



# The multimodal organization of speaker selection in classroom interaction



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## ABSTRACT

Drawing on conversation analytic research on classroom interaction, this paper focuses on teachers' selection of a specific student to provide a response (i.e. *speaker nomination*) in French-as-a-second-language classrooms. The analysis first describes the interactional accomplishment of turn-allocation as resulting from both the student's embodied displays of availability to respond and the teacher's recognition of that availability. Second, the analysis shows that availability for speaker selection is consequential for subsequent talk. Indeed, the way turn transition and sequence organization are accomplished after speaker nomination sharply contrasts depending on whether the selected student has previously displayed availability or not. The findings show that turn-allocation in the classroom is more relevantly broached as the result of the participants' collaborative adjustments, rather than as reflecting the teacher's control over the organization of turn-allocation.

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## Introduction

Other-selection of the next speaker is a key feature of multi-party institutional interactions (see e.g. [Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991](#); [McHoul, 1978](#)). "Turn-taking traffic" is often managed in such interactions by means of "mediated turn-allocation procedures" ([Heritage & Clayman, 2010](#): 37 sq.): at the end of each speaker's contribution, a chairperson or a mediator allocates the next turn. This role is devoted to the teacher in classroom interactions, to a mediator in contentious meetings, to a journalist in televised debates, etc. The other participants display their willingness to speak by raising hands or producing vocal tokens (such as audible in-breaths) that allow them to be noticed by the chairperson. However, in the absence of a visible or audible "willing next speaker" ([Mortensen, 2008](#)), the chairperson may have to allocate a turn to a participant that is potentially unavailable or unwilling to speak. This situation may have interactional consequences: the participant to whom a turn was allocated may for example display an inability or an unwillingness to take a turn, thereby slowing down the progression of the on-going social activity.

In the classroom, the mediated turn-allocation system and the systematic other-selection of students by the teacher are often viewed as enacting the teacher's control over the students' contributions and thereby as allowing little room for the

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students to take part in the organization of classroom activities. A closer look at the micro details (linguistic, prosodic and non-verbal) of the unfolding talk however reveals a much more nuanced picture of turn-taking organization in the classroom. This paper aims at providing new insights into how other-selection in multi-party classroom interaction is organized, by documenting the participants' interactional adjustments *before* and *after* other-selection is accomplished. Using conversation analysis, it describes embodied conducts that play a central role in turn-allocation and conceives other-selection as resulting from the participants' collaborative adjustments rather than from a procedure controlled by the teacher only. The paper is aimed at feeding current research on the role of non-verbal means such as gaze and gesture in turn-taking organization as well as research on student participation and involvement in classroom interaction. It shows that the process of selection in the classroom is achieved actively and collaboratively by the co-participants' joint adjustments and therefore challenges descriptions of teacher-fronted classroom activities based on initiation–reaction–evaluation sequences (IRE, [Mehan, 1979](#)) as allowing little room for the students to take part in the organization of talk.

### Turn-taking in the classroom

The “machinery” of turn-taking in ordinary conversation has been described in [Sacks et al.'s \(1974\)](#) seminal study as a finely coordinated endeavor based on two components: a *turn-constructural component* by which participants project the appropriate moment to take a turn (i.e. after the turn has reached possible completion) and a *turn-allocation component* related to the participants' rights and obligations at turn transition. [Sacks et al. \(1974\)](#) identify a set of procedures that participants in ordinary conversations orient to at *transition-relevance places* (TRP) and show that the ‘current speaker selects next’ procedure predominates over self-selection.

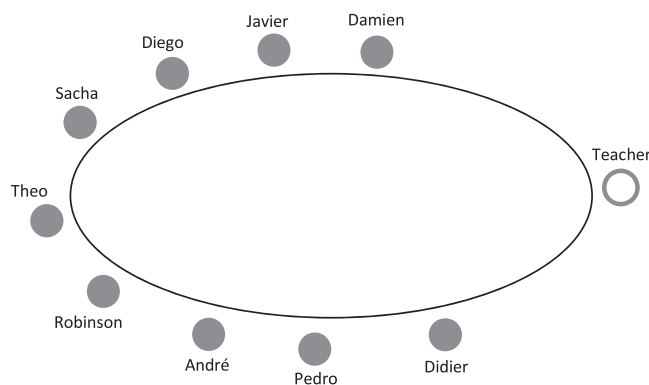
In institutional contexts, turn-transition may operate in a manner that differs from ordinary conversation and that is shaped by the *goal-oriented* nature of the interaction. A central goal in the second/foreign language classroom is to learn a target foreign language, and classroom interaction is organized in order to reach this goal (see e.g. [Seedhouse, 2004](#)). Moreover, classroom interaction involves multiple co-participants and relies on ‘traffic-management’ techniques to avoid collisions of turns-at-talk or schisming. These techniques involve asymmetries in the participants' responsibilities in conversational management, the teacher supposedly ‘controlling’ speakership, contents and activities (see e.g. [Markee, 2000](#); [McHoul, 1978](#); [Mehan, 1979](#); [Seedhouse, 2004](#); [van Lier, 1988](#); [Walsh, 2006](#)). The organization of turn-taking in teacher-fronted classroom activities is usually accomplished as a two-party speech exchange system, with the teacher as one of the party and the cohort of students as the other party ([Schegloff, 1987](#), p. 222; see also [Sahlström, 1999](#)). A range of other parallel conversational activities and participation frameworks (e.g. peer-to-peer side talk) may however emerge during teacher-fronted whole-classroom activities, oriented to by co-participants with various degrees of legitimacy.

Non-verbal turn-allocation procedures have been mentioned in classic studies on classroom interaction (see e.g. [van Lier's \(1988\)](#) distinction between verbally nominating, non-verbally signaling, and using eye gaze for allocating a turn to a student, p. 109). However, it is only recently that studies have provided detailed descriptions of the non-verbal conducts – gaze, head nods, pointing gestures and hand raising – involved in the accomplishment of speaker change in the classroom. For example, [Kääntä \(2012\)](#) shows that teachers use gaze, head nods and pointing gestures to allocate turns to students raising hands (see also [Mondada, 2009](#); [Sahlström, 2002](#)). These embodied turn-allocation procedures are found in pauses dedicated to finding a willing next speaker, or simultaneously to talk oriented to another task (e.g. evaluating a previous answer). The procedures for selecting students who *do not* bid for a turn verbally or by raising hands, however, have not been investigated much. Noteworthy in this respect is the study of [Koole and Berenst \(2008\)](#), who argue that other-selection of students by teachers is not done randomly, but is sensitive to the historicity of classroom interaction: students who frequently bid for a turn by raising hand are also frequently other-selected by the teacher in the absence of a volunteer. Using conversation analysis to investigate the participants' non-verbal conducts prior to other-selection, a study from [Mortensen \(2008\)](#) shows that gazing at the teacher at specific sequential places also plays a role in other-selection: such gazes are regularly oriented to by teachers as displaying *willingness* to take a turn and are followed by the teacher's selection of the ‘gazing student’ as the next speaker.

Following that line of research, the present study focuses on teachers' *verbal nomination* of students, i.e. on episodes where the teacher calls out a student's name, thereby requesting that student to take the next turn. The analysis is twofold: first, it describes the interactional accomplishment of turn-allocation as resulting from the students' embodied displays of availability to speak, and from the teacher's recognition of that availability; second, it shows that selecting a student who has displayed availability to speak has interactional consequences that sharply contrast with those found when the selected student has *not* displayed availability to speak. The findings show that speaker change in the classroom is more relevantly explained as the result of the participants' collaborative adjustments than as reflecting the teachers' control over the organization of turn-allocation. They suggest a revision of the very fundamental notions of *self-* and *other-*selection, insofar as selection is jointly accomplished.

### The present study

The present study uses *conversation analysis* to provide a qualitative investigation of how classroom interaction is organized by its co-participants (for recent introductions to CA, see e.g. [Sidnell, 2010](#); [Sidnell and Stivers, 2012](#)). Central to this approach is the description of participants' real time adjustments to co-participants conducts, thereby revealing their highly



**Fig. 1.** Arrangement of students and teacher in the classroom (group 1, similar arrangements in the other groups).

coordinated practices and situated interpretation of the context at hand. The analysis focuses on the temporal unfolding of the talk, i.e. not only *what* is said, but also *when* and *how* it is said or done, whether verbally or non-verbally, through gestures, gazes, in- and out-breaths, etc.

Conversation analysis is focused on how identities, roles, social categories, norms and so on are *talked into being* in and through participants' particular practices, rather than considering that these exist as a priori categories that can be applied by the analyst to the setting under scrutiny. For the classroom setting, this means that the roles of teacher and student are considered in the analysis insofar as they are treated as relevant for the participants themselves; so are all other social categories, such as those related to gender or social-linguistic background.

The study is based on a corpus of ten 45-min-long video-recorded small-group lessons in French-as-a-foreign-language classrooms. The recordings were made in a high school situated in German-speaking-Switzerland. They involve a teacher and four different groups of about 10 students each, all in their last year of high school (17–18 y.o.). The students are seated around an oval table and the teacher stands up at one extremity (see Fig. 1). The recordings were fully transcribed using the conventions of conversation analysis (see Appendix).

In some classroom activities that take place in the recordings, the teacher addresses questions to the whole group of students, without selecting one of them in particular (*general solicit*, van Lier, 1988, p. 110). Students may then volunteer to answer by raising hands and waiting for the teacher's 'go-ahead', or simply by starting to talk (*bid vs self-selection*, *ibid.*). In other activities, the teacher systematically selects specific students to answer his questions (*specific solicit* through *nomination*, *ibid.*). Finally, some activities involve mixed turn-taking procedures (*general* and *specific solicits*). For the present study, we analyzed all the instances of *specific solicits*, where the teacher selects students to answer his questions by calling their name. The verbal nomination may be accompanied by a pointing gesture or a head nod, but non-verbal nominations accomplished only with gestures, nods or gazes were not found in the data (unlike in Kääntä's (2012) study).

The study addresses two issues related to turn-allocation and sequence organization:

- 1) How do the participants jointly deal with turn-allocation *prior* to speaker nomination? In other words, when speaker nomination is recognizable as imminent, how does the teacher choose which student to nominate? How do students display that they are available or unavailable to answer the teacher's question? How do the participants mutually adjust to each other?
- 2) How do the participants jointly deal with turn-allocation *after* speaker nomination has taken place? What are the interactional consequences of nominating a student who has displayed availability or, on the contrary, who has not displayed availability, on the accomplishment of the relevant next action (i.e. an answer to the teacher's question)? Can a student resist his/her nomination and how?

### **Joint adjustments prior to speaker nomination I: displaying availability to respond**

Hand raising is the most conventionalized way to bid for a turn in multi-party institutional interaction. In the classroom, hand raising is without doubt the most efficient way to display willingness to speak, and it is used by students to attract the teacher's attention and get nominated. Several recent studies (see Fasel Lauzon & Pochon-Berger, 2010; Kääntä, 2012; Mondada, 2009; Mortensen, 2008; Sahlström, 1999, 2002) have shown that the practice of hand raising is finely tuned to the ongoing interaction and closely monitored by the participants in order to coordinate for the turn transfer. Sahlström's (2002) study shows that students regularly raise hands just *before* turn-transition relevant places (TRP), thereby precisely timing their bids for a turn to the sequential opportunities for turn transition. In a prior study on classrooms where students

are seated in rows (Fasel Lauzon & Pochon-Berger, 2010), we also showed that the movement of hand raising is finely coordinated with the teacher's gaze trajectory 'scanning' the cohort of students in the search for a willing next speaker (see also Kääntä, 2012). These findings show that the practice of hand raising is an interactional achievement.

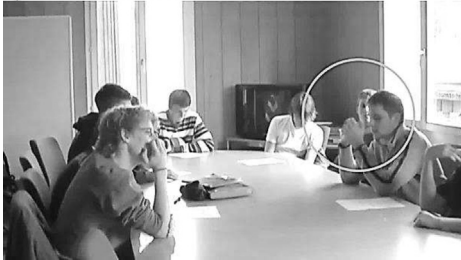
While hand raising is regularly used in classes where students are seated in rows, it is not a frequent practice in the small-group classes that constitute the data for the present study. The spatial disposition of the participants (see Fig. 1 above) not only enables them to easily gaze at each other, but to easily notice when they are being gazed at by a co-participant. Ambiguous situations, in which who gazes at whom is unclear for the participants, do not occur (unlike in Kääntä, 2012, p. 175). As a consequence, the participants rely on mutual gaze rather than hand raising to deal with turn-allocation prior to speaker nomination.

Excerpts 1 to 3 show that when turn-allocation is recognizable as imminent, that is, during or right after the teacher's uttering of a question, students display their availability for speakership by gazing in the teacher's direction, enabling the possibility of mutual gaze with the teacher.

### Ex.1 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 07m28s

- 01 T:   alors le: le troisième ①euh:: (0.8)  
           so    the the third one  uh
- 02       on va demander à diego,  
           we will ask       PREP Diego

#### ① Diego gazes at the teacher



### Ex.2 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 19m28s

- 01 T:   alors  
           so
- 02       ②(1.6)
- 03 T:   alors euh qui pourrait expliquer en français?  
           so    uh who could    explain   in French
- 04       (0.4)
- 05 T:   sacha?  
           Sacha

#### ② Sacha gazes at the teacher



### Ex.3 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-4 / 10m19s

- 01 T: est-ce que vous êtes plutôt euh: d'accord ou pas,  
do you-PL AUX rather uh agree or not
- 02 avec euh cette action anti-o-g-m,  
with uh this anti-GMO action
- 03 ou est-ce que vous êtes contre,  
or INTERR you-PL are against ((it))
- 04 ③ (3.0)
- 05 T: euh matthias,  
uh Matthias

③ Matthias gazes at the teacher



Excerpt 1 is taken from an activity constructed using a series of initiation–reaction–evaluation sequences (IRE, see e.g. [Mehan, 1979](#)): the teacher nominates students to read aloud a proverb on a list and provide its meaning. Throughout the activity, students' nomination occurs right after the reference to the next proverb on the list: 'the second we will ask André', 'the following we will ask Javier', etc. At the beginning of excerpt 1, the teacher initiates the opening of an IRE sequence (*alors le troisième*, 'so the third one', l.1) before producing a gap-filler (*euh*:, 'uh', l.1) and pausing where the nomination of a student to read and give the meaning of the third proverb is expected. When the teacher produces the gap-filler, one of the students, Diego, turns his face and gaze toward the teacher, while all the other students gaze away from him (see picture ①). The teacher then nominates Diego to take a turn ('we will ask Diego', l.2).

The same series of actions is visible in excerpts 2 and 3. In excerpt 2, Sacha turns toward the teacher and gazes at him during an intra-turn pause preceding a general solicitation from the teacher (l.2, see picture ②). He is the one selected by the teacher to answer his question (l.5). In excerpt 3, Matthias raises his gaze toward the teacher during a pause dedicated to finding a next speaker after a question (l.4, see picture ③). He is the one selected by the teacher (l.5). By changing the direction of their gaze when next-speaker nomination to respond to a question is recognizably imminent, these students display attention and interest (in contrast to both absent-mindedness and indifference) to the on-going classroom activity. Simultaneously, they enable visual contact with the teacher, a behavior that is interpreted as a display of availability to produce a response to the question. In the data, the teacher regularly selects students who have displayed their availability by enabling mutual gaze.

#### Joint adjustments prior to speaker nomination II: displaying unavailability to respond

If availability for speaker selection is displayed in and through embodied behaviors, so is unavailability. For example, by engaging in parallel activities – such as reading and writing, looking out the window, talking with classmates ([Bezemer, 2008](#); [Koole, 2007](#)) or scrutinizing their nails ([Pochon-Berger, 2011](#)) students enact being 'busy' at doing something else and thereby display their unavailability to participate to the on-going classroom activity. Moreover, since hand raising and enabling the possibility for mutual gaze are treated by participants as indicating availability for speakership, avoiding body movements ('freezing', see [Fasel Lauzon & Pochon-Berger, 2010](#); see also [Mortensen, 2008](#)) and withdrawing gaze when speaker nomination is recognizably imminent are conversely treated as indicating unwillingness or unavailability to be selected as the next speaker, as can be seen in excerpt 4.

**Ex.4 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 23m02s**

01 T: à votre avis qu'est-ce que ça peut vouloir dire,  
*in your opinion what can it mean*

02 ④ (1.6)

03 T: avec des si on mettrait paris en bouteille,  
*with DET if we would put Paris in a bottle*

→ 04 ⑤ (7.1)

④ Five students gaze at the teacher



⑤ No one gazes at the teacher



In excerpt 4, the teacher asks what a proverb means (1.1) before quoting it (1.3). During the pause between the teacher's question and the quoting of the proverb (1.2), five students gaze in the teacher's direction (see picture ④). However, after the teacher has quoted the proverb and therefore when student nomination to respond appears imminent, all five students withdraw their gaze and no student enables the possibility to establish a mutual gaze with the teacher (1.4, see picture ⑤). The students' gaze withdrawal in this sequential position is interpreted by the teacher as a display of unavailability to answer, as shown in the 7.1 second pause (1.4): By delaying the process of selection, the teacher orients to the lack of availability displayed by the students and to the pursuit of his search for a *willing* next speaker.

In this section and the preceding one, we have shown that student nomination is the result of the participants' mutual adjustments rather than of the teacher's control over turn-allocation. Students display their availability or unavailability to take a turn at specific sequential places, i.e. when student nomination is the relevant next action. They gaze in the teacher's direction, thereby enabling mutual gaze, to display their availability to answer the teacher's question; conversely, they withdraw their gaze, thereby preventing mutual gaze, to display their unavailability to answer. The teacher orients to the students' embodied displays when it comes to nominate a next speaker by selecting, when possible, a student who has displayed availability to take a turn.

### Joint adjustments after speaker nomination I: allocating a turn to an available participant

When the teacher asks a question and nominates a student, it is expected not only that the student takes a turn, but that the student performs a specific action, namely the production of a candidate answer to the question. In this section and the following, we focus on the action accomplished by the nominated student after nomination has taken place.

When the teacher nominates a student who has displayed availability to answer his question, transition into speakership and the production of the relevant next action are most of the time accomplished without major problem: Even when the nominated students produce somewhat "broken starts" (Gardner, 2007) they visibly display that they are in the process of producing the expected second pair part, namely an answer, thereby confirming their availability.

**Ex.5 – following Ex.1 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 07m34s**

02 T: on va demander à diego,  
we will ask PREP Diego

→ 03 ⑥(0.8)

→ 04 Die: +il ne faut pas vendre le peau: (0.3) euh de l'ours,  
one NEG must not sell the skin uh of the bear

05 avant de l'avoir tué. ((reading))+  
before having killed it

① Diego gazes at the teacher (see ex.1)



⑥ Diego gazes at his worksheet

**Ex.6 – following Ex.2 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 19m32s**

05 T: sacha?  
Sacha

→ 06 Sac: ⑦oui euhm (0.2) ça veut dire que (0.2)  
yes uh it means that

07 c'est égal d'où (0.1) le- l'argent vient.  
it does not matter where the money comes from

② Sacha gazes at the teacher (see ex.2)



⑦ Sacha gazes at his worksheet

**Ex.7 – following Ex.3 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-4 / 10m27s**

05 T: euh matthias,  
uh Matthias

→ 06 Mat: euh ⑧(1.6) oui c'est: (4.7)  
uh yes it's

→ 07 je je vois les (0.7) les problèmes avec l'environ- ment.  
I I see the the problems with the environment

③ Matthias gazes at the teacher (see ex.3)



⑧ Matthias gazes at his worksheet



Excerpt 5 provides the continuation of excerpt 1. Right after being nominated, Diego, who had displayed availability by gazing in the teacher's direction (see picture ①), shifts his gaze from the teacher to his worksheet (see picture ⑥). The rapid change of gaze and the adoption of an “open textual posture” (Bezemer, 2008) with a hand on the worksheet displays the student's compliance with his nomination and his engagement in the accomplishment of the expected next action. The student then starts producing the projected second pair part by reading the proverb aloud (1.4–5).

Like in excerpt 5, in excerpts 6 (continuation of excerpt 2) and 7 (continuation of excerpt 3) the nominated students shift their gaze from the teacher to their worksheet right after hearing their name called, thereby confirming their availability to undertake the expected second pair part and displaying their engagement in the task (“doing thinking”, Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986; see pictures ⑦ and ⑧). The production of the second pair part in excerpt 6 is slightly delayed by Sacha's turn-initial acknowledgment of his nomination, but is then delivered rather unproblematically (1.6–7). The nominated student's turn start in excerpt 7 is somewhat ‘broken’ (Gardner, 2007), but despite long pauses (1.7), the co-participants keep on displaying their understanding that the production of the second pair part is under way by maintaining listeners' positions (see picture ⑧). In other words, despite possible difficulties in delivering the second pair part, students who are nominated after having displayed availability to be selected exhibit that they comply with their nomination by directly and unambiguously engaging in the task of producing the projected second pair part.

### Joint adjustments after speaker nomination II: allocating a turn to an unavailable participant

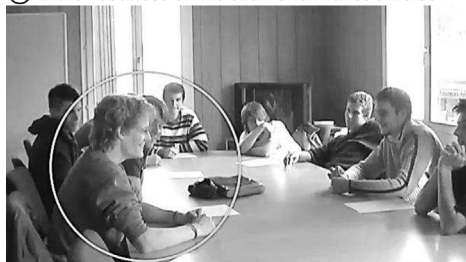
#### *Finding a next speaker relying on ‘noticeable’ behaviors*

The teacher generally nominates students who have displayed availability to be selected: selecting an available student (rather than an unavailable one) seems to be a ‘preferred’ action. However, in the absence of displays of availability on the part of the students, the teacher must find another criterion to rely on when nomination is due. A solution for the teacher is to extend his turn and thereby reset a TRP, offering another opportunity for students to display their availability to answer. Another practical solution that the teacher recurrently uses in the data is to nominate the student whose behavior is the most ‘noticeable’ at the moment where nomination is due.

### Ex.8 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 16m36s

- 01 T: [on va demander à]  
we will ask PREP
- 02 Did: ⑨[+hiha ] hiha hiha ((squeaking noise))+
- 03 ((laughters from peers: 1.1))
- 04 T: euh à didier euh: le premier?  
uh PREP Didier uh the first one

#### ⑨ Didier bounces on his chair and makes a noise



**Ex.9 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 36m09s**

→ 01 T: .hhh ⑩alors la deuxième euh: charade euh::: diego?  
           so the second uh riddle uh Diego

⑩ Diego stretches away from the table

**Ex.10 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-B-1 / 04m30s**

01 T: comment ce génocide euh ⑪a eu lieu?  
       how did this genocide uh happen

02 (1.6)

→ 03 T: euh: (0.4) cora?  
       uh Cora

⑪ Cora looks for something in her purse



Excerpts 8, 9 and 10 show examples of situations where no student displays availability when student nomination is recognizably imminent: as pictures ⑨, ⑩ and ⑪ show, the students gaze at each other, at the table or elsewhere, but not in the teacher's direction. However, in each excerpt, one of the students' behavior is 'noticeable': in excerpt 8, Didier bounces on his chair while making a squeaking noise, gathering his classmates' attention; in excerpt 9, Diego stretches away from the table; in excerpt 10, Cora searches for something in her purse. In each case, the 'noticeable' student is the one nominated by the teacher (ex.8, 1.4; ex.9, 1.1; ex.10, 1.3). It is worth stressing that the students' behaviors in these examples share a common feature beyond their 'noticeability': they all index a potential lack of attention or interest for the ongoing activity. Nominating these students may then be a way to disrupt their engagement in a 'parallel activity' (Koolle, 2007) and to draw their attention back to the classroom activity, while simultaneously minimizing a potential source of disruption for the rest of the group.

*Compliance with nomination*

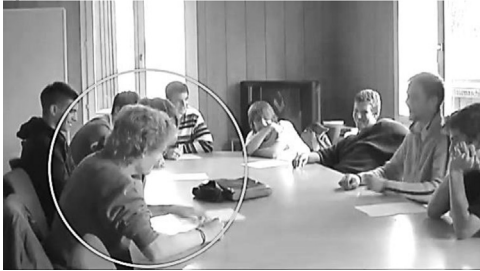
Nominating an unavailable student, despite drawing the student's attention back to the on-going activity, has interactional consequences that are potentially problematic. While students who have displayed availability simply confirm that availability when they are nominated by engaging in the task of producing the projected second pair part (see Section "Joint adjustments after speaker nomination I: Allocating a turn to an available participant"), students who have displayed unavailability either (a) comply with their nomination, despite their prior unavailability, and engage in the production of the expected second pair part, or (b) attempt to 'resist' their nomination.

Even when students display compliance with their nomination, minor disruptions in the progressivity of actions are generally observed, which are symptomatic of the students' unavailability prior to their nomination.

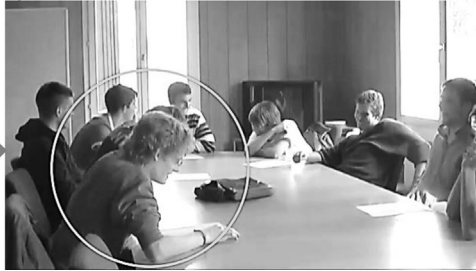
### Ex.11 – following Ex.8 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 16m40s

- 04 T: euh à didier ⑫euh: le premier?  
uh PREP Didier uh the first one
- 05 Did: ⑬euh oui (0.6) c'est pas bien [de faire]  
uh yes it's not good to do
- 06 T: [alors tu] peux le lire?  
so can you read it
- 07 Did: oui +un tiens vaut mieux que (0.4)  
yes one 'take it' is better than
- 08 tu- deux tu l'auras. ((reading))+  
'you' two 'you'll have it'

⑫ Didier brings his worksheet closer to him



⑬ Didier moves into 'work' position



Excerpt 11 (continuation of excerpt 8) shows a student complying with his nomination to produce the expected second pair part, despite a display of unavailability prior to nomination. At the moment when Didier is nominated by the teacher (1.4), he is engaged in a parallel activity, a telling to some of his classmates, bouncing on his chair and making a squeaking noise. However, as soon as he hears his name, Didier stops his movement and noise, brings his worksheet closer to him (line 4, picture ⑫), verbally acknowledges his nomination (1.5) and moves into a 'work' position (picture ⑬). The student thereby enacts that he complies with his nomination to answer the teacher's question by non-verbally showing his engagement into the task of producing the expected action.

Once in a 'work' position, Didier initiates an explanation of the proverb (1.5). By starting with an explanation without reading the proverb aloud first, Didier deviates from the course of action that has been used up to that point in the activity (see ex.5<sup>1</sup>). The deviation is immediately sanctioned by the teacher, who interrupts Didier and requests him to read the proverb aloud (1.6). Didier complies with the request (1.7-8).

In sum, the nomination of a student who has displayed unavailability at the moment when selection is due does not necessarily lead to a major hold in progressivity: the nominated student may display compliance with his/her nomination and engage in the production of the projected second pair part without encountering major problems. However, even when the nominated student displays compliance, minor holds in progressivity occur regularly, like remnants of the student's momentary unavailability: the student slightly deviates from the expected course of action (as in ex.11), reads the wrong sentence in a list, or simply takes longer in delivering the expected action.

#### *Resistance to nomination*

While students who have displayed unavailability may comply with their nomination and engage in the production of the second pair part, they regularly *resist* it. Participants' *resistance* in institutional interactions has been documented in a variety of settings, such as medical interactions (e.g. patients' resistance to a diagnosis or treatment recommendations), trials (e.g. witnesses' resistance to questions in cross-examination) or news interviews (see [Heritage & Clayman, 2010](#), for an extended description of resistance in multiple institutional settings). Resistance can be active or passive, explicit or implicit, overt or

<sup>1</sup> Didier has to explain the *first* proverb of the *second* list that has been given to the students. He is then not the first student to participate to the activity. He is, however, the first student not to read the proverb aloud before explaining it.

cover: for example, a patient may resist a treatment recommendation by remaining silent, a witness may resist a series of yes/no interrogatives by producing non-conforming responses such as “I don’t remember” or alternative descriptions, an interviewee may resist a question by refusing to answer it or by “furnishing the ‘veneer’ of an answer” (Heritage & Clayman, 2010, p. 254). In our data, students who have displayed unavailability prior to their nomination recurrently resist their nomination as the ‘answerer’ to the teacher’s question by producing a claim of insufficient knowledge (“I don’t know”, Beach & Metzger, 1997; see also Sert & Walsh, 2013 on classroom data). By claiming insufficient knowledge to provide the expected second pair part, the students resist their nomination in a socially acceptable way, accounting for not providing the second pair part by evoking an inability rather than a reluctance to do so.

Claims of insufficient knowledge delay the pursuit of the classroom activity and require extensive adjustments on the part of the participants to find a solution, as shown in excerpts 12, 13 and 14.

### Ex.12 – following Ex.4 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 23m15s

- 05 T:    alors euh diego,  
          so    uh Diego
- 06       (1.8)
- 07 Die: °je ne sais pas.°  
          I    don’t know
- 08       Ⓣ(1.3)
- 09 And: °c’est:°  
          it’s
- 10       Ⓟ(0.7)
- 11 T:    ouais [andré?]  
          yeah   andré
- 12 And:       [c’est ] quand on parle (1.0) euh (0.8)  
              it’s    when one talks       uh

Ⓣ André gazes at the teacher



Ⓟ André raises his hand



In excerpt 12, the teacher is confronted with the task of nominating a student while none of them displays availability or behaves ‘noticeably’. After waiting for a willing next speaker for several seconds (see ex.4), the teacher nominates a student who resists his nomination by claiming insufficient knowledge to provide the expected second pair part (*je ne sais pas*, ‘I don’t know’, 1.7). The claim interrupts the progressivity of actions: a solution must be found by the participants in order to resume the activity and have the pending second pair part produced. During the pause that follows the claim of insufficient knowledge, three students raise their gaze toward the teacher, enabling mutual gaze and thereby displaying availability to take a turn (1.8, see picture Ⓣ). One of them, André, produces three subsequent actions: he gazes at the teacher (1.8), minimally starts a turn (1.9) and raises his hand (1.10, see picture Ⓟ), thereby showing not only availability but willingness to ‘replace’ his classmate as the nominated speaker. The teacher welcomes André’s initiative by nominating him (1.11), and thereby ratifies the ‘replacement’ of Diego by André. André immediately resumes the classroom activity by providing a second pair part to the teacher’s question (1.12).

A second example of student’s resistance to nomination by using a claim of insufficient knowledge is found in excerpt 13. This time, the teacher insists on keeping the nominated student involved in the activity.

## Ex.13 – following ex.9 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-A-2 / 36m14s

- 01 T: .hhh alors la deuxième euh: charade euh::: diego?  
so the second uh riddle uh Diego
- 02 Die: ⑩+hun ((yawning noise))+
- 03 (0.6)
- 04 Die: ⑪je ne sais rien.  
I don't know anything
- 05 (0.7)
- 06 Die: uhuhuhu .h .h
- 07 T: alors tu [peux essay-]  
so you can try-
- 08 Die: [le numéro ] trois pas deux.  
DET number three not two
- 09 T: tu peux essayer peut-être le premier?  
you can try perhaps the first ((= 1st word of second riddle))
- 10 Die: euh (0.1) +[mon ] première soutient la tête, ((reading))+  
uh my first ((word)) supports the head

⑩ Diego moves back towards the table



⑪ Diego is in 'work' position



At the beginning of excerpt 13, in the absence of displays of availability on the part of the students, the teacher nominates the most 'noticeable' student, Diego, who is stretching away from the table (l.1; see ex.9). When hearing his name, the student moves back in a position that will allow him to read the worksheet (l.2–4, see pictures 16 and 17), thereby enacting his reengagement into the activity. However, he simultaneously resists his nomination by producing a claim of insufficient knowledge that puts on hold the activity (*je ne sais rien*, 'I don't know anything', l.4). Unlike in excerpt 12, here the co-participants do not visibly consider the possibility of a change of speaker to resume the activity: the other students do not display availability to 'replace' their classmate by raising their gaze, and the teacher does not orient to a resetting of the nomination process either. On the contrary, he insists on keeping Diego involved in the production of a candidate second pair part by requesting that he tries doing it (*tu peux essay-*, 'you can try', l.7). Diego also displays a concern for finding a way to pursue the activity, by proposing to solve the third rather than the second riddle, thereby attempting to 'bargain' his momentary withdrawal from the activity (*le numéro trois pas deux*, 'number three not two', l.8). The teacher however passes over the student's attempt to bargain his participation and renews his request that Diego tries solving the first part of the riddle (l.9). Diego finally complies and starts producing the action for which he was nominated by reading the riddle aloud (l.10).

Excerpts 12 and 13 show students actively participating in order to overcome the hold in progressivity created by a claim of insufficient knowledge on the part of an 'unavailable' student. In excerpt 12, a student comes to the rescue by showing willingness to replace his classmate as the nominated student, while in excerpt 13, the nominated student attempts to bargain his participation to the activity, before complying with his nomination at the teacher's insistence. Both examples evidence how the students are regularly actively involved in the nomination process not only *before* nomination takes place, but also *after* nomination has taken place, by collaborating with each other and with the teacher to deal with interruptions in progressivity. However, in some cases, students may display less collaborative behaviors and resist their nomination not only by displaying their inability to produce a second pair part, but also by indexing their reluctance to participate to the on-going activity, as can be seen in excerpt 14.

## Ex.14 – following ex.10 – CODI-L2-secII-DK-B-1 / 04m34s

- 03 T: euh: (0.4) cora?  
uh Cora
- 04 (0.7)
- 05 Cor: ⑱ QUOI?  
what
- 06 ((students' laughter: 1.9))
- 07 T: ⑲ alors comment euh:: (0.9)  
so how
- 08 comment s'est passé ce génocide, euh (0.5)  
how did happen this genocide
- 09 \*comment ça s'est passé, euh  
how did that happen  
**\*Cora takes a handkerchief out of her purse and blows her nose**
- 10 Cor: \*°°was?°°  
what ((in German))  
**\*Cora gazes at Thomas**
- 11 T: qu'est-ce qui s'est passé [en fait? ]  
what happened actually
- 12 Cor: [°°wenn?°° ]  
when ((in German))
- 13 Tho: in- in- im zweite weltkrieg.  
in in in the second world war ((in German))
- 14 Cor: euh pff  
uh pff
- 15 \*(6.8)  
**\*Cora gazes at the table, shrugs, gazes at the teacher, shrugs again, blows her nose and starts looking for something in her purse again**
- 16 Cor: je ne sais pas.  
I don't know
- 17 (1.4)
- 18 [((students' laughters: 2.6))]
- 19 T: [alors euh::: maurice? ]  
so uh Maurice

⑱ Cora turns her head towards the teacher




⑲ Cora searches for something in her purse again



At the beginning of excerpt 14, in the absence of a display of availability on the part of at least one student, the teacher nominates the most noticeable student, Cora (1.3), who is looking for something in her purse (see ex.10). Contrary to what has been observed in the previous excerpts, Cora does not move back into a 'work' position when she hears her name. Instead, she abruptly turns toward the teacher and produces an open-class repair initiator in a loud volume (*QUOI?*, 'WHAT?', 1.5, see picture ⑱). Cora's reaction to her nomination is similar to that of someone who is annoyingly interrupted in the middle of doing something important. It is oriented to as inappropriate by her classmates, as indicated by the ensuing laughter

(1.6), but the teacher does not take offense at Cora's behavior and provides the requested repair, reformulating his question (1.7–11).

As soon as the teacher starts providing the repair, Cora resumes what she was doing before her nomination, searching for something in her purse (1.7, see picture ) . She thereby displays her lack of interest in the on-going sequence the teacher tries to involve her in and thereby resists her nomination to answer the teacher's question. Cora then opens a clarification sequence in Swiss-German, addressed to a classmate (1.10–13), before providing multiple displays of reluctance to be the nominated next speaker (sigh, 1.14; silence, shrugs, gaze avoidance and shift back to position displaying unavailability, 1.15). Finally, she produces a claim of insufficient knowledge (*je ne sais pas*, 'I don't know', 1.16). Although the claim is not received as a very credible one by her classmates, as their subsequent laughter shows (1.18: it is unlikely that a student in her last year of high school ignores all about the Holocaust), it is oriented to by the teacher as a socially acceptable means for Cora to resist her nomination and to show willingness to withdraw from the floor: being unavailable because engaged in a parallel activity is not an acceptable behavior in the classroom, being reluctant to speak because uninterested in the on-going activity neither, but not answering because one does not know the answer is an acceptable account in that context. The teacher displays acceptance of Cora's withdrawing from the floor by resetting the nomination process, initiating a new search for a next speaker and nominating another student (1.19).

This section has shown that participants who have displayed unavailability to produce the projected second pair part regularly resist their nomination by claiming insufficient knowledge to answer the teacher's question. These claims put on hold the progressivity of the activity and are oriented to as an obstacle to overcome both by the teacher and by the nominated student's classmates, who regularly work together in order to find a solution and resume the activity.

## Summary and conclusion

Although other-selection of students in the classroom may at first sight appear to result from the teacher's personal choice, and for this reason to reflect the teacher's control over turn-taking in the classroom, this paper has shown that the nomination of students is the result of a collaborative process involving all the participants. When nomination is foreseen as imminent, the students display their availability or their unavailability to take a turn and produce the projected action. In classrooms involving a small group of students who can coordinate their actions by gazing at each other, availability is displayed by gazing in the teacher's direction when nomination is due, enabling mutual gaze with the teacher. While gaze plays a central role in displaying availability, its role is also central to display unavailability, which is done by withdrawing gaze so that eye contact cannot be established.

The teacher orients to these displays when asking a question, by nominating students that display availability when it is possible. In the absence of displays of availability on the part of the students, the teacher usually nominates the most 'noticeable' student at the time where nomination is due. The most noticeable student is often one whose verbal or non-verbal behavior is treated as indexing a lack of attention or interest in the on-going activity. Therefore selecting the most noticeable student may be a way for the teacher to reengage a possibly inattentive student in the classroom activity.

While mutual adjustments take place *before* student nomination, they are also observed *after*. The students' embodied displays of availability or unavailability are consequential for subsequent talk: While the selection of a student who has displayed availability is regularly followed by a smooth speaker transition, with the nominated student unproblematically engaging into the production of the projected second pair part, the selection of a student who has displayed unavailability often results in interactional disruptions. When the nominated student complies with his/her nomination, the interactional disruptions are minor (e.g. short repair insertion sequences). However, students who have displayed unavailability often resist their nomination by claiming insufficient knowledge to provide the expected second pair part. Such claims create interruptions in the progressivity of actions that require extra collaborative 'work' from the participants. Other students may actively seek to resume the progressivity of actions by volunteering to 'replace' the nominated student as the designated next speaker. The nominated student may also offer to collaborate by 'bargaining' his/her participation to the activity with the teacher, who may accept or refuse the bargain. However, when the nominated student does not cooperate with the teacher and when no other student volunteers to replace their classmate, the search for a next speaker may have to be restarted.

With this paper we hope to feed research on the role of gaze and gesture in turn-taking and turn-transition, in particular by showing how student nomination in the classroom results from the carefully synchronized multimodal displays of the students and the teacher's orientation to them. The participants' adjustments therefore not only unfold sequentially (e.g. the students adopting a 'work' position *after* they have been nominated) but simultaneously (e.g. displaying one's availability *while* the teacher is looking for a next speaker). These findings advocate for a conception of speaker selection in multi-party institutional interaction as a collaborative process, achieved by means of participants' coordinated embodied conducts, rather than resulting from one of the participants' (i.e. the teacher's) control over the others. They suggest a revision of the very fundamental notions of *self-* and *other-selection*: Instead of clear-cut categories, these procedures are tied to each other within a dynamic process of mutual adjustments.

We also aim to enrich research on student participation in the classroom, by showing that the students actively contribute to the organization of classroom interaction. They do this not only by displaying their availability or unavailability to be selected as next speaker before nomination occurs; they also actively engage in the management of progressivity. This may occur when a claim of insufficient knowledge of a nominated 'unavailable' student momentarily puts on hold the on-going classroom activity. These findings challenge a view of classroom interaction as being 'controlled' by the teacher, and suggest

that the students' role in the local management of activities is much more active than their position as mere 'respondents' to the teacher's questions seems to indicate.

The particular context under scrutiny in the present study, both in terms of participation format ('teacher-selects-next') and in terms of the participants' spatial arrangement (around a table), plays a role in the type of resources that participants rely on to deal with speaker transition: It is likely that classroom participants rely on different resources when they cannot enter into eye contact with each other, for example in classrooms where students are seated in rows. However, even in such a setting, students rely on the teacher's changes in gaze direction to time and organize their bids for the next turn (see e.g. Fasel Lauzon & Pochon-Berger, 2010). Hence, although the present study focuses on a well-defined classroom context, the findings may apply to other educational settings as well.

Our study highlights the subtly embodied displays which are often 'seen but unnoticed' (to use Garfinkel's 1967 terms) and which classroom participants routinely orient to in order to organize their conducts. It is not so much the embodied behavior as such (e.g. gazing at the teacher, stretching one's arms, yawning) that the participants rely on to organize their own participation, but the exact timing when they are produced (i.e. their synchronization with the projected nomination of a next speaker). In that regard, the epistemological apparatus of conversation analysis is a powerful tool for revealing the synchronicity and collaborative character of the co-participants mutual adjustments when it comes to organize speaker change in the classroom. The classroom participants' collaborative behavior is understood here in their joint orientation to allocating a turn to a *willing* speaker as a socially shared norm. Conversely, as some of our examples show, overruling that jointly accepted social norm may lead to subsequent interactional work which in turn may interfere with the progressivity of the classroom activity.

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## Appendix. Transcription conventions

T:	speaker: teacher
And:	speaker: student's name
[ ]	overlap
(0.5)	measured pause, in seconds
coul-	cut-off
ce:	lengthening of preceding sound
oui?	rising intonation
oui,	slightly rising intonation
oui.	falling intonation
oui	accentuation
↑oui	high pitch
OUI	louder than surrounding talk
°oui°	softer than surrounding talk
.h	in-breath
huhu	laughter
((reading))	transcriber's comment
+	start of the stretch of talk to which a transcriber's comment refers

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