# Analyzing Co-Teacher Turns as Interactional Resources

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Collaborative teaching is widely adopted in teacher-training programs in the United States for the positive influence it has on teachers' professionalism and on students' learning. Though there are a vast number of studies on the *Initiation-Response-Feedback* (IRF) sequence between teachers and students, studies on the use of IRF in co-teaching contexts are scarce. The current study focuses on interactions between two pre-service teachers in a semester-long adult ESL classroom at a U.S. university. Through a discourse analysis of the leading and non-leading teachers' interactions within the IRF sequence, the study has found that the non-leading teacher utilized the second turn of IRF as an interactional resource to advance the instructional talk and achieve the immediate instructional objectives.

Collaborative teaching is widely adopted in English as a second or foreign language (ESL or EFL) teaching contexts. It is defined as a practice in which two or more teachers deliver substantive instruction to a group of students in the same physical space (Cook & Friend, 1995). Apart from co-delivering instruction in class, co-teaching may also involve collaborative course planning, organization of instruction, and assessment of instruction (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). It is adopted in different types of language teaching contexts to serve multiple purposes. For example, in an EFL context, collaboration between a nonnative English speaker teacher (NNEST) and a native English speaker teacher (NEST) is often assumed to enrich the lessons due to the teachers' complementary linguistic and cultural knowledge (Carless & Walker, 2006; Dormer, 2012). On the other hand, in an ESL classroom, co-teaching between an ESL teacher and a subject teacher makes the learning of subject matter more accessible to ESL learners (Creese, 2006). Co-teaching is also implemented in teacher training to promote pre-service teachers' professional growth, in which pre-service ESL teachers cooperate with peer pre-service ESL teachers or experienced ESL teachers (Baeten & Simons, 2014).

As there is more than one instructor in a single classroom, co-teaching adds to the complexity of classroom interactional patterns. Fagan (2012) points out that as teachers are the main interlocutors who manage the flow of classroom discourse and coordinate learner interactions, their communicative practices will influence learner participation and further learners' opportunities for language understanding and usage. Thus, in co-teaching contexts, how the presence of multiple teachers will affect learning opportunities is worthy of investigation. However, the relationships between co-teaching, its influence on classroom interactional patterns, and their influence on learning and teaching opportunities are under-researched. Among discourse analysis studies in co-teaching contexts, some focus on interactions

between NNESTs and NESTs in EFL contexts (e.g., Lee, 2016, 2017; Park, 2014) or between ESL teachers and subject matter teachers (Creese, 2006; Gardner, 2006), but the current literature has rarely explored interactions among pre-service teachers. This study tries to address this research gap, investigating the interactions between two pre-service ESL teachers in a co-teaching context and the pedagogical functions achieved by their discursive practices.

The current study examines classroom interactions during my practicum as a pre-service teacher, which occurred at a community-based teaching site at a university in the northeastern United States, where I co-taught an academic speaking course with one of my peers in a master's program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Specifically, I will analyze the interactions between my co-teacher and me within the triadic *Initiation-Response-Feedback* (IRF) sequence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Mehan (1979) sees this sequence as a characteristic interactional unit that organizes classroom instructional events and allows the exchange of academic information between teachers and students. According to Sinclair and Coulthard (1992), the *initiation* move is made by the teacher to direct students, elicit responses, or provide information, depending on the teacher's intention. The *response* move is made by the student as an acknowledgement, reply, or reaction to the teacher's initiation. The *feedback* move is made by the teacher to evaluate the appropriateness and accuracy of the student's response. In this study, I will depict how the second turn position of the IRF sequence, namely the response slot, is occupied by the non-leading teacher to "advanc[e] the instructional talk" of the leading teacher and to help the learners "pursu[e] immediate instructional goals" (Park, 2014, p. 43) through providing students with *interactional space* in classroom discourse (Walsh, 2012).

I will present four excerpts to examine, via discourse analysis, the non-leading teacher's intervention in the progression of the classroom discourse and the achievement of teaching objectives. I focus on the following research questions: In what occasions did the non-leading teacher occupy the second turn position of the IRF sequence? What functions did this discursive move serve in the immediate learning events? How did other interlocutors react to the non-leading teacher's intervention? Based on these analysis of these questions, what implications can be drawn for pre-service teachers in co-teaching contexts?

## Classroom Discourse in Co-Teaching Contexts

Collaborative pedagogical relationships between teachers have been studied in relation to various facets of institutional practices and teachers' practices with the purpose of promoting effective collaboration. While some literature on co-teaching in ESL/EFL contexts has explored how teachers collaborate outside of the classroom, such as in co-planning lessons (Arkoudis, 2006; Davison, 2006), this study highlights collaboration inside the classroom, specifically how co-teaching impacts classroom discourse. The current literature on teachers' collaborative discourse in ESL/EFL contexts explores how teachers collaborate to achieve instructional goals in a complementary fashion by adopting certain interactional resources (such as occupying a certain turn slot of the IRF sequence) or pedagogical roles. Creese (2006) examines the interactions that individual teachers have with their students and how such interactions provide learning opportunities complementary to those

in their co-teachers' interactions with the students; more studies (Aline & Hosoda, 2006; Lee, 2016, 2017; Park, 2014) focus on depicting how teachers make discursive choices contingent upon their co-teachers' ongoing interaction with the students and intervene in ongoing interactions to serve immediate interactional or instructional needs. This includes situations in which teachers co-deliver instruction by alternating roles as leading and non-leading teachers. For example, by investigating the interactions in EFL classes co-taught by local homeroom teachers and NESTs in elementary schools in Japan, Aline and Hosoda (2006) identify the pedagogical roles that homeroom teachers temporarily take when they are not leading instruction. Such roles include *translator*, *co-learner*, and *co-teacher*, which the homeroom teachers inhabit by entering a certain turn when communicative problems arise between the leading teacher and the students.

Some studies focus on a specific turn in the IRF sequence, often investigating the pedagogical functions achieved through deviating from the typical IRF sequence. For example, Lee (2017) focuses on the first turn position in the IRF sequence and records how the non-leading teacher uses co-initiation to coordinate students' participation or reformulate the leading teacher's initiation to guide the students toward giving a response compatible with the immediate learning objective. Teachers' occupation of the second turn position of the IRF sequence has also been documented in a few studies. Aline and Hosoda (2006), Lee (2016), and Park (2014) have depicted the non-leading teacher playing the role of co-learner with students by responding to a question initiated by the leading teacher. When the pupils failed to give a correct response either out of a lack of understanding of classroom interactional norms or a lack of knowledge to answer the question, the non-leading teacher gave a response to model the classroom interactional norms or to provide an evaluation of students' incorrect responses in a less face-threatening way. Lee (2016) records another function of the non-leading teacher's occupation. In one excerpt presented in the study, the non-leading teacher initiated a response to the leading teacher's question, which served as a "pivot turn" (p. 11) to reinitiate another question that narrowed the scope of the leading teacher's original question to elicit an appropriate response from the students. The studies above demonstrate the different functions of the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot in classroom learning. While the participant teachers of these studies have been mainly experienced teachers, the current study will study the discourse of pre-service teachers.

### Discourse Analysis of Pre-Service Teachers

Collaborative teaching is widely applied in teacher preparation programs to develop pre-service second/foreign language teachers' knowledge and expertise in teaching as well as their autonomy, agency, and ability to collaborate with other members in their professional communities (Altstaedter, Smith, & Fogarty, 2016). Although several discourse analytic studies include pre-service teachers in co-teaching contexts, discourse between these teachers is seldom studied with regard to the novice teachers' expertise in teaching. In one such example, however, Gardner (2006) investigates through discourse analysis how a newly qualified subject teacher moved from a supporting role to a more central role while co-teaching with a more experienced language support teacher. The current study

will investigate classroom discourse with two pre-service teachers with regard to their teaching expertise as novice teachers.

Fagan (2012) proposes that teacher expertise affects teachers' classroom communication practices. Some inherent traits of classroom teaching make the management of classroom interaction a particularly demanding task for novice teachers (Tsui, 2003). Doyle (1979) proposes that in classroom teaching, multiple events such as unpredictable interruptions and identification of appropriate students to contribute answers occur simultaneously, leaving little time for teachers to reflect before making decisions. Tsui (2003) further discusses how a difference between novice teachers and expert teachers is their ability to cope with such immediacy and unpredictability. While novice teachers tend to curtail unexpected learner contributions to avoid deviating from what they have planned, expert teachers tend to improvise, utilizing unexpected learner contributions as springboards to keep the lesson on track with their pre-planned teaching objectives. Similarly, Fagan (2012) identifies two strategies used by novice teachers to curtail unexpected learner contributions. One strategy is "glossing over learner contributions," namely to address the unexpected contributions hastily or not address them at all (p. 113); by doing so, the novice teachers in his study were able to close their unexpected sequences-of-talk and move on, keeping the conversation proceeding in the way they had planned. The other strategy is "assuming the role of information provider," that is, the teacher self-selects to respond to a teacher-initiated question when no preferred response has been given by the students, or to a learner-initiated sequence when the teacher was ready to move to the next activity (p. 113). This strategy helped the novice teacher in Fagan's study to close the current sequence of talk and direct the classroom conversation as originally planned.

The simultaneity and unpredictability of classroom events, the reasons behind novice teachers' curtailing unexpected learner contribution, and the difference between the expertise of novice teachers and expert teachers have together informed the current study in two ways. First, it can be seen from Tsui (2003) and Fagan (2012) that novice teachers usually disprefer deviations from their pre-planned content, an observation which is likely related to novice teachers' lack of expertise in teaching and their wish to simplify the complexity of classroom interaction and further focus on delivering the pre-planned content. This has significance for the collaboration between pre-service co-teachers at discourse level, as the non-leading teacher can use strategies to create more interactional space for students (Walsh, 2012). The current study focuses on the non-leading teacher's occupation of the second turn position of the IRF sequence as a way of achieving such discursive collaboration. Second, it can be seen from Fagan's (2012) study that novice teachers tend to curtail unexpected learner contributions. When the non-leading teacher enters the response slot as a co-learner, it is likely that the novice leading teacher will treat the response as unexpected learner contribution and curtail the response. The study will examine this phenomenon through the lens of teacher expertise.

## Methods and Context

Discourse analysis is utilized in the current study to analyze the data taken from the classroom interaction. The study uses the discourse analytic approach

of Sinclair and Coulthard (1992), which distinguishes the form from the function of classroom language. The current study thus situates the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot within the co-teaching context to describe its functions. Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, and Shuart-Faris (2005) also emphasize the importance to distinguish *structure* from *substance* of classroom discourse. They propose:

> The analysis of classroom literacy events requires that one examines how ... language is being used, by whom, when, where, and for what purposes, along with *what* is being said and written, by *whom*, and *how*, and *what import* the uses of spoken and written language have to the people in the event and to the conduct and interpretation of other events. (p. 47, emphasis in the original)

Hence, this study situates the non-leading teacher's occupation of the second turn position in IRF sequences in specific pedagogical events and investigates how such a practice serves instructional needs.

The excerpts included in the current study are drawn from 40 hours of video-recording in a semester-long adult ESL classroom at a U.S. university. The focal course was considered an academic speaking course, with the goal of facilitating learners' verbal communication in formal or informal learning events in an academic community. The course content combined communicative functions that students might use in an academic community (e.g., expressing personal opinions, describing cause-and-effect relationships, and giving presentations) with the discussion of social issues (e.g., the abolition of capital punishment, the legalization of euthanasia, and feminism). Students were international graduate students and visiting scholars of the university. They had all earned a score of at least 100 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)—equivalent to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level C1 or above—the minimum score required for matriculation into graduate programs at the university. The class adopted an open-entry, open-exit policy; that is, the students could choose to enroll, attend, and drop the course at any time they wanted. Hence, student attendance varied from session to session. Each week a new lesson was taught. The same lesson was offered twice a week so that students could choose either session that was convenient for them to attend. The number of students for each lesson usually ranged from two to eight.

I co-taught the course with another pre-service teacher. We were students in the TESOL master's program at the university and from China. Neither of us had co-teaching experience, though I had a semester-long fieldwork experience of solo teaching before teaching the class. My co-teacher did not have any previous teaching experience. Before each class, we co-planned the lesson content and activities and decided which parts of the lesson that we would lead to give instruction. In class, we took turns as the *leading teacher*, implementing the activities we designed. When one of us was teaching as the leading teacher, the other worked as a *non-leading teacher* without an explicitly defined role. The non-leading teacher usually did facilitative work that was not specified in the lesson plan. For example, during pair or group activities in which students worked individually, the non-leading teacher might be paired with students to practice with them or might circulate in the classroom to see if students had carried out the instructions and completed

activities according to the leading teacher's intention. During the more teacher-fronted whole-class activities which Crookes and Chaudron (1991) identify as "characterized by the teacher's speaking most of the time, leading activities, and constantly passing judgment on student performance" (p. 57), the non-leading teacher's responsibilities were less clearly defined than her responsibilities in the student-centered pair or group activities. This study focuses on the discursive practices of the non-leading teacher during such activities, which were mediated by the (lack of) responsibilities described above, specifically when the non-leading teacher occupied the response turn position in an IRF sequence.

The excerpts present moments in which I entered the second turn position of an IRF sequence as the non-leading teacher. In such situations, one immediate role I served was as a co-learner with the students (Aline & Hosoda, 2006), as was indicated by occupying a turn-taking position that is usually occupied by learners. The other role was as a co-teacher (Aline & Hosoda, 2006), which was my inherent identity in the classroom. I argue that my fluid roles of being both co-learner and co-teacher enabled by occupying the second turn position of the IRF sequence created interactional space for the students (Walsh, 2012). Meanwhile, as the leading teacher and I sometimes did not have the same understanding of the pedagogical function served by my occupation of the response slot as a co-learner, miscommunication occurred. The paper thus proposes that pre-service teachers should have an awareness that the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot can be used as an interactional resource to move the instructional talk forward and achieve instructional goals (Park, 2014).

## Data Analysis

Four excerpts containing the non-leading teacher's occupation of the second turn position of IRF sequences are presented in this section. The teacher's occupation of the second turn serves two functions: (a) mediating conversation between the leading teacher and students to move the instructional talk forward and (b) serving as a contingent resource that other students' answers can build upon, and thus eliciting expected answers from the students. Both functions serve to advance instruction and achieve instructional goals. In these excerpts and discussions, LT refers to my co-teacher who assumed the leading teacher role, and NLT refers to me as the non-leading teacher.

### Function 1: Mediating Conversation Between the Leading Teacher and Students

For most experienced classroom learners, it is a commonly known interactional norm that students are expected to give a verbal response to questions initiated by the teacher. However, students' expectation of the interactional norm may change if the teacher frequently self-selects to answer instead of selecting students to answer the questions initiated, that is, students may start to expect the teacher to fill in the response slot by himself/herself. The teacher's and students' different expectations regarding who should fill in the response slot might thus cause misunderstandings. Excerpt 1 presents a miscommunication typical of the classroom interaction that day: The students remained silent when LT tried to elicit a verbal response from them. This silence may have been caused by a mismatch

between LT's and the students' immediate expectation of who should fill in the response slot. Thus, LT's instructional talk came to a halt.

Excerpt 1 is taken from a lesson in which the class talked about prejudice against vegetarians. Nine students attended the class that day. In Excerpt 1, LT was leading the students through a list of verbal phrases that express the meaning of "stigmatize." Each student had a worksheet containing a list of the target phrases from an article they had just read. Preceding the conversation in Excerpt 1, LT had just finished explaining a phrase from the list. In Excerpt 1, LT asked a question to elicit a response from the students.

*Excerpt 1*.[1] (2017.10.20)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | LT: | What's the second underlined phrase? |
| 2 | | (5.0) |
| 3 | NLT: | Slap labels on someone? |
| 4 | LT: | Uh-huh. Slap on somebody certain labels. |

In turn 1, LT asked a question that required the students to read an underlined phrase. However, none of the nine students responded, leading to a five-second pause. As the bystanding NLT who was observing the class interaction preceding this conversation, I thought that the students did not give an immediate response because they were temporarily socialized into another interactional norm, that is, they expected LT to respond to her own questions and continue talking. Preceding the conversation in Excerpt 1, most of LT's initiating moves were constituted by an elicitation question immediately followed by an *informative* act (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992) that provided the answer to the question. Such initiation moves do not require linguistic responses from the students. An appropriate response to an informative act should be an *acknowledgement* act indicating one is listening, which, in a classroom, can take a nonverbal form, including silence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992). Therefore, when LT initiated the question in turn 1, students might have been waiting her to offer an answer to her own question. Meanwhile, as was indicated by the salient pause in turn 2, LT might have temporarily changed the interactional norm she had previously used. Her expectation of a response from the students can be also seen in turn 4, where she registered my response to her question (turn 3) as legitimate, indicated by her acceptance token "Uh-huh." Thus, when LT and the students did not detect a mismatch between their expected interactional norms, neither of the two parties made adaptations to their interactional pattern, causing a pause in the flow of the classroom discourse. Regardless of the reason behind the pause, my practice of filling in the response slot allowed LT to further give her feedback. In this way, LT was able to push the instructional talk forward.

**Function 2: Using Multiple Responses to Elicit Expected Answers From Students**

The second turn position of the IRF sequence can also be utilized by the non-leading teacher as a contingent resource for students to build their own answers on. Ko (2013) proposed that when the teacher initiates a question towards the

[1] For transcription conventions, see Appendix. In all excerpts, LT refers to the leading teacher (my co-teacher) and NLT refers to the non-leading teacher (me).

whole class or towards an individual learner, multiple responses may occur. That is, when the student who first self-selects or is allocated to take the turn produces an insufficient response, other students may take the chance to develop the content of the previous response or give other responses refuting the previous one. In the excerpt below, by taking a role of co-learner with the students, as a non-leading teacher, I utilized multiple responses to push the students towards achieving the immediate instructional goal without diminishing their *space for learning* (Walsh, 2011), defined as "the interactional space which is appropriate for the specific pedagogical goal of the moment" (Walsh, 2012, p. 6).

In Excerpt 2, two students attended the lesson, in which we used a video of a ten-minute speech of the United Nations' gender equality campaign as input material. The learning objective of the lesson was that students should be able to use the structure of a speech to give their own speeches on social equality. Before playing the video clip, LT led the class in a pre-listening activity, to predict the structure of the speech. Students were expected to give a structure that was roughly similar to that of the speech, so that they could see how the structure was fleshed out in the speech while watching the video. In Excerpt 2, when a student gave a response that deviated from the teachers' expectations, I (NLT) occupied the response slot to provide scaffolding intended to point students towards what we were expecting.

*Excerpt 2.*[2] (2017.11.15)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | LT: | Let's predict about- Let's make prediction about what's going to be the structure of her speech↑. Because she's making a formal speech↑ What do you think she's going to structure her speech? Do you think she's going to jump into a bunch of arguments or (0.5) What would she say first? |
| 2 | | (6.0) |
| 3 | LT: | What would you say if you're going to make a speech? |
| 4 | | (1.0) |
| 5 | S1: | Argument- main argument= |
| 6 | LT: | =main argument uh-huh= |
| 7 | S1: | =Sub- sub-argument one, two, three, maybe↑. The reasons for supporting that argument. Use some examples to support that argument? [The reason- or statistics to prove [tha::t |
| 8 | NLT: | [Oh so it's similar to:: [Uh-huh |
| 9 | | (1.0) |
| 10 | LT: | So evidence, data, quotes? |
| 11 | S1: | Yes. |
| 12 | LT: | Uh-huh. |
| 13 | NLT: | So similar to expository essays? Like what we have talked about. |

[2] Student references are maintained across excerpts (i.e., S1 in Excerpt 2 is the same as S1 in Excerpt 3).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 14 | LT: | Uh-huh. |
| 15 | S1: | Yeah maybe. |
| 16 | NLT: | Or it could be like- Cause the speech is given to the public, so it could be- Um, she may use some simple words or structure, or structure that is more attractive? I don't know. |
| 17 | | ((LT and S1 nod)) |
| 18 | LT: | Yeah we'll find out about it later. ((Turning to S1)) So for you, you would say bring up the argument first, and then you would dive into little, sub-argument? |
| 19 | | ((S1 nods)) |
| 20 | NLT: | ((Turning to S2)) What about you, S2? |
| 21 | S2: | Actually I don't know the character of that speech. But- I can imagine that- maybe she first used the hook to inspire other people, to make people more focusing on her story. So::= |
| 22 | LT: | =So she could start with a personal story? And use it as a kind of hook to= |
| 23 | S2: | =Yeah maybe. If I'm in her shoes, maybe I'll tell my own story about movie industry or something like that. And then, I will tell my arguments. |
| 24 | LT: | Yeah that could be the way she structured her speech. |

In turns 1–7, LT and S1 completed the first round of eliciting and responding, in which S1 gave an insufficient response that deviated from the instructional goal. In turn 1, LT initiated a question to ask the students to predict the structure of the speech. Based on our lesson plan, the response LT and I expected to elicit from the students was the opposite of "jump[ing] into a bunch of arguments," that is, the speaker would first use narratives as a hook to attract the audience's attention, and then introduce her arguments. LT's question was followed by a silence lasting six seconds, during which no students answered the question. Then in turn 3, LT reformulated her original question into a shorter form "What would you say if you're going to make a speech." However, she did so without the same scaffolding included in the original question (turn 1), such as "jumping into a bunch of arguments or-" and "What would she say *first*?" (emphasis added). After a short pause in turn 4, S1 self-selected to answer that the speaker would include main arguments. LT accepted his answer in turn 5 with the token "Uh-huh" and by repeating his response. In turn 7, S1 continued to add that he would further include the "sub-arguments," "reasons," "examples," and "statistics" to support the "main arguments." This answer deviated from the response we were expecting based on our lesson plan.

In turns 8–16 and 20–24, I (NLT) intervened in the conversation and built on S1's response, which I had considered insufficient. From turn 8 to 15, there were a few exchanges between LT, me, and S1, during which we paraphrased S1's response by either restating it (turn 10) or relating this response to the structure of expository essays (turn 13) that we "[had] talked about" in a previous lesson.

Considering both LT and I were aware that S1's response deviated from the expected answer, our paraphrasing of S1's response serves a function that is more than simply confirming what S1 said; as seen in Excerpt 3, I later compared the differences between the audience of an argumentative essay and those of a speech to draw students' attention to how such differences could lead to the differences between the structure of an argumentative essay and that of a speech. In turn 16, I offered another possibility in the response based on our discussion—indicated by the conjunction "or"—to potentially draw students' attention to a feature of the genre, that is, the speech needed to be appealing and easy to understand for the public. Several uncertainty markers were used in giving the response, as if I were not sure about my answer. However, considering my role as a teacher and the fact that both LT and I knew the expected answer of the question, my response was directed at the students and meant to elicit from the students that the speech needs a hook at the beginning, instead of being directed at LT for her further feedback. Following my response, at the start of turn 18, LT hurriedly addressed my response by saying "Yeah we'll find out about it later." Or, using Fagan's (2012) term, LT *glossed over* my contribution which she may have not expected and thus closed the current sequence of talk. LT did not explicitly ask the students to build on my answer and elicit from the answer expected. Instead, LT turned to S1 and initiated a new question based on S1's response in turn 7. She restated S1's response from turn 7, and S1 confirmed her restatement by nodding in turn 19.

From turns 20–24, I (NLT) nominated the other student, S2, to speak, and S2 integrated the previous responses given by S1 and me and gave a response compatible with the teaching objectives. In turn 20, I decided to take on the role of a teacher explicitly by occupying the initiation turn of IRF and nominating the other student S2 to talk about his opinion. In turn 21, S2 proposed that the speech should have used a hook "to make people more focusing on her story." It is possible that S2's answer was built on my answer, as his idea resonated with my idea that the speech should be "attractive" to the audience (turn 16). In turn 23, S2 further developed his idea by saying "If I'm in her shoes, maybe I'll tell my own story... And then, I will tell my arguments." As S2's response was consistent with the expected goal of the pre-listening activity, this response was confirmed by LT in turn 24.

It can be seen from Excerpt 2, as NLT, I utilized multiple responses to elicit the expected answer from the students. By challenging S1's response, I offered another possibility for the students to consider, that is, an answer that the students could challenge or build on in their following responses. Although I shifted my footing into a role of co-learner by occupying the response slot of IRF sequence and by sitting among students, considering my role as a teacher, my response might be directed more to the students for them to build their own answers on than directed to LT for her to evaluate. Thus, my occupation of the second turn of the IRF sequence provided scaffolding to the students to elicit the answer. Meanwhile, by taking the role of a co-learner and by using uncertainty markers such as "it could be like-" and "I don't know" (turn 16), I provided a response that seemed less face-threatening for the students to respond to, which might make it easier for the students if they wanted to reject my opinion. Direct negative feedback from the teacher may pressure the students into giving an answer which meets the teacher's expectation before they are ready, while having a different

opinion with a co-learner seems to be less face-threatening. In turn 13, after I gave a response that might have the potential to promote students' noticing of the genre difference, S1 did not provide any supplement to his answer. Thus, in turn 16, I gave another response about audience awareness, after which S1 confirmed by nodding. Though it cannot be seen explicitly from S1's responses how classroom talk was advancing towards the teaching objective, the non-imposing interaction generated more turns on the current topic, and thus enabled more interactional space (Walsh, 2012) for the students. Finally, S2 integrated the content of the multiple responses generated in the interactional space. Thus, the interactional space created by my occupation of the response slot also helped to eventually elicit the expected response from the students, which further helped to achieve the learning objectives.

Meanwhile, my occupation of the response slot in turn 16 seemed to be glossed over (Fagan, 2012) by LT. In this way, my contribution as a co-learner was not immediately utilized by LT as a springboard to achieve the immediate instructional goal. Tsui (2003) proposes that novice teachers tend not to use unexpected learners' contribution as a springboard for further discussion in order to reduce the complexity of classroom interaction. It was possible that LT did not expect my occupation of the response slot and thus chose to hastily address my response. When LT went back to a previous point in the conversation (turn 18), I entered the initiation slot usually occupied by LT, self-selecting to nominate another student, S2 (turn 20). However, by doing so, it seemed that I glossed over LT and S1's conversation in turns 18 and 19, resulting in an interruption in the previous conversation flow. If LT and I had both been aware that my occupation of the response slot in turn 16 could be utilized to facilitate the achievement of the immediate instructional goal, then the miscommunication from turns 16 to 19 might have been avoided. This points to the importance of collaboration between co-teachers in considering the sequence and form of classroom talk to achieve the immediate instructional objectives as planned by both teachers.

In Excert 2, I utilized the second turn position of the IRF sequence to guide students towards the immediate instructional goal step by step. In Excerpt 3, my occupation of the response slot serves a similar function of triggering multiple responses and facilitating the achievement of the instructional goal but was applied in another situation, when no students volunteered a response after LT initiated the question. Excerpt 3 is from later in the same lesson as Excerpt 2. The conversation happened after the whole class had listened to the speech. LT was leading the students to recall the information covered in the listening text to check their comprehension.

*Excerpt 3.* (2017.11.15)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | LT: | Can you still recall any information from her speech? What did she say about feminism or anything? |
| 2 | | (10.0) |
| 3 | NLT: | I think she talked about the stigmatization of feminism. Like this word is equal with "man-hating." |
| 4 | LT: | Uh-huh. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | NLT: | Um:: |
| 6 | S1: | Yes it has become a popular word. |
| 7 | NLT: | Uh-huh. |
| 8 | | (3.0) |
| 9 | LT: | So can you recall any of other= |
| 10 | S1: | =And she said man is also victim of the:: (1.0) inequality. Because they are assumed to be stronger. |

After LT initiated the question in turn 1, there was a long pause of ten seconds. The two students did not respond to the question, though they should have remembered some content from the ten-minute video, as is suggested in turns 6 and 10. Therefore, following the silence, I (NLT) responded in turn 3, offering the keywords "stigmatization of feminism" and "man-hating" that had been mentioned in the speech. After LT accepted my response with the acknowledgement token "Uh-huh" (turn 4), S1 built on my response and showed his agreement in turn 6, further commenting that man-hating is "a popular word." LT encouraged S1 to speak on. S1 recalled more information from the speech in turn 10, adding that men are also victims of gender discrimination.

It can be seen from the excerpt that S1's response in turn 6 was directly built on my contribution (turn 3). S1's response in turn 6 functions as what Ko (2013) terms an "elaborating multiple response," that is, a response that "jointly develop[s] the meaning of the previous response with additional items" (p. 6). Though it is hard to find out the reason why the students remained silent for such a long time without volunteering to answer the question, my response, which was recognized by LT as legitimate, offered the students a starting point to join the conversation. In this sense, my occupation of the response slot moved the conversation forward and helped students meet the instructional goal. However, as the analysis of Excerpt 2 suggests, the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot will not serve its function without both teachers recognizing it as an interactional resource. In the next section, I will show how NLT's response worked differently with and without LT's awareness that it can be used as an interactional resource.

**Developing Co-Teaching Expertise Through Miscommunication**

It can be seen from the analysis above that NLT occupied the second turn position of the IRF sequence to push the instructional talk forward and help to achieve the instructional goals. Meanwhile, the co-learner role enabled me, NLT, to achieve these functions without "disrupting the ongoing instructional talk" (Park, 2014, p. 36). However, sometimes LT and I diverged on our understanding of the purpose of my response, causing miscommunication between us. The following event is an example.

The following activity is from a lesson in which the class talked about the causal relationship between human trafficking and prostitution.[3] LT asked the students to identify phrases used to express cause and effect in the text provided.

[3] Due to the dysfunction of my camera, this event was retrieved and the dialogue reconstructed from my field notes (Fieldnotes 2017.10.25).

One section of the text was as follows:

> The effect of legal prostitution on human trafficking inflows is stronger in high-income countries than middle-income countries. There are two main causes: trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation requires that clients in a potential destination country have sufficient purchasing power, *as a result of which* higher-income countries are more likely to foot the bill. (adapted from Tan, 2014,[4] emphasis added)

The target phrase was "as a result of which." The text surrounding the phrase is somewhat complicated, with the cause preceding the effect. After the students identified the phrase, LT proceeded to the next phrase without further explaining the meaning of "as a result of which." I intervened and asked LT, "What does 'which' mean?" LT, possibly confused by my immediate role at that moment, instead of directing the question to the students, directed the question back at me and asked which part I was confused by. LT and I spent some time to figure out each other's intention. Finally, it turned out that the students did feel confused about which part of the sentence was cause and which part was effect (Fieldnotes 2017.10.25). This kind of miscommunication also happened in other classes, in which my paraphrase of a student's response for the purpose of clarification was taken by LT as an agreement with the student's idea. As LT disagreed with the idea offered by the student, she directed questions at me to challenge the idea. Thus, a short period of the teaching time was spent on me instead of the students. In these examples, while I regarded my occupation of the response slot as an interactional resource in teaching, LT did not; thus, miscommunication happened. My analysis of such miscommunication shows that the pedagogical value of such departures from conventional discursive patterns will not be realized unless both teachers consider it as an interactional resource.

When the same lesson as just described was offered the second time, I asked the same question, and LT showed awareness of my intention, as is shown in Excerpt 4.

*Excerpt 4.* (2017.10.27)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | LT: | So can you find other expressions in this article (0.5) that can be used to express the effect? |
| 2 | S3: | "As a result of which" |
| 3 | LT: | Okay "as a result of which." Anything else? |
| 4 | NLT: | What does "which" refer to? |
| 5 | LT: | Yeah, what does "which" refer to? That's a really good question. Yeah, what does "which" refer to? |
| 6 | S3: | The cause. |
| 7 | LT: | Um:: The cause. What is the cause (0.5) from this article? |
| 8 | | (12.0) |

[4] Tan, C. (2014, January 2). Does legalized prostitution increase human trafficking? *Journalist's Resource: Research on Today's News Topic*. Retrieved from https://journalistsresource.org/studies/international/human-rights/legalized-prostitution-human-trafficking-inflows#sthash.CYqsvtMK.dpuf

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | LT: | Probably the preceding sentence? |
| 10 | S4: | Yeah. |
| 11 | LT: | Uh-huh. A really long sentence. "Trafficking for the purpose" blablabla. Yeah. |
| 12 | | (2.0) |
| 13 | LT: | So what is the effect in this sentence? |
| 14 | S4: | "Higher-income countries are more likely to foot the bill." |
| 15 | LT: | Right. |
| 16 | S4: | But I have a question. Why can we consider "as a result of which" as a cause? |
| 17 | LT: | Hmm. That's not a cause. That's an expression for the effect. So the sentence that precedes this expression is the cause. |
| 18 | NLT: | So the "which" is the cause? |
| 19 | LT: | Yeah. |

After the IRF sequence in turns 1–3, I directed a question at LT in turn 4 to direct the class's attention to the use of the expression. Building on S3's response in turn 2, this question can be considered as part of multiple responses. This time, LT, unlike what she had done in the previous lesson, seemed to understand my intention of occupying the response slot. In turn 5, she accepted my contribution to the discussion by calling it a "good question", and then echoed it to the students ("Yeah, what does 'which' refer to?"). Following her echo of my question, S3 immediately answered that "which" refers to the cause in turn 6. However, when LT further brought this phrase back in the context and asked what the specific cause in the article is (turn 7), her question was followed by a period of silence lasting twelve seconds, during which nobody volunteered to answer the question. Thus in turn 9, LT proposed the answer ("Probably the preceding sentence?") to her previous question, but in an interrogative form, possibly to check students' understanding. S4 agreed with the answer she proposed (turn 10). LT further asked the whole class what the specific effect refers to in the text (turn 13), and S4 responded with the correct answer (turn 14). After his answer got confirmed by LT, in turn 16, S4 further asked why the phrase "as a result of which" should be considered as the cause, which seemed to suggest his misunderstanding of the structure of the phrase. LT clarified in turn 17 that the phrase is an expression for the effect, and the sentence preceding this phrase is the cause. I followed to ask in turn 18 if the word "which" in "as a result of which" refers to the cause, and this interpretation was confirmed by LT (turn 19).

The discussion from turn 4 to turn 19 revolves around the target phrase "as a result of which," and the teachers and students tried to make the meaning and structure of the phrase more explicit. This extended discussion was initially triggered by my question "What does 'which' refer to?" in turn 4, before which LT had been ready to move on to another target phrase in turn 3, as suggested by her calling for another phrase from the students ("Anything else?"). My occupation of the response slot in turn 4 though, seemed to give her a chance to decide whether

it was necessary to initiate an extended discussion on this target phrase. Different from directing my question back at me as she had done in the previous lesson, this time, she seemed to see what learning outcomes can be potentially achieved by the question, utilizing it as a chance of checking students' understanding. Starting with echoing my question, she initiated a series of extended questions to examine students' understanding of the meaning and structure of the phrase. During the extended discussion, it can be seen that the students did have some problem understanding the meaning and structure of this phrase, as is suggested by the long pause in turn 8 and S4's misinterpretation in turn 16. Thus, it can be seen that the extended discussion triggered by my occupation of the response slot in turn 4 provided interactional space and learning opportunities for the students. However, as LT was the teacher who directed the flow of classroom discourse, my occupation of the response slot as NLT would not have been turned into an opportunity for learning without being accepted by her, or without her engaging the students in the extended conversation step by step. Therefore, it can be seen from Excerpt 4 that the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot is better utilized when both teachers are aware that it can be utilized as an interactional resource of coordinating classroom talk, facilitating the achievement of the instructional objectives, and providing interactional space for learning.

## Discussion and Implications

In this study, the non-leading teacher's occupation of the second turn position with a response or with a question served two functions: mediating conversation between the leading teacher and the students to keep the conversation flowing, and eliciting expected answers from the students through multiple responses. Both functions served to promote instructional talk and facilitate the achievement of the immediate learning objectives. Thus, the non-leading teacher's occupation of the second turn position should be regarded by teachers as an interactional resource in co-teaching contexts. Though certain interactions can be structured before class, as Hall and Smotrova (2013) point out, "instruction rarely unfolds as a sequence of pre-planned steps" (p. 75). In classroom teaching, there will always exist some "interactionally complex" moments in which the discourse "depart[s] from classroom normativity" (Hellermann & Pekarek Doehler, 2010, p. 42), and yet these moments are "consequential to the advancement of the instructional agenda" (Hall & Smotrova, 2013, p. 75). The demanding task of managing unpredictable classroom interaction makes it important for researchers to examine the collaboration between teachers—especially pre-service teachers—in co-teaching contexts. According to Tsui (2003), as novice teachers may be less proficient in making sense of and recognizing the patterns in multiple classroom events that happen simultaneously, they tend to simplify the complexity of classroom interaction, which allows them to focus on delivering the pre-planned content. Thus, when one teacher is preoccupied with implementing the pre-planned agenda and not aware of miscommunication or students' learning needs in the moment, the co-teacher(s) could intervene by inhabiting the response slot, thus mediating the miscommunication or providing interactional space for students.

The current study also suggests that classroom discourse can be better coordinated to serve the learning needs if co-teachers could increase their awareness

of the affordances provided by a non-leading teacher's response as an interactional resource. As Fagan (2012) suggests, novice teachers tend to curtail unexpected learner contributions. The current study also shows that the non-leading teacher's response would sometimes be glossed over by the leading teacher, possibly out of the leading teacher's different understanding of the intention of this practice. When the leading teacher is not aware of the pedagogical value of this practice, it is possible that he/she will curtail the unexpected non-leading teacher's response to reduce the complexity of interaction or treat the non-leading teacher's response as a regular learner contribution instead of one with pedagogical purposes. Such miscommunication led the teachers in this study to spend more time figuring out each other's intention and coordinating their classroom talk. Thus, it can be seen from such crosstalk situations that the pedagogical value of the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot will not be fully realized without both teachers' collaboration.

Meanwhile, the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot of IRF sequence can be considered part of a teacher's communicative repertoire in the classroom, which further constitutes a teacher's teaching expertise. Rymes (2010) proposes that a communicative repertoire includes various means of communication different from a linguistic repertoire, such as posture, dress, and knowledge of communicative routines, which individuals use to "function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate" (p. 528). According to this perspective, the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot can be seen as a part of a teacher's repertoire that teachers can draw on in co-teaching contexts to mediate classroom talk and the achievement of learning objectives. Expanding one's repertoire would further develop a teacher's expertise in a co-teaching context. Tsui (2009) proposes that second language teachers' teaching expertise in classroom interaction was shown in their way of coping with the complexities of classroom teaching, and that expert teachers usually "have established a repertoire of routines that they can draw on in response to unpredicted events" (p. 193). Such practices would help novice teachers to better handle the unpredictable communicative breakdowns and miscommunications in classroom interaction, adding to their teaching strategies. Meanwhile, Tsui (2009) also proposes that expert teachers can recognize patterns in classroom interaction and "interpret these patterns in meaningful ways" because of their rich practical experience in the classroom (p. 192). The current study also showed that interactional patterns associated with the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot were finally recognized and utilized by the leading teacher as her experience with this practice accumulated. Rymes (2014) proposes that "as one moves through life, one accumulates an abundance of experiences and images, and one also selects from those experiences, choosing elements from a repertoire that seem to communicate in the moment" (p. 4). Though miscommunications may occur between novice teachers in co-teaching contexts, with both teachers increasing their awareness of the repertoires that each may bring into the co-taught classrooms and with their exposure to the actual use of these repertoires, the non-leading teacher's occupation of the response slot will be put into effective use to mediate the classroom talk and provide interactional space to students in the process of achieving instructional goals.

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## Appendix

Transcription Conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| (0.0) | lapsed time in pause or silence, in seconds |
| ((word)) | nonverbal action |
| ? | rising intonation |
| , | continuing intonation |
| . | falling intonation |
| ↑ | rising pitch |
| = | latching between two neighboring utterances |
| wo- | cut-off of the preceding sound or word |
| :: | prolongation of the preceding sound |
| [ | overlapping speech |
| “word“ | quoting from class materials |