaction as fluently as possible. In classroom settings, as in other institutional contexts, obligations are imposed on the speakers and they can be sanctioned if they do not comply with the organisation of turn-taking or provide a fit response in the case of adjacency pairs and sequential positioning in general (Sacks et al, 1974; Schegloff, 2007).

### **Turn-Taking and Sequence Organisation in the Classroom**

The turn-taking system was described in the seminal paper by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), where they established its components and a set of rules. These components pertain to how turns are constructed and allocated to allow for minimal overlaps and gaps in interaction. To constitute a turn, there must be recognisable *Turn Constructional Units* (TCUs), which are made up of any stretch of speech that can be understood on their own, specially given the context in which it is inserted. Moreover, the turn allocation component of a TCU comprises elements such as a recognisable action that makes relevant a response by a co-participant, like asking a question or making an offer; addressing a co-participant using verbal address forms including pronouns or names; and addressing a co-participant by employing embodied features, e.g. gestures or eye gaze. These allocation techniques align with current-speaker selects next-speaker, however, participants may also self-select. Furthermore, for the transitions from one speaker to another to occur fluently, turns inherently reach a point of possible syntactic, prosodic and pragmatic completion. This endpoint is identified as a *Transition Relevance Place* (TRP).

Some key characteristics of Institutional CA that pertain directly to the classroom are its turn-taking systems, which are shaped by the shared institutional goal of the participants, also

considering each one's institutional identity (Dobrzycki, 2021, p. 12). Participants orient to this institutional organisation with the constraints it entails. This type of setting manifests itself in the designing of turns and the lexical choices they contain (Kääntä, 2010, p. 20). In the classroom context, the interaction between teachers and students shows particular attributes regarding how participants come to be and make use of conversational resources, as well as how their knowledge is distributed (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 49). Likewise, the hierarchical arrangement where the teacher holds a higher position in terms of authority and knowledge (Mehan, 1985) is demonstrated in the allocation of turns in the development of the class, given it is them who adjust the participation framework and determine the speakership of the students (McHoul, 1978). In this sense, it is mainly the teacher that selects who speaks next and when (Gardner, 2013; Kääntä, 2010; McHoul, 1978).

For speaker transfer to take place, it is necessary that the current turn reaches a recognisable and projectable possible completion that constitutes the Transition Relevance Place (Schegloff, 2007 p. 3-4). This is pertinent at the moment of projecting who has the right and obligation to speak next, usually following the 'current speaker selects next' technique. However, this is one of the constraints of institutional settings. McHoul (1978) summarised the possibilities for turn-taking management in the classroom stating that “only teachers can direct speakership in any creative way. While students can direct speakership (i.e. can construct their turns so as either to continue or to select the teacher), the permutability of selectees is of zero degree” (p. 189), as selecting another student as a possible next speaker is not a choice in this institutional setting. According to Kääntä (2010), teachers allocate turns by using students' names and directing their gaze toward them. They might also use head nods and pointing gestures as embodied turn-allocations which derive meaning from their sequential position and rely on mutual gaze to succeed.

In terms of sequence organisation, turns comprise actions that demand a relevant and accountable following action, these are identified as adjacency pairs. These pairs are constituted by a first-pair part (FPP) and a second-pair part (SPP) in a relation which makes the SPP conditionally relevant to the FPP (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 1968). In the context of classroom interaction, a question by a teacher makes an answer from a student relevant. If an answer is not produced, participants are accountable for the lack thereof (Mehan, 1979). Furthermore, this accountability is a reciprocal relationship between speakers, given that each part must produce an intelligible turn for the other part to produce a relevant and aligned reply (Goffman, 1967; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1972).

Another important aspect of sequence is preference, which is understood as the relationship between a FPP and a SPP in terms of the interaction structure and not the psychological motives of participants. SPPs are not symmetrical alternatives; they differ in value and participants orient to them differently. (Sacks & Schegloff, 1973, p. 314). As aforementioned, a teacher's question makes a student's answer relevant. However, not all possible responses are treated equally. A preferred response, such as a correct or relevant answer, aligns with the teacher's pedagogical goals and is usually produced fluently. In contrast, a dispreferred response, such as an incorrect answer, hesitation, or silence, misaligns with these goals and often requires repair or mitigation (Pillet-Shore, 2017, p. 6).

Besides, classroom talk is characterised by the use of three-part sequences, namely, teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation or IRE (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) which are essential for instruction, even being called 'instructional sequences' (Mehan, 1979). This structure is particular to classrooms because of its institutional nature (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 40). Furthermore, the presence of an evaluation is highlighted as a feature that differs from everyday interaction, as it is uncommon that interactants evaluate each other's replies to

questions in ordinary conversation (Mehan, 1979, p. 285); however, it is an extremely common occurrence in the classroom as a pedagogical tool.

Concisely, talk-in-interaction is the consolidation of sequences of social action that are developed and accomplished through different systems, such as turn-taking arrangements, as well as their organisation as adjacency pairs or IRE sequences. However, this structure of conversation requires that a relevant response is provided and accepted as sufficient. When this response is either nonexistent or dispreferred, the sequence is extended until an appropriate response is obtained or, unfortunately, the topic or interaction is deemed as exhausted (pp. 289-290). This process is referred to as pursuing a response or, in the case of questions, an answer.

### **Pursuing an Answer in the Classroom**

Sometimes, the most commonly encountered disruptive behaviour in the classroom is being met with silence, especially after asking a question with pedagogical purposes. As aforementioned, different initiation actions, such as questions, prompt an immediate and relevant response. Nonetheless, when the question prompts a non-answer, an incomplete or an unwanted answer, the question-answer exchange can be considered problematic (Chiang, 2011). Hence, this lack of a response must be held accountable for by identifying and treating the problematic source.

Some options pertain to problems of understanding or hearing the utterance, as well as a wrong assumption of knowledge on the topic or upcoming disagreement with the speaker's position (Pomerantz, 1984). When these problems are identified, "clarifying, reviewing the assumed common knowledge, and modifying one's position are ways that speakers pursue responses." (p. 153). In addition, some strategies proposed by Mehan (1979) that may take place are prompting replies, repeating elicitations, and simplifying elicitations (pp. 287-288). Kasper

(2004) states that questions may be repeated in response to a candidate's non-comprehension. The teacher may reformulate the question to facilitate understanding, leading to a more relevant and extended answer from the student. In interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers of English, linguistic adjustments can enhance the comprehensibility of input and contribute positively to their second language acquisition (Long, 1985).

Moreover, Stivers & Rossano (2010) examined how responses are mobilised in interaction, proposing that response relevance operates on a continuum. They argue that turns can be configured to increase response relevance considering aspects such as social action, sequential position, and turn-design features such as interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, interrogative prosody, recipient-focused epistemicity, and speaker gaze. The authors claim that the way an action is designed through turns at talk can enhance its relevance for eliciting a response, hence, using certain features or a combination of them will mobilise a response to different degrees (p. 3).

The main focus of this dissertation is on relevantly missing answers to teacher's questions in an EFL classroom. For this purpose, a deeper understanding of the question-answer pair is necessary to comprehend the reasons an answer may be unarticulated. First of all, a question is more than its linguistic composition, as well as some utterances that are not designed as questions accomplish an interrogative intent (Schegloff, 1984). Schegloff identifies questions as 'interactional objects' that entail different sequentially relevant social actions, which explains the common orientation for a question to prompt an answer as an outcome of its sequential positioning and the expectations created for the other participant's response.

## **Incrementing**

Firstly mentioned by Schegloff (1996), “an increment is a grammatically fitted continuation of a turn at talk following the reaching of a point of possible syntactic, pragmatic, and prosodic completion” (Walker, 2004, p. 147). That means, this phenomenon takes place when the speaker self-selects for different reasons after reaching the point of possible completion of their turn. Increments adopt a backwards orientation, that is, they expand on prior action as opposed to constituting a new action (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono 2007, p. 513).

Walker (2004) describes three types of grammatically fitted increments based on their sequential positioning; these are post-gap increments, which occur after a gap or timed pause; post-other-speaker-talk increments, which take place after other speaker has initiated a new turn; and next-beat increments, which happen immediately after the completion of the turn with no gap (p. 150). In addition, the turn from which the subsequent increment derives from is referred to as the increment’s host.

Further research on incrementing has resulted in more specific categorisations of these ‘add-ons’ to TCUs, such as replacements and ‘proper’ increments, and a distinction between glue-on and insertable increments (Couper-Kuhlen & Ono 2007, p. 515). These categories will not be further explored as this differentiation does not necessarily fit the purpose of this dissertation. Therefore, the focus will be on the aforementioned description provided by Walker (2004), simplifying increments as turn continuation elements.

Regarding the institutional setting of a classroom, Dobrzycki (2021) poses that “in university interaction, (...) increments are determined by ‘pause’ (rather than other forms of prosodic break, such as pitch, loudness, tempo/rhythm), as ‘pause’ is a sufficient indicator of awaiting an answer.” (p. 23). This makes reference to the monologue-like speech style that takes place in a classroom setting, where the teacher controls the lesson and is entitled as the main

speaker for the majority of the class. In this context of one participant being a constant speaker, a significant pause is enough modification to the usual state of the class that it demands a relevant next action, most certainly an answer to an interrogative; when this answer is not provided, increments occur. Different from an institutional context, a typical everyday interaction awaits for a variety of next relevant actions as opposed to (only) an answer.

### **Participation Framework**

Goffman (1991) built a foundation for participation in his work *Footing*, moving away from the dyadic notion of speaker and hearer that gave much importance to the verbal aspect of communication and expanding on the embodied features of communication with the concept of ratified and unratified participants. Moreover, he developed further categories to portray the relation between interactants and their role in talk-in-interaction, such as bystanders, eavesdroppers, and addressed and unaddressed hearers. This complexity portrays how “participation refers to actions demonstrating forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk” (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004, p. 222).

Interaction is mostly dyadic, even in settings where there is more than one participant not every one of them may be a ratified speaker if not addressed or selected, as Stivers (2021) explains, “being a ratified participant does not provide non-selected speakers with rights to answer questions that selected another, and their behavior demonstrates this orientation” (p. 5). The current speaker is commonly the one who selects other co-participant (Sacks et al., 1974), which might be done through embodied features like eye gaze or verbally by using vocatives (Goffman, 1981, p. 133). In the context of a classroom, unless stated otherwise, the common case is that every student is a ratified participant, although the rights and obligations to speak are assigned by the teacher (McHoul, 1978), as mentioned before. However in a multi-participant setting, interaction orients to dyadic configuration; when one student gets involved in direct

interaction with the teacher (e.g. in an IRE sequence), the rest of the students shift to be unrati ed speakers until the sequence is completed.

### **Face in the Classroom**

Goffman (1967) introduced the concept of *face* to refer to “the positive social value a person effectively claims for [themselves] by the line others assume [they have] taken during a particular contact” (p. 5). That is, the self-image that a person seeks to protect in talk-in-interaction, pertaining more specifically to a participant’s perceived linguistic and social identity (Aporbo et al., 2024, p. 414). The concept of face is complexly constituted by positive and negative face, a duality that should be interpreted as outward and inward correspondingly, rather than attending to the traditional interpretation of ‘positive as good’ and ‘negative as bad’. This interpretation stems from the description of each type of face, concisely, positive face refers to that desire of obtaining others’ acceptance and being held in high esteem, whilst negative face is that desire to remain unconstrained and independent to realise one’s actions (p. 414). The attention or value directed towards each participants’ face is determined by the composition of the group of interactants and the situation they are in (Goffman, 1967, p. 6), which is essential to institutional settings such as the classroom and its structure and restrictions.

The concept of face was later on used as foundation for Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1978), which aimed to recognise participants’ intentions and actions regarding the maintenance of each and other’s faces, seeking to minimise ‘face threats’ in talk-in-interaction. Consequently, it can also be talked about Face-Threatening Acts (FTA), that pertain to any “behavior that could make someone potentially embarrass, humiliate, or lose 'face' (self-image) or harm it in some manner which may lead to conflict between interactants” (Aporbo et al. 2024, p. 413). It is relevant to mention that Goffman (1967) touches on the participants’ orientation to maintaining everyone’s face, as each interactant is expected to have a degree of consideration for others’ feelings as well as they take care of their own. In principle, this is a spontaneous process

throughout the interaction that responds to a deep-rooted culture of politeness, “a basic structural feature of interaction” (p. 11).

In reference to education, more than just a space for knowledge acquisition, the classroom is a space for social interaction. This entails that students display their self-image with each other and the rest of the educational community, as well as teachers. Particularly in teacher-student interactions, face concerns are relevant to build and maintain a safe learning environment that allows a fluent exchange of interactions. Students can often feel as though they are being put on the spot when asked something relevant to the lesson, undergoing social scrutiny from not only the teacher but also their peers. Therefore, it is crucial to consider FTAs in the classroom to encourage student participation, as face concerns may reduce the willingness to participate (Svinhufvud, 2015, p. 69). On the other hand, the teacher's face is also up for scrutiny when instructions or questions are met with silence. This is tightly related to the aforementioned features of turn-taking and sequence organisation, given the accountability of sequentially relevant actions such as question-answer pairs. Just as students are responsible for providing adequate answers, teachers are accountable for formulating intelligible questions. (Dobrzycki, 2021, p. 29)

### **Epistemics and Deontics in Classroom Interaction**

Demonstrations of knowledge and authority are particularly relevant in institutional settings such as the classroom. In terms of talk-in-interaction, epistemics and deontics play an important role in the development of the class. The allocation of turns and the participants' responsibilities to contribute to a fluent and productive interaction are representative examples of how these elements play an important role. Furthermore, these elements intertwine with the conditional relevance a question demands. Additionally, when a participant asks a question, this action and the way it is done implicitly carries claims and expectations about both the speaker's and the recipient's state of knowledge (Pomerantz, 1988, p. 365).

With regards to knowledge claims in interaction, the concepts of epistemic status and epistemic stance become relevant to explain the different dynamics present in talk-in-interaction. We can talk about epistemic status when addressing how knowledgeable a participant is with respect to a domain of knowledge in comparison with someone else, this relative status is differentiated with the epistemic gradient ‘more knowledgeable (K+)’ and ‘less knowledgeable (K-)’. However, the position interactants take and project regarding their own knowledge may vary from their actual status, this refers to one’s epistemic stance (Heritage, 2012; Heritage, 2013). In the classroom context, a common pedagogical resource is that teachers lower their epistemic stance when assessing students’ knowledge about a certain topic. Ironically, “this exchange reaffirms the teachers’ elevated stance in terms of authority and knowledge” (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 41). This is true for students as well, as sometimes they will not want to participate or rather claim not to know the answer so as to not be scrutinised in front of everyone present; however, “claims of insufficient knowledge, such as I don’t know, do not necessarily mean that the speaker ‘does not know’ (...), if speakers make assessments with certainty, they are accountable for the accuracy of their assessments” (Dobrzycki, 2021, p. 33).

Attending the same asymmetrical relationship between teachers and students, authority is another aspect worth considering along with knowledge disparities. Stevanovic & Peräkylä (2012) explain that “participants orient also to the deontic dimension of authority (concerning rights and obligations)—something that must be regarded as separate from the epistemic dimension but yet as interrelated with it” (p. 298). As with epistemics, deontics may distinguish between status and stance as well. As Stevanovic (2015) explains, deontic status refers to the authority a participant holds in relation to their co-participants, whereas deontic stance refers to how this authority is displayed regarding certain domains of action in the interaction (p. 2).

In the classroom we can find reference to deontics when teachers point out their authority by giving instructions, positioning themselves in a higher deontic stance, commonly

observed more often in elementary and middle school; however, students may also find themselves in either an equal or higher position than teachers when they have the power to make decisions concerning their own learning, which is more likely to be found in higher education.

As this study is concerned with pursuing students' answers, the focus will be on teachers' display of knowledge and authority when they ask questions, which "simultaneously, albeit subliminally, [project] knowledge, identity and power" (Heritage, 2013, p. 372). This information seeking or confirmation action demands a subsequent one beyond the relevance of adjacency pairs and preference, that obeys the authority a teacher holds in the classroom; in this sense, students most likely feel they ought to answer and, even more, provide a correct or suitable answer.

## **Methodology**

### **Data Collection**

During the years 2021 and 2022, two corpora of video-mediated and face-to-face lessons were gathered by the supervisor of this dissertation at the English teacher training programme at Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación (UMCE). The video-mediated lessons pertain to online classes that took place during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent quarantine period in the year 2020. The lessons were recorded per students' request as a way of atoning for the difficulties of studying during the pandemic. These recordings were made available to the supervisor for research purposes.

In 2022, a new corpus with recordings of face-to-face lessons was collected thanks to the progressive opening of public spaces. These recordings consist of 39 video-mediated lessons that add up to 28 hours of footage, and 12 face-to-face lessons that sum almost 14 hours of footage. Considering this, the participants are students from first to fourth year along with ten professors that teach the subjects from these years.

Furthermore, all the footage was revised and narrowed down to fragments that could potentially be analysed in depth for the purpose of looking at reformulations and resources to pursue answers. These fragments were then coded using Spreadsheets by Google, facilitating a swift first look at the data and making it possible to pre-select the suitable examples for the purpose of this research. The coding method was also expanded upon in line with the same purpose. This will be elaborated further in the data analysis section.

Regarding ethical considerations, both teachers and students were informed of the purpose of the research and asked for their consent in gathering the recordings of online lessons and recording the face-to-face sessions. This consent also ensured their identities would remain confidential and the recordings would only be used for research purposes. Attending a more

efficient process in terms of logistics, the consent forms were distributed and signed via online. Correspondingly, the names of teachers and students are kept anonymous throughout this dissertation and will be addressed using the neutral 'they/them' pronouns. In addition, the faces of the participants will be blurred in the captures of the recordings, the image will be edited to be in black and white as well.

### **Data Analysis**

Given the data was already collected for previous research as well as appropriately named and coded, it was fairly straightforward to begin the analysis of the data purposefully focusing on the excerpts of interest. The existing coding labelled interventions focusing on the excerpts were teachers asked questions and what happened next in terms of answers and reformulations. The previous researchers classified questions by 'wh-questions', 'yes/no questions' and mixed questions. The group established 131 excerpts that were potentially useful for research regarding pursuing an answer in the classroom.

Additionally, to narrow down the scope of this research, reformulations were put into three categories using a colour coding system: change of the question's structure, such as moving from an open-ended wh-question to a yes/no question to narrow down the possible answers and increasing the chances of participation; change of wording while maintaining the structure, using synonyms and expanding upon the question expecting students may feel more compelled to provide an answer; and appealing to students with the use of imperatives, negative constructions, and indefinite pronouns among other linguistic resources.

**Figure 1**

Example of the coding. Shows the categorisation and colour coding

	A	B	C	D	F	G	J	K	L
1	Video	Time Stamp	Name	Target line	Reformulation	Type of question	Does the question get a response?	If so, after how many attempts?	Is there reformulation after a response?
2	T1.G1	00:34:25-00:35:12	Life	What is the most important....					
3	T3_V2_P1	00:01:00 - 00:01:58	Lexical Accent	What do we mean by lexical accent? Can you tell me?	T:What do you understand by lexical accent? T: Yes, what is lexical accent? T: Uh, Anais, what do you understand by lexical accent? T: Any other ideas guys?	Wh- question	Yes	3 attempts	Yes, there are 2 more reformulations
4	T3_V2_P1	00:03:15 -	Compound Noun	Can you give me an example of a Compound Noun?	T: Any others?	Wh- question	Yes	1 attempt	Yes
5	T3_V2_P1	00:03:46 -	Compound Adjective	Uh, can you give me a Compound Adjective? In English?	T: Can anyone give me another one?	Wh- question	Yes	1 attempt	Yes
6	T3_V2_P1	00:11:34 - 00:11:40	Babysitter	And sitter?	T: What is it?	Wh- question	Yes	2 attempts	No
7	T3_V2_P1	00:16:30 - 00:17:18	Round the clock	Uh we have the expression "round the clock". Does someone know it?	T: Round the clock? T: Can you find out? T: What is "round the clock"? T: What is around the clock guys?	Mixed question	Yes	5 attempts	No
8	T3_V2_P1	00:19:45 - 00:20:05	Heart to heart	What else can you tell me about this one?	T: But what else can you tell me about this eh...in terms of stresses, locations and -inaudible- S1: I don't know	Wh- question	Yes	1 attempt	Yes
9	T3_V2_P1	00:21:42 -	Early stressed compound nouns	So...um...could you please tell me, Sarai, what we-you expect to find in early-stressed compounds nouns here?	T: Can we help her? What do you expect to find out? T: We're going to discuss early-stressed compound nouns. So we're going to study those-	Mixed question(?)	Yes	1 attempt	Yes
10	T3_V2_P2	00:19:51 -	Activity	T: Book team, please choose 3 interesting definitions and examples you like to share and tell us.	T: Come on, teacher. T: We already know address book	Wh- question	Yes	3 attempts	No
11	T4_V1_P1	00:02:48 -	CV/Resume	T: What is the difference between the concept of Resume and the concept of CV	T: Does anybody know anything about it? T: Anyone? T: So, can you please elaborate it a little bit more? T: Anyone else? T: Anybody?	Wh- question	Yes	3 attempts	Yes
12	T4_V1_P1	00:22:03 -	Social skills	T: What is the type of soft skill in which, I mean, they described it as having not the power but the talent to say things that need to be said without hurting anyone	T: Being straight-forward or being direct? T: Homework T: If the name comes to you, please do not hesitate. T: No? T: It's the talent to say things without hurting anyone. T: 'insert example' T: Think about it	Wh- question	No		

The scope of interest for this dissertation pertains to the interactional resources teachers implement to appeal to students' willingness and emotions when pursuing an answer. As already mentioned, this comprises the use of linguistic devices such as negative constructions and indefinite pronouns. Viewed from an interactional point of view, these devices are recognised as achieving different purposes in talk-in-interaction in an institutional setting such as the classroom, these actions will be further elaborated in the following Analysis chapter.

After identifying the excerpts that fit the desired scope, the next step was to transcribe the relevant sections to analyse. There is a final count of 11 examples derived from 6 fragments, 3 were recordings of video-mediated classes and 3 were recordings of face-to-face lessons. The Jeffersonian Transcription System (Jefferson, 2004) was used for this research; the conventions for this method can be found in the Appendix section. Along with this system, additional notations will be used for the purpose of clarity, such as arrows to signal increments and bolded

turns or words to highlight the features corresponding to each subsection in the Analysis segment.

Subsequently, the analysis was comprehensively carried out with the guidance of my supervisor, supporting the recording with the transcription, and vice versa, to examine the interaction bit by bit. As preliminary findings were emerging, the corresponding literature was revised in order to properly describe and analyse the interactional phenomena being observed. As aforementioned, Conversation Analysis is essentially qualitative and inductive in its research methods; this approach focuses on its orientation to authentically untangle the interaction between participants without carrying preconceived notions about their motives or intentions. Therefore, the analysis was carefully curated to focus on what was evidently happening in the interactions.

## Analysis

Throughout the analysis, various linguistic resources were identified as achieving social actions when pursuing an answer, interactionally speaking. The examples that will be analysed correspond to instances of teachers pursuing answers by reformulating the request for information that suffers the lack of uptake. Mainly, reformulations attempt to deal with possible problems of understanding or hearing, but sometimes non-uptake is beyond these problems.

### Expanding the Request: Increments and Candidate Answers

When the request for information is met with silence, a common pedagogical strategy is to expand on the interrogative. As aforementioned, increments adopt a backwards orientation to expand on prior talk, acting as turn continuation elements. Other ways of adding to questions' mobilising features is to offer candidate answers to help direct the students to a preferred answer.

In this first example, the teacher uses increments to prolong the flow of the interaction. Simultaneously, the teacher provides a series of candidate answers as a way of eliciting students' replies (Pomerantz, 1988).

#### Example 1. VGT\_T6\_2\_G2\_Help\_me

```

01 T:  s::: (.) so for the people who already answered. I hav-
02     I've a (0.5) quick question before we begin debating, .hh u::h
03     or or evaluating the assessments? .h (0.6) for the people
04     who already answered. quick question. (0.3)
05 T: → do you think there was a question missing.
06     (0.9)
07 T: → do you think there was something I should've a:sked.
08     (0.8)
09 T: → (again) that I didn't.
10     (0.7)
11 T: → or do you think a question was maybe redundant. (o)r-
12     (1.2)
13 T: → or shouldn't be there.
14     (0.7)
15 T: → help me.

```

```

16      (.)
17 T:   .hh cuz I- (0.4) cause it's the first time I do one of these.
18      (8.5)

```

In this extract, the teacher prompts the intent of asking a question from lines 1 through 4, calling for students' attention as to what comes next in line 5. After a 0.9 pause, the teacher pursues a response by redoing the question with a formulation that places the responsibility of the missing action on himself. In line 9, the teacher produces an increment which replicates the intonation pattern and adjusts syntactically to the previous turn (Schegloff, 1996; Walker, 2004). It also does the job of further pursuing an answer. After 0.7 seconds, the teacher does a new version of the question, this time, it seeks to answer whether there was a question that was redundant rather than missing. Again, the teacher produces an increment offering another possible candidate answer to elicit students' responses. (Pomerantz, 1988). This way, the teacher provides a variety of candidate answers, which in terms of preference, makes an answer more likely to be provided. In this case, the answer is provided later in the interaction after other resources mentioned in upcoming sections; therefore, the remainder of the analysis will be presented in other sections.

Example 2 exhibits the continuation of a lesson after the students have been tasked to read sample CVs and/or resumes. The teacher's reformulations will also include offering candidate answers.

#### Example 2. VGT\_T4\_V1\_P2\_Missing\_information

```

01 T:   Is there anything you miss(ed)? (0.6) I mean (.) when you read
02      those CV's (.) or resumes (1.7) thinking of-I mean thinking
03      f-f-from the Chilean conception of the resume is there anything
04      missing?↓
05      (5.0)
06 T:   Uh:m missing like (0.5) what?↓ information? (0.4) yeah↑ like key:=
07 S1:  Ah [es-]=
08 T:   =[in]formation o[r] basic informatio[n

```



Spanish from lines 15 to 26 with two occasional acknowledgement “oh” from the teacher, as well as the aid of a classmate when the answering student asks if they missed something in their answer. Additionally, the teacher evaluates the students’ answers as the end of the IRE sequence in lines 29 and 31, finalising the exchange.

### **Participation: The Use of Indefinite Pronouns**

In the analysed excerpts, teachers showed a clear tendency to not explicitly nominate students to answer but instead opted for re-stating an open participation framework (Goffman, 1981; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004) where everyone is a ratified participant and has the rights to speakership (Goffman, 1981). This was done by using indefinite pronouns such as ‘anyone’ and ‘anybody’.

In example 3, the teacher is trying to fix a problem with their PDF file and asks the students for their help.

#### **Example 3. VGT\_T3\_G1\_1\_Flip\_the\_page**

```

01 T:   okay, mH- mH- haha it's:- I can show it to you right now
02     it's- it's turned around,
03     (1.7)
04 T:   u:h (1.2) let's- let's see.
05     (0.2)
06 T:   maybe some of you guys are a bit more apt (0.4) at using this
07     type of computer than I am,
08     (0.8)
09 T:   so right now this is: (.) my screen share.
10     (1.6)
11 T:   so let's see how do I flip this (.) puppy::.
12     (4.0)
13 T:   #mmm# no:.
14     (.)
15 T:   no:. tampoco.
16     (2.0)
17 T:   tururururur. (.) (tshuf)
18     (0.7)
19 T:   anyone: (0.7) wanna try?
20     (0.2)
21 T:   → and tell me?

```

```

22      (4.0)
23 T:   I assume some of you guys: (0.7) use (1.6) Android, and
24      Microsoft?
25      (0.4)
26 T:   there has to be a reason this is:, looking like this?
27      (2.9) ((sniff))
28 T:   no?
29      (.)
30 T:   mH- mH- >nobody has< any suggestions for the teacher today,
31      (2.5)
32 S:   quizás en herramientas?

```

In lines 01 and 02, the teacher reveals the problem they are facing (flipping a PDF page) and makes an initial attempt to involve others in solving it. In lines 4 and 11 the use of “let’s” denotes encompassing behaviour as the teacher tries to involve the students in what is being dealt with. In line 6 and 7 the teacher attempts to include the students by lowering their epistemic stance, this will be further elaborated in the subsequent section about epistemics.

It is not until line 19 that the teacher explicitly asks for the students’ help. This calls attention to the absence of different turn-design features that mobilise responses in previous statements of the problem (lines 1 to 11), rather maintaining a declarative structure. Features such as interrogative lexico-morphosyntax and interrogative prosody increase the relevance of providing a response to different degrees (Stivers & Rossano, 2010), so perhaps the teacher could have elicited a response earlier by posing a more direct question.

As previously announced, this excerpt constitutes another example of a teacher asking not a known-information question but rather an information-seeking one; the teacher is not trying to prove students’ knowledge. Once again, this teacher risks losing face by displaying a lower epistemic and deontic state in relation to their students in this domain of action.

Moreover, in line 19 the teacher re-states an open participation framework by using the indefinite pronoun “anyone”, also adding “wanna try” to suggest that success is not required and

failure is acceptable. After 0.2 seconds, they add "and tell me?" inviting further engagement. After a 4-second pause, they lower their epistemic stance again. With no response, the teacher provides an account, implying someone might have the solution. This could also serve as face-saving, shifting the blame to the software rather than themselves.

In line 30, among other features that will be discussed later, the teacher once again uses an indefinite pronoun, this time "nobody". However, the use of a negative pronoun could be interpreted to set a different tone to the interaction. Before, the use of 'anyone' invited participation in a non-pressing manner, not ever addressing students directly; now, 'nobody' is referring to the entirety of the students, still in a covertly manner but addressing them in a way they might feel pressured to answer or even challenged to correct the teacher. Finally, the interaction culminates in line 32 with a student offering a candidate solution in Spanish: "quizás en herramientas?".

The upcoming example is one of the recordings of a face-to-face lesson; hence, it is crucial to consider the importance of body language and gaze (Goffman, 1981; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2023; Stivers, 2021) and how the teacher utilises these features to pursue answers. At the beginning of the excerpt (line 1 to 8), the teacher is summarising the beginning of the class for those students who entered late.

#### Example 4. VGT\_T4\_V1\_P1\_CV/Resume

```

09 T:      ↑(al)right I >already< asked a question? and the
10         question was what is the difference b (0.4) betwee:n
11         (0.7) the concept of resume: a:nd (.) the concept of
12         C V.
13         (1.2)
14 T:      does anybody kno:w anything about it?
15         (1.6)
16 T:      anyone?
17         (0.8)
18 S:      o sea según (büild decí/asi)
19         (0.4)
20 S2:     ↑thm >hum hum [ hum hum< ](laughter)

```

21 T: [↑it's alright?]  
 22 S: *de:: (es) que el el CV es más como:: (.) de tu::s eh*  
 23 *credenciales académicas más que:: [no habilidades]*  
 24 T: [ xx:: ]  
 25 T: so there we have very relevant information that is key  
 26 (1.0)  
 27 S: xx [xx xx]  
 28 T: [>so< ] can you please elaborate a little bit more on  
 29 so you say (.) *credenciales académicas* so (0.3) what do  
 30 you mean by that?  
 31 S: *que el resume es más como:m: (.) tus habilidades y tu*  
 32 *trajectory como: qualifications?*  
 33 (0.6)  
 34 S: → *más que:: (0.8) [como] un historial académico creo [yo ]*  
 35 T: [ so-] [kee]p  
 36 that in mind (0.3) it's gold it's actually pure gold  
 37 (.)  
 38 T: right?  
 39 (0.8)  
 40 T: you are right(s)  
 41 (0.3)  
 42 T: you are right. **anything els::e? anybody?**  
 43 (4.1)

**Figure 2**

*Images of the recording VGT\_T4\_V1\_P1\_CV/Resume (1)*



*Image corresponding to line 11*

*Image corresponding to line 15*

In this excerpt, as lines 9 to 12 show, the teacher has just introduced a question to get on with the lesson. After a pause of 1.2 seconds denotes the students' non-uptake, the teacher tries to elicit an answer by using the indefinite pronouns "anybody" and "anything". The first one alludes to an open participation framework where every student is welcome to contribute to the interaction. The second one points out that there is no need for a thorough or complex answer, *anything* the students might possibly know will be useful and appreciated both in interactional and pedagogical standpoints.

In the images from Figure 2, the yellow arrows portray the teacher's movement, their proximity increases not only the chance of capturing the students' attention but also the relevance of providing an answer to the question the teacher is posing. In addition, the blue arrows depict gaze direction. In the left image, the gaze of the students being directed towards the teacher portrays their engagement with the teacher's talk (Goffman, 1981; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2023); nonetheless, this can be contrasted with the second image, where the teacher has already asked the question and the students directly in front of the teacher are averting their gaze and showing engagement in other activities (Rossano, 2013, p. 313), so as to not commit with answering the question. In the right image I tried to illustrate the teacher's gaze wandering from one student to another, something that happens throughout the lesson. In terms of interaction, "questioners are more likely to look at their recipients than vice versa, and they tend to do so by looking toward their recipient from the very beginning of the question without alternating looks toward and looks away" (Rossano, 2013, p. 312).

### Figure 3

*Images of the recording VGT\_T4\_V1\_P1\_CV/Resume (2)*



*Image corresponding to line 17*

*Image corresponding to line 21*

Following the pause of 1.6 seconds in line 15, the teacher once again prompts the students to answer using the indefinite pronoun “anyone”. As the left image on Figure 3 shows, in line 17 the teacher points to a student after holding eye contact, allocating the following turn to this student. In line 18, the same student presents an interrogative to corroborate they will provide an acceptable answer. Assurance comes from the teacher in the form of “it’s alright” in line 21, which is higher in pitch than the surrounding talk and is complemented by the gesture shown in the right image; these actions demonstrate an encouraging and untroubled stance, so as to say that whatever the student input is, this will be welcomed. Now the student makes use of their right and obligation to speak, providing an answer in lines 22 and 23. Furthermore, line 25 presents the Evaluation part of an IRE sequence, which is followed by another IRE sequence when the teacher prompts for further elaboration in lines 28 to 30.

It should be noted that the request to elaborate is done in a non-confrontational way, softening the request with the interrogative “Can you” and mitigating it even more with “please”. This appeals to the student’s willingness to comply in an amicable way, as opposed to what could have been an imperative form like ‘Elaborate’. This new sequence goes on until the beginning of line 42. Immediately after the evaluation “you are right”, the teacher shifts the status of the participation framework, now giving speakership rights and obligations to the rest of the class by using the indefinite pronouns “anything else? anybody?”, changing the focus from the student that provided the answer to everyone else.

### **Correct me if I'm Wrong: The Use of Negations**

When other instances have been exhausted, it has been observed that teachers break down the lack of suggestions, attempting to promote reflection and participation. This is often done using elliptical sentences that can be understood thanks to the context of which the interaction is inserted, being constructed upon the preceding talk (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 7). From the analysed data, the elliptical structures we want to focus on manifest as prosodically interrogative negations in the forms of ‘no’ or ‘nothing’.

As mentioned before, this feature has been observed after attempts using other resources such as reformulations and prompting everyone’s right to participate. This action could also be interpreted as covertly announcing the topic becoming exhausted and making final attempts to elicit a response before moving on to another topic, which is tightly linked with its usual non-initial position.

Sacks (1989) describes what he calls a ‘correction invitation device’. These are instances where a polar question is designed with the purpose of underlying implication being confirmed or corrected by the recipient, rather than pursue an agreement on their part, which is the common answer one would seek with polar questions in terms of preference. In the following

examples, we will see that teachers invite students to confirm what is implied (e.g. you will not provide an answer) or supply a correct answer if the implication is deemed incorrect, which would be expected and preferred. Furthermore, it is covertly holding students accountable for not providing an answer.

The upcoming excerpt is the continuation of the previous fragment, we come back to Teacher 4 right after the answer has been provided, now trying to elicit further responses.

Example 5. VGT\_T4\_V1\_P1\_CV/Resume

```
42 T:    you are right. anything els::e? anybody?
43      (4.1)
44 T:    no? nothing?
45      (0.6)
46 T:    alright
47      (0.4)
```

Before this extract, the teacher had just finished evaluating the student's answer, finalising the IRE sequence. The attempt made to elicit another answer is followed by a noticeable pause of 4.1 seconds that leads to the final attempt in line 44 with “no? nothing?” before deeming the topic as exhausted with the compliance check “alright” in line 46.

Although the original question had already been answered, we can notice that the negations are still simultaneously accomplishing the three identified interactional functions: being used as correction invitation devices (Sacks, 1989), attempting to elicit an answer by signaling a last chance to provide an answer, and covertly announcing the possible exhaustion of the current topic.

In example 6, we look at Teacher 6 once again, now further into the interaction.

Example 6. VGT\_T6\_2\_G2\_Help\_me

```
01 T:    s::: (.) so for the people who already answered. I hav-
```

```

02      I've a (0.5) quick question before we begin debating, .hh u::h
03      or or evaluating the assessments? .h (0.6) for the people
04      who already answered. quick question. (0.3)
05 T: → do you think there was a question missing.
06      (0.9)
07 T: → do you think there was something I should've a:sked.
08      (0.8)
09 T: → (again) that I didn't.
10      (0.7)
11 T: → or do you think a question was maybe redundant. (o)r-
12      (1.2)
13 T: → or shouldn't be there.
14      (0.7)
15 T: → help me.
16      (.)
17 T: .hh cuz I- (0.4) cause it's the first time I do one of these.
18      (8.5)
(omitted lines in which the teacher deals with a student's request asked
through the chat)
30 T: ah sorry.
31      (0.7)
32 T: .h I:: (1.1) copied that as well.=
33 T: → =.h so no?
34      (.)
35 T: → no suggestions?
36      (0.8)
37 S: maybe how did we feel (0.6) about (.) the assessments.
38      (0.6)

```

At this point, the teacher has already tried eliciting a response by offering multiple candidate answers, as it was already covered in example 1. From lines 19 to 32, the teacher deals with a student's request asked through the chat. Once that is resolved, the teacher goes back to previous talk using the conjunction “so” as a resumption marker and the negative token “no” which is higher in pitch and intensity than the surrounding talk, also marking the new turn as topically disjunct from the previous talk. This turn presents itself as an elliptical question, hence syntactically incomplete, but projects a few possibilities in the given context, namely, ‘no suggestions’, ‘no answers’, ‘no comments’, etc. What follows is one of these possible completions “no suggestions”, which helps bring the attention back to the initial request and also allows for a wider range of answers than the previous formulations.

These negations come after the attempts of eliciting an answer by offering candidate ones from lines 7 to 13 that were described earlier. Even more, while attending to the student's request from lines 19 to 32, enough time has allowed for students to claim speakership. Therefore, the 'late' arrival of this resource supports the claim that the use of negations would be a 'last resort' at eliciting students' answers. Moreover, these turns act as correction invitation devices (Sacks, 1989), not only inciting students to correct the claim that they will not provide suggestions but also holding them accountable for not providing one.

Finally, a student's answer comes in line 37, where criticism is softened by the articulation of the answer. This response is notably soft and non-confrontational, aligning with the prior lack of suggestions and avoiding direct critique to the teacher. The student's intention to not threaten the teacher's face coincides with the intrinsic orientation to maintain every participant's face as it is in the best interest of everyone in the interaction (Goffman, 1967, p. 11).

Example 7 brings back the final part of the excerpt of Teacher 3, where they try to involve the students in aiding him flip the PDF page.

Example 7. VGT\_T3\_G1\_1\_Flip\_the\_page

26 T: there has to be a reason this is:, looking like this?  
 27 (2.9) ((sniff))  
 28 T: **no?**  
 29 (.)  
 30 T: mH- mH- **>nobody has< any suggestions for the teacher today,**  
 31 (2.5)  
 32 S: *quizás en herramientas?*

In previous lines of the interaction we could observe the teacher covertly asking for help until they directly asked with "anyone (0.7) wanna try? (0.2) and tell me?" in lines 19 to 21. Further into the interaction we encounter the elliptical question "no?" after the teacher is once again met with silence when attempting to appeal to students' knowledge in line 26. Same as

example 6, this interrogative projects different possibilities as to what has been omitted, like ‘no solutions’, ‘no comments’, ‘no suggestions’, etc., the latter being confirmed in the next turn.

This type of response elicitation also aligns with the description of a ‘correction invitation’ device (Sacks, 1989), where the speaker seeks information by designing the question containing their guess to be confirmed or corrected, in this case: “nobody has any suggestions for the teacher today?”. As it was detailed in the previous section, ‘nobody’ addresses the students in a way they might feel pressured to answer or even challenged to correct the teacher. Once again, the use of negations projects the topic becoming exhausted and calling for a last chance at claiming speakership to provide an answer. At the same time, it holds students accountable for not being able to provide an answer.

Finally, the interaction culminates in line 32 with a student offering a possible solution in Spanish: "quizás en herramientas?".

### **Taking a Stance: Meddling with Epistemics**

In the following examples, we will see teachers navigate with epistemic (and sometimes deontic) stances, usually putting themselves in a lower position regarding their co-participants to set a less intimidating space, inviting students to feel confident and try to display their knowledge.

In example 8, we examine the epistemic display of Teacher 6 at their request for help.

#### **Example 8. VGT\_T6\_2\_G2\_Help\_me**

```

11 T: → or do you think a question was maybe redundant. (o)r-
12     (1.2)
13 T: → or shouldn't be there.
14     (0.7)
15 T:  help me.
16     (.)
17 T: → .hh cuz I- (0.4) cause it's the first time I do one of these.
18     (8.5)

```

After a 0.7 pause, the teacher makes an explicit request for help. This is done through the use of the imperative construction “help me”. By using this formulation, the teacher appeals to the students’ will to help them, perhaps as a final resource once the reformulations of the initial question have been exhausted. The use of a request also makes it clear that the answer the teacher has been pursuing is something that is not in their knowledge domain. In line 17, the teacher provides an account for the help request claiming that this is the first time they have done that type of summative assessment.

It is worth noting that in this case the teacher is not asking a known-information question, which is the common pedagogical practice in the classroom. Instead, we can observe the teacher is honestly seeking feedback from their students, putting themselves at a vulnerable position of potentially losing ‘face’ (Aporbo et al. 2024; Svinhufvud, 2015), either by the possibility of receiving negative critiques or no critique at all.

The sincere request for help and further account made by the teacher is distinctively straightforward, especially in comparison with the other fragments. This display was not necessary but its interactional and pedagogical function are worth to be noted, appealing directly to the students’ good will to provide feedback. Unfortunately, this strategy was not enough to obtain the answer that is later provided as seen in example 7.

Example 9 goes back to Teacher 3 and the problem with the PDF document. In this case, the focus is on the covert manner they ask for the students’ help by claiming to be less knowledgeable than them.

Example 9. VGT\_T3\_G1\_1\_Flip\_the\_page

06 T: **maybe some of you guys are a bit more apt (0.4) at using this**  
 07 **type of computer than I am,**  
 08 (0.8)  
 (omitted lines in which the teacher shows engagement with the task at hand)  
 19 T: anyone:\_ (0.7) wanna try?  
 20 (0.2)  
 21 T: → and tell me?  
 22 (4.0)  
 23 T: **I assume some of you guys: (0.7) use (1.6) Android, and**  
 24 **Microsoft?**  
 25 (0.4)  
 26 T: **there has to be a reason this is:, looking like this?**  
 27 (2.9) ((sniff))  
 28 T: no?  
 29 (.)  
 30 T: mH- mH- >nobody has< **any suggestions for the teacher today,**  
 31 (2.5)  
 32 S: *quizás en herramientas?*

As previously mentioned, in lines 06 and 07, the teacher adopts a lower epistemic stance, positioning the students as more knowledgeable and capable, which is done in a specially praiseful manner, directly appealing to the students' emotions, addressing their positive face (Aporbo et al., 2024; Goffman, 1967).

The teacher lowers their epistemic stance again in lines 23 to 24. With no response, the teacher provides an account, implying someone might have the solution. As aforementioned, this could also serve as face-saving, shifting blame to the software rather than themselves. After 2.9 seconds, the elliptical question "no?" unpacks the lack of suggestions, following the same declarative structure, now functioning as a question.

Finally, the teacher refers to himself in the third person in line 30, which, as Land and Kitinger (2007) suggest, represents others' views or general categories. According to Schegloff and Sacks (1973), this choice invites reflection on why the teacher distanced themselves,

possibly to emphasise a pedagogical stance or bring attention to their deontic authority in this institutional setting. The interaction culminates in line 32 with a student offering a candidate solution: "quizás en herramientas?".

### Deviant Cases

In the analysis of the selected excerpts we came across cases where the resources employed were not enough to elicit the required answer from students.

#### Example 10. VGT\_T4\_1\_Good\_egg

01 T: Alright so (0.3) ,now I would like you to:: (. ) discuss, so  
 02 you can now (0.3) unmute (. ) yourselves (0.3) and I would like you  
 03 to discuss the=f- the following questions. .h uh: do you consider  
 04 yourself (0.4) to be a good egg?  
 05 (0.9)

06 T: a:nd, the second one\_ ↑who do you think will be the dark  
 07 horse in this group.  
 08 (0.2)

09 T: → by the end of the semester.  
 10 (1.5)

11 T: alright? so .h I'd like to open the discussion,  
 12 (0.8)

13 T: uh:: so you can speak a little bit because (. ) I'm always speaking  
 14 and that's °°kind of boring°°  
 15 (1.5)

16 T: → and I'd like to hear (0.3) what you have to say.  
 17 (1.1)

18 T: okay, let's uh- maybe let's talk about the first question first.  
 19 (. ) do you consider yourself to be a good egg.  
 20 (9.0)

21 T: *Uy (h)no- no tantos a la misma vez por favor.* (aspirated laughter)  
 22 (6.7)

23 T: no?  
 24 (1.4)

25 T: alright.  
 26 (. )

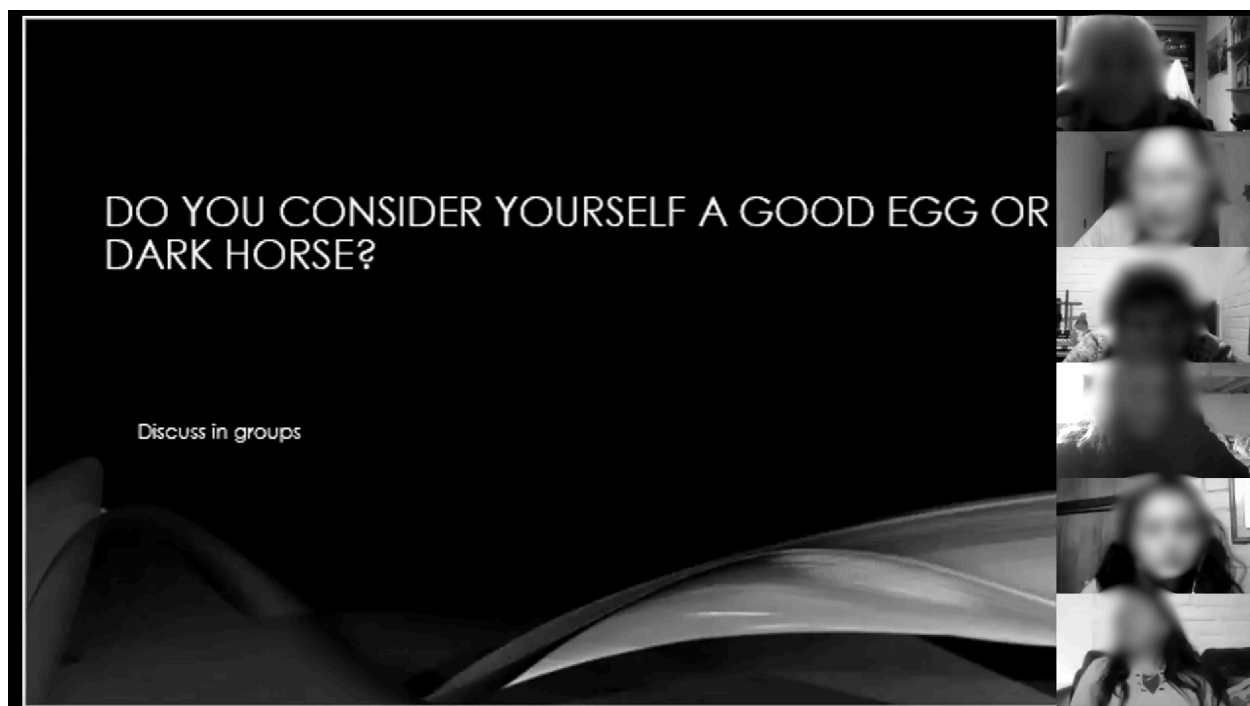
27 T: well.  
 28 (0.5)

29 T: anyway.  
 30 (. )

31 T: .h (. ) uhm:: (0.3) let 's continue.

**Figure 4**

*Image of the recording VGT\_T4\_1\_Good\_egg*



*Image corresponding to line 11*

From lines 0 to 6, the teacher begins to introduce two questions that they seek students to answer. After posing the second question, there is a pause and the teacher produces an increment which has the same intonation pattern as the question and adjusts syntactically to it (Walker, 2004). After not obtaining an answer, the teacher produces an understanding check “alright” followed by an invitation for students to discuss the questions, an action that reiterates the previous request made at the beginning. Following, the teacher makes an account for the previous request of opening up the discussion, also adding a second account followed by an assessment that could refer to the current and/or previous instances of lack of student participation. This assessment is also designed as a self-deprecation. After a 1.5 second pause, the teacher adds a third account in a further attempt to elicit students’ responses. In line 17, after 1.1 seconds, the token “okay” marks incipient speakership and resumption of the previous task in response to the students’ silence. Immediately, there is a self-initiated self-repair in

which maybe is inserted to introduce the suggestion to divide the task into a more approachable way by dealing with the two questions separately, making it easier for students to provide an answer. It should be noted that there were students with their cameras on, as shown in Figure 4, and some had previously participated in IRE sequences.

After a pause of 9 seconds, the teacher projects a stance using a non-lexical particle (González Temer, 2021), producing this turn in Spanish and resorting to humour, which gets some visual responses shown by students' cameras turned on. On the one hand, a possible explanation is that the teacher is trying to make the students feel more compelled to provide an answer by making them laugh. On the other hand, the teacher might be saving face by salvaging the long silence and students' lack of participation and engagement with the class. After another long pause of 6.6 seconds, the teacher produces the negative construction "no" with rising intonation, which is elliptical to 'nobody is going to answer'. This turn also reiterates the request for the students to provide an answer and makes reference to previous attempts to elicit an answer from students. After a 1.4 pause, from lines 24 to 28, the teacher indicates acceptance of the lack of answers using the compliance check "alright" and moves on using "well", since the topic is already exhausted. Finally, "let's continue" marks topic transition in line 30.

The definitions of 'good egg' and 'dark horse' play an important role in why I believe the previous efforts to elicit an answer did not accomplish their purpose. To refer to someone as a 'good egg' means they are considered to be a good, kindhearted person. To talk so greatly about oneself may be taken negative by the rest of participants in a multi-party setting in the cultural context of Chile; although it can be done tastefully, it most certainly contributes to the students' reluctance to answer as they could lose face. The second question is even more threatening in terms of face as it deals with the concept of 'dark horse'. To refer to someone with this term is to express one's perception of their skills, to enunciate an 'unexpected winner', which may be accepted in a group of close friends but undoubtedly not in this context.

In summary, the questions “do you consider yourself to be a good egg?” and “who do you think will be the dark horse in this group by the end of the semester?” both expect a direct critique about oneself and someone else in the group, that even if done cautiously still constitutes a Face Threatening Act, because it is “behavior that could make someone potentially embarrass, humiliate, or lose 'face' (self-image) or harm it in some manner which may lead to conflict between interactants” (Aporbo et al. 2024, p. 413).

The last example shows Teacher 4 employing a variety of strategies to elicit an answer, unfortunately not being able to get one. This is an important example to review to assess the effectiveness of the resources being analysed.

#### Example 11. VGT\_T4\_V1\_P1\_Soft\_Skills

```

01 T:      ↑soft skills, (.) the ones that you can see here
02          (1.0)
03 T:      right?
04          (0.5)
05 T:      >I have a question for you another one.<
06          (0.3)
07 T:      what (.) is (0.3) that type of soft skill in which (1.0)
08          >I mean< they describe it as having, (0.6) not? the ↓power
09          (0.6) but the talent, (0.7) to say ↑things, (.) that need to be
10          said, (.) without hurting anyone.
11          (4.3)
12 T:      being straight forward? being direct?
13          (0.7)
14 T:      no no no yeah I mean it could be but (no it')s not the name
15          (3.0)
16 T:      homework
17          (2.0) ((laughter-like noise))
18 T:      if if if if if if the name comes to you, please.
19          (0.8)
20 T:      → don't: (0.3) (xx xx) ((laughter-like noise)) (even) hesitate
21          (0.7)
22 T:      no?
23          (0.6)
24 T:      it's the talent, >remember< (0.3) the talent to say things (0.2)

```

25           without hurting anyone  
26           (1.5)  
27 T:        mayb- maybe:, (0.5) things that may (0.3) may >actually<  
28           sound kind of (0.6) †sensitive.  
29           (1.3)  
30 T:        → without hurting people  
31           (0.6)  
32 T:        there is an episode the simpsons (.) homer simpson working  
33           as a=uhm (.) kind of advisor,  
34           (0.7)  
35 T:        alright?  
36           (0.6)  
37 T:        doing this kind of >let's say< hard job  
38           (0.3)  
39 T:        → >saying=hey you know< why your girlfriend doesn't wanna  
40           be with you anymore?  
41           (0.5)  
42 T:        so >this is an official-< (0.5) break-up  
43           (1.3)  
44 T:        → but using the right words?  
45           (0.7)  
46 T:        → in order to avoid (0.3) making everyone I mean the  
47           people feel kind of let's say uhm (.) (cut-out)  
48           (0.6)  
49 T:        †think about it  
50           (0.2)  
51 T:        alright.  
52           (1.3) (( T hits board with open palm))  
53 T:        second question?

**Figure 5**

*Image of the recording of VGT\_T4\_V1\_P1\_Soft\_Skills*



*Image corresponding to line 15*

In this extract, from lines 1 to 3 the teacher addresses the concepts that have been the centre of the lesson to then present a new question. In line 5, the teacher announces the subsequent action through a pre-sequence construction, allowing students to prepare for answering the question (Schegloff, 1972). From line 7 to 10, the teacher poses the question. In this process, there is a visible problem with the formulation of the question, as the trajectory of the construction is halted and replaced by a different one. Moreover, the teacher recognises a possible understanding issue with this construction that translates into a prepositioned self-repair “I mean”, in the same way that a word search is perceivable in lines 8 and 9, with “not the power (0.6) but the talent”, perhaps expressing a linguistic problem in the formulation.

Following the question, there is a noticeable lack of uptake from the students in line 11 demonstrated by a 4.6 second pause. After this silence, in line 12 the teacher offers candidate

answers to help students in giving a response, although in line 13, it is shown that these candidate answers were actually not correct, the teacher is discarding possible answers but offers them all the same to mitigate the lack of uptake. After a pause of 3 seconds, the teacher uses humour to address the students' absent response by only saying 'homework', implying that they still have to search for and learn the concept. This humorous attempt is well-received with laughter. As shown in Figure 5, this time the teacher maintains distance from the students as opposed to example 4, where it could be argued that the use of eye gaze and proximity played an important role in obtaining the answer.

Then, in lines 18 to 20, the teacher tries once again to elicit a response by encouraging students to comply with the task, even if not there and then. In addition, "please" is used as a way of lowering his deontic authority, this lets students know that they possess certain authority in giving the solicited answer (Stevanovic, 2015).

After a 0.7 second pause, the teacher uses the elliptical question "no" as a last resort in pursuing students' responses. However, from lines 24 to 30 there is a reformulation that seeks to elicit the previously requested answer. By using the insertion "remember" in line 24, the teacher links the current turn to the assigned 'homework'. In lines 27 and 28, the teacher then unpacks the previous turn, expanding on the concept of those 'things' that may hurt someone. Following a pause of 1.3 seconds, the teacher produces an increment to further pursue a response. After a brief pause, from line 32 until line 47, the teacher uses another strategy and provides an example from a TV show that illustrates the concept he has been trying to get students to recognise. However, this example does not get any uptake either. After this the teacher tells students to #think about it#, which again serves as a link with the assigned 'homework'. The teacher closes this sequence with the exclamation "alright" and moves on to another question.

As the obstacle in the previous example seemed to be the threatening face acts, in this case the lack of answer can be directly correlated to the students' knowledge and language proficiency. Judging by the composition of the question and further expansions, the interrogative was not meant to be answered with information they had reviewed neither in this class nor a previous one. This claim could also be evidenced in that the teacher assigns this as homework, instead of asking the students to remember previous classes or contents, or simply consulting their notebooks. If this is the case, the attempts at eliciting an answer should consider other strategies; for example, if the teacher believes that students' proficiency level is the obstacle, they could incorporate the mother tongue. Also, simplifying the question to a polar one like "do you know that concept?" instead of requesting to name it could elucidate the actual obstacle that prevents students from providing the correct answer.

## Discussion

As it was observed, reformulations and further attempts at eliciting answers take different forms. Some of these reformulations may sometimes take the form of increments that teachers use to further expand on the requests, as seen in example 1. This measure also gives students a chance to think of possible answers. Besides, teachers also tended to offer candidate answers, which is extremely common in prompting delayed answers (Pomerantz, 1988, p. 361).

We also observed the use of indefinite pronouns, which is commonly encountered as a way of inviting responses by modifying or re-stating the Participation Framework (Goffman, 1981; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004). As seen in every example, instead of selecting one or more students as ratified speakers to answer the posed question, teachers prefer to not risk students losing face (Aporbo et al., 2024; Goffman, 1967) by putting them on the spot. In the first general assessment of the data it was observed that teachers tended to not directly select students, although it was part of the teaching style of a couple, the excerpts that contained these instances were not selected for the final collection, as you could see. This strategy, although prioritising the students' comfort, seemed to not be particularly effective in eliciting responses.

Another means of setting a proper environment to elicit students' responses is when teachers navigate with epistemic and deontic stances, usually putting themselves in a lower position regarding the other participants to set a less intimidating space, inviting students to feel confident and try to answer. From this data, it has been observed that teachers may lower their epistemic stance not only by asking pedagogically driven known-information questions but also by honestly seeking information through questions. Commonly, this is perceived when they ask for feedback on something related to their work, seen in example 8, or when asking for help, seen in example 9. In account of this, it must be noted that teachers also risk losing face when being vulnerable with students, as they appear less knowledgeable in certain domains of action.

Moreover, a frequent linguistic resource that has been observed is that teachers tend to use negations such as 'no' and 'nothing' in the form of elliptical questions. These are sometimes unpacked in following or later turns, usually confirming possible projections such as 'no answers' or 'nothing else'. An interesting feature of this action is that it is often used in closing positions, even projecting the possible exhaustion of the topic; not as an initial strategy to pursue an answer but rather as announcing a last chance to come forward before deeming the topic as exhausted.

Furthermore, it is crucial to bring back the notion of adjacency pairs and preference, as polar questions, namely yes/no questions, are treated to align with agreement as a reply in terms of preference, whether posed positively or negatively (Sacks, 1987). However, in the opportunities showcased in examples 5, 6, and 7 it can be argued that it is not in the interest of the teacher for students to agree with their assertion, that is, to openly confirm they have no answer to give, and lose face in consequence; although it can always be a possibility. This conundrum can be elucidated by the concept of Sacks' correction invitation devices (1989) that has already been described and identified in the examples. In addition, the implication of negations as invitations for correction would align with the idea that their use appears to hold students accountable for not providing an answer. Considering that questions demand answers in terms of sequential relevance and preference, pointing out that these answers are not being delivered, even implicitly, alludes to the accountability of continuing the interaction. Therefore, alluding to students' accountability to provide an answer might be another interactional function of these linguistic constructions.

## Conclusions

This study has shed light into some recurrent linguistic and interactional features that teachers turn to when pursuing answers.

Regarding the first research objective, the linguistic and interactional resources identified in the analysed data correspond to: expanding the request for information made by the teacher by the means of increments and offering candidate answers; adjusting the participation framework by using indefinite pronouns to allocate speakership rights and obligations; enticing students to provide an answer by using negations, inviting correction and appealing to their accountability; and taking a particular stance by displaying different levels of epistemic and deontic authority.

About the second research objective, the use of increments and offering candidate answers are widely used by teachers to maintain the flow of conversation, navigating pauses and avoiding situations where students might feel directly pressured to provide an answer. These techniques help create a space where students can participate without fear of being subjected to direct evaluation, aligning with Goffman's concept of 'face,' which protects the social image of the student (1967). In the same line, a non-threatening space is sustained by avoiding selecting students to answer questions, instead using indefinite pronouns like "anyone" to broaden the possibilities for responses, decreasing individual pressure and promoting collective participation; however, in the analysed fragments this proved to be a double-edged measure, as the lack of uptake was unquestionably noticeable and it often took the use of other resources to elicit an answer. Considering this observation, teachers might need to maintain a balance between a non-threatening space and more efficient ways to allocate turns, such as selecting students, which can be done in amicable ways, especially if the dynamic is inserted timely and collaboratively.

Another key strategy is the adoption of a low epistemic stance. This way, the teacher reduces their discursive authority to generate a collaborative atmosphere, where students might feel encouraged to display their knowledge. In the observed data this strategy was not exceptionally outstanding as an effective measure to obtain answers; however, it most definitely contributed to the purpose.

The use of negations is a particularly relevant finding in view of the fact that it was not possible to find a substantial premise in the existing literature that comprises explicitly enough the pedagogical or interactional significance of using interrogative negations as a 'last resort' in the process of pursuing an answer. Nevertheless, various interactional and pedagogical functions were identified, specifically: they are utilised in a 'last resort' manner when other instances of participation have been exhausted, also implicitly announcing the possible exhaustion of the topic; they serve as a correction invitation device (Sacks, 1989); and they also achieve the function of referencing students' accountability to provide an answer.

Overall, the resources were identified and analysed thoroughly to frame the pedagogical implications in students' participation. Although every fragment shown except for the deviant cases were examples of successful answer pursuit, the merit is not for one strategy alone but rather the combination of them. Moreover, as the use of negations could be argued to be the most effective given their proximity with the obtained answers, this could be an inaccurate conjecture because these constructions are overwhelmingly present in later positions in the interaction surrounding a topic.

### **Limitations and Further Research**

On a different note, some limitations to this study were the quality of the recordings, which were done with common user technology, which at last manifested trouble in understanding some stretches of speech, this can be evidenced in the transcription of some of

the examples. Fortunately, these chunks or utterances did not happen to be significant, thus, intelligibility was not greatly affected by the multimedia equipment.

Regarding further research, another relevant aspect of the analysis was the difference from the video-mediated classes to the face-to-face ones, where embodied features like eye gaze, proximity and gestures were directly correlated with the obtention of an answer as shown in example 4. Along with the differences that may present in video-mediated as opposed to face-to-face lessons, I believe the findings regarding participation framework and allocation of turns, as well as the use of negations are incredibly relevant. I would certainly like to expand on how to balance a safe, encouraging space for students with an efficient strategy to allocate turns when answers are expected. With regards to the use of negations, the lack of literature addressing the particular situations I described in this dissertation makes me wonder whether it could be a cultural feature, and if that is the case, does it manifest itself in other ways in other cultures or languages? I believe that research on multicultural classrooms in the Chilean context, as well as comparisons with other cultures would proffer really interesting data.

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## Appendix B. Transcription Conventions

### Jefferson's Transcription System (2004)

:	Stretched sound
.	Final falling intonation
-	Abrupt cut off of a sound or word
[ ]	Speech overlap
=	Continuation of a TCU
o o	Syllables or words that are quieter compared with speech by the same speaker
(.)	Brief pause of less than (0.2)
(1.7)	Timed pause between one utterance and another
.hhh	Audible inbreath
hhh	Audible outbreath
CAPITALS	Louder sound of words or utterances
<u>underlined</u>	Emphasis on the words or segments underlined
whhord	Aspiration in the middle of a word
w(h)ord	Breathiness while talking, for example laughing in the middle of a turn

> <	Increased speaking rate
< >	Decreased speaking rate
!	Exclamation Points Animated speech tone
?	Rising vocal pitch
↑↓	Rising and falling shifts in intonation
\$	Simley or chuckling voice
#	Creaky voice
~	Shaky voice
(( ))	Comments or descriptions
( )	Uncertain word
xxx	Unintelligible
<i>italics</i>	non - English speech