



**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS STUDY OF INTERRUPTION AS A  
STRATEGY OF TURN-TAKING IN UNIVERSITY  
CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS**

Prof. Muslih Shwaysh Ahmed, Ph.D.

Samar Hamad Suleiman Al Khalifawi,

College of Education for Humanities

College of Education for Humanities

**Abstract**

This qualitative research is concerned with observing and analyzing interruption which is a particular strategy of turn-taking in classroom interactions of fourth-year students of the University of Anbar. The research concerns itself with turn transitions that occur via interruption strategy, which is resulted from violating the rules of turn-taking system proposed by Sacks et al (1974). The aim of this research is to mark interruption types and analyze their functionality in classroom context. It also aims at proving that interruptions are not always aggressive and impolite but sometimes are supportive. The researchers adopted audio recording as a basic instrument for collecting data. The data used in the analysis are selected exchanges from different lectures delivered to fourth year students in the College of Education for Humanities and the College of Arts of the University of Anbar, Departments of English. The researchers adopt an eclectic model to analyze data. Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model is adopted to analyze the structural aspect of classroom interaction whereas Sacks et al's (1974) is adopted to analyze the functional aspect of interruption depending on classifications proposed by Ferguson (1977). It is found that interruption is not always aggressive and impolite but sometimes supportive. The interruptions made by teachers are all supportive and cooperative, whereas the students' tend to be competitive affecting the flow of speech in some cases.



## المستخلص

يهتم هذا البحث النوعي بملاحظة وتحليل استراتيجيات معينة لتبادل الحوار وهي التقاطع، في جانب معين من التفاعل الاجتماعي وفي سياق معين وهو تبادل الحوار في التفاعلات الصفية لطلبة السنة الرابعة في جامعة الانبار. يهتم هذا البحث بانتقالات الأدوار التي تحدث بواسطة استخدام استراتيجيات التقاطع الناتجة عن خرق قواعد تبادل الحوار المقترحة من قبل ساكس وآخرون (١٩٧٤). وبالتالي فإن الهدف هو تحديد وتحليل هذه التقاطعات وبيان وظيفتها في سياق معين وهو التفاعل الصفّي. يهدف البحث أيضا إلى إثبات أن التقاطعات ليست عدائية وغير مهذبة دائما وإنما داعمة في بعض الأحيان. تبنى الباحثان التسجيل الصوتي كأداة لجمع البيانات المستخدمة لغرض التحليل والتي هي عبارة عن مقاطع مختارة لتبادل الحوار من محاضرات مختلفة القيت على طلبة السنة الرابعة في كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية وكلية الآداب في جامعة الانبار، أقسام اللغة الانكليزية. اعتمد الباحثان على نموذج انتقائي لتحليل البيانات، الأول هو نموذج سنكلير وكالثر (١٩٧٥) لتحليل الجانب البنوي للتفاعل الصفّي أما الثاني فهو ساكس وآخرون (١٩٧٤) لتحليل الجانب الوظيفي للتقاطع اعتمادا على تصنيفات قدمها فركسن (١٩٧٧). لقد وجد أن التقاطعات ليست عدائية وغير مهذبة دائما ولكن في بعض الأحيان تكون داعمة. لقد وجد أيضا أن تقاطعات المدرسين تتصف بأنها متعاونة وداعمة دائما على العكس من تقاطعات الطلبة التي تميل للتنافس وتؤثر على سير الحوار في بعض الأحيان.

## 1-Introduction

Turn-taking [henceforth TT] is part of the structure and systematic organization of conversation. In students-teacher interaction, turn-taking is highly salient i.e. students overlap and interrupt other colleagues systematically and some teachers do as well.

Transitions from one turn into another occur both in "soft" way through silence and pausing, and "non-soft" way through overlapping and interruptions when the speakers talk simultaneously. When more than one person engage in a conversation, there is a potential for overlapping and interruption while both, or many parties are speaking at the same time. Interruption in turn-taking is problematic for the people involved since the result is a breakdown for turn-taking system.

A state of simultaneous turns can be created according to Duncan (1974: 303) by two ways: (1) in the absence of a turn- yielding signal by the speaker, the auditor may attempt to take the speaking turn, or (2) if the speaker displays a yielding signal and the auditor acts to take the turn, then the original speaker continues to claim his speaking turn. We can add also, simultaneous turns occur when auditors attempt to take the speaking turn while the gesticulation signal is being displayed.

TT has been investigated by many studies concerning interviews and phone conversations, and has been investigated extensively by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson. Sacks et al (1974) have analyzed spontaneous conversations. They talk about the existence of a mechanism which regulates



conversation and assigns turns to the speakers engaged in interaction (turn-taking mechanism). They tackle three important matters, how people take it in turns to converse, how to open a conversation, and how to close a conversation. Before explaining the system of turn-taking, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by a 'turn' in a conversational interaction. A turn for Ochs (1979:63) is "an utterance bounded by significant pause or by utterance of other participant", that is to say, speaker's turn continues until another speaker holds the floor.

Cohen (1979:259) states that a speaking turn has many characteristics. It is a socially cooperative act, it is informationally relevant, and it creates an opportunity for further conversation. It also supports the dialogue with sufficient information to make the other participant be able to continue. Interlocutors must change roles in order to have a continuous conversation. For any conversation to continue speakers must change roles and this is the meaning of turn-taking.

Spolsky (2008:125) defines TT and describes it as "the rules for determining who speaks when in a conversational exchange". These rules regulate the stream of the conversational interaction. They decide who will speak and when. Having two or more speakers talk simultaneously makes it difficult to understand the idea behind the conversational exchange. Violation of TT rules by the participants results in chaos especially when two or more participants try to hold the floor at the same time while overlapping and interrupting each other.

Speakers sometimes try to hold the floor by using some linguistic strategies among them interrupting the current speaker to indicate that they want to continue their turn. Coulthard (1985:59) states that "one of the basic facts of conversation is that the roles of the speaker and listener change, and this occurs with remarkably little overlapping speech and few silences". Once speakers decide to engage in a conversation, there will be pressure against periods of silence. For instance, when one speaker stops talking he is giving the speaking turn to another speaker, the other has to begin talking. Not speaking is interpreted as a selected silence by the addressee, which might be considered as a problem in the conversational event.

## **2. Components of Turn-taking System**

Sacks et al (1974:12) describe TT system in terms of two components and a number of rules which facilitate order conversation between participants and minimize 'gaps' and 'overlaps'.

### **2.1 Turn-Constructional Component**



It is the component that constructs a turn. It is also termed as 'Turn constructional unit' [henceforth TCU]. TCUs are composed of sentences, clauses, phrases, or even single words. These units are syntactic units and can be identified by intonation (Sacks et al, 1974:12). At the end of each TCU we have what is so called *transition- relevance- place* [henceforth TRP]. Meyer (2009:237) defines TRP as "the place in speaker's turn (e.g. a pause, or the end of grammatical unit) where a new speaker could begin speaking".

At the TRP, the listener has a tendency to represent his/her readiness to shift to the speaker state and the previous speaker has now become an auditor. When such kind of exchange occurs within a conversation without overlapping or interruption, a regular and smooth exchange of turns is said to have occurred.

## 2.2 Turn-Allocational Component

Sacks et al (1974) propose two groups of techniques for turn allocation purposes. Group (a) includes techniques by which the current speaker selects the next speaker. Group (b) involves techniques by which turns are self-allocated or self-selected. In addition to these techniques they proposed a set of rules that are used for allocating turns at TRPs. Ferenick (2009:147) describes these rules as follows:

**A-**If the current speaker selects a next speaker then the selected next speaker has the right to start talking.

**B-**If the current speaker does not select a next speaker, then self-selection by any speaker may occur.

**C-**If the next speaker does not self –select, then the current speaker may continue speaking until a next speaker self-selects.

These rules are sequential, that is to say, rule (a) comes before rule (b) and (c), and rule (b) has priority over rule (c) (Clark and Clark, 1977:228). Taylor and Cameron (1987:108) argue that these rules are considered as a reformulation of the norms speakers and hearers 'Orient to' in the management of conversation i.e. holding, securing, and giving up the floor in conversation. They also hypothesize that by speakers' orientation to these norms and by avoiding all the actions that do not conform to these norms, interlocutors are able to produce orderly exchanges of talk that are so characteristic of ordinary conversation (ibid).

## 3. Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is one type of verbal interaction that occurs between teachers and students (Coulthard, 1977:93). Classroom interaction requires



face to face interaction. It is a kind of institutional interaction with its own fingerprint. Bhatia (1993:13) states that classroom communication is a speech event characterized by a number of communicative purposes and needs governing language use. All kinds of genre including interviews, debates, meetings, and cross examinations are speech events which involve turn-taking. (Widdowson, 2007:38)

The most distinguishing feature of classroom interaction is Initiation-response-Feedback [henceforth IRF] sequence that is mostly observed in traditional teacher-fronted classrooms. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), as cited in McCarthy (1991:15), state that classroom communication that occurs between teachers and students has an internal structure. They proposed the T-S-T pattern, in which the teacher asks, the student answers, and the teacher then acknowledges the answer and comments on it. Sinclair and Coulthard call this unit (T-S-T) an 'exchange'. This exchange includes three parts: question, answer, and feedback, each part is given the name (move).

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:26) call the first move in each exchange in classroom interaction the *opening move*, and the second an *answering move*, as for the third they call it a *follow-up move*. But Sinclair and Brazil (1982:49) recommend saying *initiation-response* and *follow-up* (IRF) (McCarthy, 1991:16). Each move has its own function within the limit of an exchange. Every exchange has to be initiated by an initiation move whether by a statement, question, or command, and naturally, someone has to respond whether in words or action. The status of follow-up is a little bit different. In the context of classroom interaction it fulfills the vital role of acknowledging the students' responses telling them that they have done what the teacher wanted them to do. In some other situations, follow-up moves might be an act of politeness (McCarthy, 1991:16). Coulthard (1992:65) notes that a sequence might consist of three sequential moves (IRF), but not necessarily of three turns. A sequence may expand to include more than three turns.

Johnson (1995:100) postulates that effective classroom interaction must fulfill a number of conditions. First of all, it has to ensure the optimal conditions for target language learning and use, open up a space for both Meaning-focused and Form-focused language practice, and gives students opportunities to use planned and unplanned discourse within authentic contexts. Secondly, it should enable students to create interaction, control the topic, and engage in Meaning-focused discussion. Finally, classroom communication is supposed to challenge students to operate beyond their current level of proficiency by participating in the negotiation of meaning and by performing different language functions.





Classroom communication has numerous universal characteristics that distinguish it from other types of communication. *Contingency* is one of these characteristics that can be found in Learner- fronted classes characterized by symmetrical relationships and broader space for participation. Van Lier (1996:172) claims that classroom communication is a specific kind of discourse constructed collectively by the teacher and the students in which the focus of interaction may shift from pedagogic to the natural mode at any moment. This specific property of classroom interaction is called '*contingency*' which may be interpreted as a kind of departure from the script of the lesson in response to the current circumstances of the communication in the classroom.

*Authenticity* is another characteristic of classroom discourse. It is one of the characteristics that distinguish classroom interaction from naturalistic communication. Rivers (1993) as cited in Aleksandrak, (2013:135-136), defines authentic messages as those containing an amount of information which are of interest for both interlocutors (speaker and listener). Authentic interaction is not restricted to expressing one's own ideas but also includes comprehending the ideas of others.

Widdowson (1998), as cited in Aleksandrak (2013:136), puts a broader interpretation for authenticity and interprets it as a social construct and relates it to the learning activity rather than the material or the language used in classroom interaction. As such, authenticity is the product of the learning process along with the language used in this process, "it is the result of acts of authentication, by students and their teacher, of the learning process and the language used in it" (Van Lier, 1996:128). However, '*contingency*' and '*authenticity*' can be found in Learner-centered classrooms which involve symmetrical relationships between teachers and students, and as a result, there will be balanced talking rights, in contrast with Teacher-fronted classrooms which are characterized by asymmetrical relationships which result in unequal distribution of the talking rights.

Thus, classroom communications, which adopt the communicative approach, are the best environments to activate the universal features of (contingency and authenticity) because they are characterized as being symmetrical and Learner-fronted. More symmetrical relationships should be established by giving the students more talking rights and diminishing the distance between the teachers and the students (Gil, 2002:277).

#### 4. Interruption

Interruption is a kind of simultaneous talk which occurs when the current speaker is being interrupted by the other participants before completing his/her



turn. Cerny (2010:2-3) defines interruption as "an initiation of simultaneous speech intrudes deeply into the internal structure of a current speaker's utterances, with the intent of disrupting the topic", as an attempt to hold the "floor of interaction or manifesting cooperation and support, does not matter if it results in successful interrupting of the speech flow or failure" (ibid).

Interruption is classified as one of the cases of simultaneous speech. It occurs in every day conversation, TV debates, classroom interaction, etc. Apparently, in institutional settings such as classroom interaction, interruption is bounded by politeness rules that participants must abide by. Interruption as a kind of simultaneous speech occurs when the current speaker does not reach a completion point or when he does not show a desire to yield the floor, such kind of people are called 'long winded'. As a result, participants may turn to use interruption as a means to gain the floor. However, participants interrupt for different purposes such as holding the floor, deviate from the current topic being tackled or to discard some conception. Thus, interruption represents a breakdown for the TT system. Smooth flow of interaction and successful exchange of turns are achieved when there is lack of interruption occurrence.

Interruption sometimes represents an act of dominance and control that is described by some linguists as aggressive or impolite since the speaker's turn is stolen by another. However, linguists believe that interruption is common in any kind of interaction and not always disruptive to the discourse. Interruptions come into being when a speaker talks during another speaker's turn and not at the TRP; the point at which speakers exchange speaking turns. So, interruption as a communicative hinder can be obviated if the participants engaged in the conversation pay attention to the TRPs.

According to Coats (2013: 113-114), interruptions are "violations of turn-taking rules of conversation. The next speaker begins to speak while the current speaker is still speaking; at a point in the current speaker's turn which could not be defined as the last word. Interruptions break the symmetry of the conversational model: the interrupter prevents the speaker from finishing his or her turn". When she mentioned "violation of the rules", she refers to Sacks et al (1974) rules for turn allocation, which state that a perfect conversation is ordered so that no disruption occurs. In this research Ferguson's classification will be adopted for the purpose of data analysis, because it is an adequate classification dealing with interruptions and their functionality in the context of speech. Also, Ferguson's classifications include all the possible types of interruption that might occur in any type of discourse including classroom discourse.

## **5. Data Collection and the Models Adopted**



The researchers adopted recording as a basic instrument for collecting data since the aim of the study is to observe and analyze interruptions as strategies of TT inside the classroom. So, recordings are the best tool for doing so. Because this research focuses on spoken discourse in a specific context, that is classroom interaction, the researchers adopted naturally occurring spoken discourse for collecting data. Audio recordings are important part of qualitative approach. The audio records or data are spontaneous and the communicative event has real world consequences. Audio records show natural real interaction inside the classroom between the participants (students & teachers). As for the subjects, they are fourth-year students from both sexes. They study at the University of Anbar, College of Arts and College of Education for Humanities, Departments of English. The choice of the subjects as fourth-year students takes into consideration that they have better knowledge and fluency in English than the other undergraduate students. They also have a type of experience in managing the discussions, using strategies such as interruption to express their own ideas and attitudes, and show their agreement and disagreement with the other participants as well. The researchers transcribe the data to be analyzed following transcription conventions adopted by John's et al (1992). According to their conventions the silent pause is given the following notation (...), while the filled pause is transcribed according to the way in which speakers fill their pausing. Some pauses are filled by phonetic combinations like (ermm) and (mm) whereas some others are lexicalized such as (well) (ok), etc. Interruptions are put between two square brackets [ ] with the sign (≠) before it.

The data used for the purpose of analysis are selected exchanges. These exchanges will be analyzed individually satisfying the structural approach used as a model in this research. An eclectic model is adopted in the analysis of data in order to investigate classroom interaction structurally and functionally. Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) is used to analyze the structure of classroom interaction dividing the lesson into transactions-exchanges-moves then acts. The other model is of Sacks et al (1974) which is adopted to analyze the functional aspect of TT strategy which is interruption in the context of classroom interaction supported by Ferguson's (1977) classifications of interruption.

## **6. Data Analysis and Discussion**

Sacks et al (1974) present a number of rules which facilitate normal flow of speech between the participants and minimize 'gaps and overlaps' in the conversation. Any attempt to hold the floor without abiding by these rules will be considered as a breach or violation of the TT system mechanisms.





So, as a procedure of analysis, exchanges are subdivided into moves. The type of move will be given, in addition to the type of the contravention involved within each exchange satisfying the structural model of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) which deals with the structure of classroom discourse.

Depending on the functional model of Sacks et al (1974) of turn construction and allocation, the breaches of TT system will be observed and traced within each exchange then classified and analyzed discursively showing its purpose and functionality. These steps are included within tables adapted from Sinclair and Coulthard (1975).

## 6.1 Ferguson's Classifications of Interruption

Ferguson (1977) presents classifications of interruption, which are considered to be the most adequate classifications to be used in the analysis of interruption. The following are the main classifications:

### 6.1.1 Classification I

This classification includes seven types of interruption classified according to the interrupter's intention and the interpretation of this interruption by the interruptee. They are interruptive, successful, unsuccessful, single, complex, successive, and compound interruptions. They are as follows:

#### A-Interruptive Interruption

Interruptive interruption is "any verbal or (exceptionally non-verbal) action that obstructs the development of a current speaker's ongoing turn". (Marteniz, 2000:119). The exchange below is an example of this kind of interruption:

Move Type	Exchange	Strategy Exploited
I	T: Now how did you deal with time since the lecture is allocated for only 20 minutes, [≠]	Interruptive interruption
R	S: [≠this was my big problem. Time is too short to deliver a good lecture. In my first lecture I could not finish in time.]	
I	T: so, what did you do?	
R	S: I made a plan and divided the students into groups.	



This exchange of talk is selected from a lecture on the practicum period delivered to the students of the fourth year. The exchange was an eliciting one that started with a question which was interrupted by a student before being finished. This type of violation is called *interruptive interruption* because the student interrupted the teacher causing his turn to be blocked before reaching a finishing point in order to talk about her own experience. Hence, the teacher made another question asking the interrupter [so what did you do?] and the interrupter responded accordingly.

### B-Successful Interruption

According to (Marteniz, 2000:119), successful interruption occurs when the interrupter succeeds in breaking the progress of the current speaker's turn, and is able to finish his turn. Beattie (1952:100) adds that the main factor behind the successful interruption is the "initiator of the attempted speaker-switch gains the floor". This can be shown in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
I	T: Now what does minority mean?	Successful interruption
R	SS: [أقلية]	
F	T: Yeah, sometimes, [≠]	
I	S: [≠so we can say that bilingual person is the one who speaks different languages, right?	
R	T: yes, right when we say that this person is a bilingual person this means that he can speak two different languages, and if we say he is a multilingual this means that he is able to produce more than two languages.	

The exchange is selected from a lecture on linguistics delivered to fourth year students. It was an eliciting exchange started with a question about the meaning of [minority]. The students responded chorally saying [أقلية] as a result of no selection of the next speaker by the current speaker. Hence, choral self-selection occurred. A confirming feedback was given to the students in this exchange and that feedback has been interrupted, before being finished, by a student's *successful interruption* by which he could hold the floor ending his interruption with a question directed to the teacher [right?]. The teacher's



response came as an acknowledging feedback with some additional information about bilingual persons.

### C-Unsuccessful Interruption

This type occurs when the interrupter fails to gain the floor and the current speaker continues his speaking turn. That's to say, the interrupter's turn is unfinished. (Marteniz, 2000:119).

Move Type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
I	T: Now, let us take an example from our country, Kurdish people in the north they use two languages the first is Kurdish and the second is Arabic. So, they are bilingual, children who are born there can speak both Arabic and Kurdish, [≠]	Unsuccessful interruption
R	S:[≠sir there is also what is so called individual bilingualism which is not the result of dominant or, [≠]	
I	T:[≠ majority], [≠] S: (continue...) but the result of having parents speaking two or more languages.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on linguistics delivered to fourth year students. The exchange was an informing one started with an initiation move giving the students an example about bilingualism. One of the students interrupted the teacher because he expected a near TRP where the teacher relinquished his turn giving the student a chance to hold the floor. The teacher then made *unsuccessful interruption* in an attempt to get his turn back, but the student continued speaking.

### D-Single and Complex Interruption



Single interruption indicates that the interrupter made only one attempt to hold the floor, whereas complex interruption refers to the interrupter's numerous attempts to break the current speaker's speech and hold the floor. So, they both refer to the number of attempts done by the same interrupter to break the speaker's turn and take the turn (Marteniz, 2000: 120).

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
I	T: well (ahh...) we studied language variations and we said that we have different terms like accents, dialects,	



R	standard language, etc. today we have what is so called, [≠]	Single interruption
F	S: [≠ bilingualism]	
	T: Bilingualism and diglossia, ok.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on linguistics delivered to the students of the fourth year. The teacher started the exchange by an initiation move beginning with a marker (well), then a filled pause. This pausing is one of the features of natural spontaneous speech, which was filled with a phonetic combination (ahh...) used to hold the floor until producing a review statement of the previous lecture. After that, a *single* and *simple* interruption took place, made by a student interrupting the teacher before reaching a completion point or a TRP [≠bilingualism]. The student made only one single attempt to interrupt the teacher (*single interruption*), simultaneously responding by a suitable term [bilingualism]. The teacher then acknowledged what the student has said in his single and simple interruption made previously [Bilingualism and diglossia, Ok]. As for Complex interruption, it is shown in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
I	T: How did you find your experience in teaching language? Is it good? Is it difficult?	  Complex interruption [The same interrupter interrupts more than once]
R	S: It was really an interesting experience but I noticed that they neglect the environment of the classroom, [≠]	
I	T: [≠How do they neglect?]	
R	S: teaching materials need certain environment to be taught and, [≠]	
F	T: [≠You mean facilities like computers, laps, etc.]	
R	S: Yes sir, they need modern devices to be used in teaching language, [≠]	
F	T: [≠Laboratories and machines to enable the students to listen to conversations and the pronunciation of certain words.]	

### E-Successive Interruption



To deal with this type we have to make distinction between successive and complex types of interruption. The difference between them is that, in the former more than one interrupter try to break the sequence of the current speaker's utterance, and take the turn. Whereas, in the latter type the same interrupter does several attempts to hold the floor by interrupting the current speaker's turn. (Marteniz, 2000: 121). This is shown in the following example:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy Exploited
I R F	T: What is the function of modifiers in general SS: (err...), they modify, limit, and, [≠] SS: [≠ describe]  T: Good	Successive interruption  (Many students interrupt the current speaker)

This exchange is selected from a lecture on grammar delivered to fourth year students. It was started with a question about the functions of modifiers in general. A student responded and started his response with a filled pause [err...] which is phonetic combination filler. Then, he started numerating the functions until interrupted by a group of students before reaching a finishing point or TRP. They completed the answer instead of him, competitively, in a form of *successive interruption* which was ended with the teacher's feedback [good].

### F-Compound Interruption

Compound interruption occurs when two or more interrupters try to interrupt the current turn holder's utterance and do that simultaneously when they talk at the same time (ibid: 123). This can be stated in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
I   R	T: If you faced any problem in the teaching process for example the lack of teaching aids and you know most of the schools in Al Ramadi and the near or far districts lack these aids. What is your task to overcome this difficulty?  S: I bring something helping and, [≠] S1: [≠I bring a loud speaker or pictures.]	Compound interruption





	S2: [≠use laptop or data show]	(Two students interrupt simultaneously)
F	T: good.	

The exchange is selected from a lecture about the practicum period. This exchange was started with a question about the problems facing the teaching process in Ramadi. A student responded and got interrupted by two students, simultaneously, in what is so called **compound interruption** that stopped him before reaching a TRP. Each one supported a different point of view [≠S1: I ring a loud speaker...], [≠S2: use laptop ...] and both, got feedback from the teacher for their answers.

### 6.1.2 Classification II

This classification includes types of interruption that occurs once at a time. These occur within 'single interruption' (Marteniz, 2000:123). They are as follows:

#### A-Simple Interruption

This type occurs when there is simultaneous speech preventing the current speaker from finishing his turn. So, the current speaker's turn is incomplete (Beattie, 1952:101-102). This type is shown in the following exchange:

Move Type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
I	T: Last time we studied modification and sentence modifier, so what is meant by sentence modifier?	Simple interruption
R	S: It is a word or, [≠] T: [≠raise your voice]	
R	S: it is a word or group of words that modify the whole sentence not only the head word.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on grammar delivered to fourth-year students. It is an eliciting one. It was started with a question about the meaning of modifier. A student responded and got interrupted by the teacher before reaching a completion point. The teacher did not expect a possible TRP but he wanted to notify the student to raise his voice, in a **simple interruption** [≠raise your voice please]. The student continued responding with a raised voice.

#### B-Overlap Interruption



Overlap interruption is similar to simple interruption except in that overlap interruption occurs when the current speaker reaches completion in turn. It is stated in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
<b>I</b>	T: now, students, if I ask you to write about spring at this moment how you would write it?	Overlap interruption
<b>R</b>	SS: [different responses were given simultaneously ]	
	T: let me add something please, pessimistic like the poet or optimistic opposite to the poet's attitude, [≠]	
<b>R</b>	S: [≠if I got to write about spring I will write about happiness, stability, the joy of spring and youth and all the beautiful things].	
<b>F</b>	T: ok.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on poetry delivered to fourth year students. This exchange started with a question which was answered chorally by the students as a result of no selection of the next speaker. As a result, the teacher interrupted them finishing their turns before being completed in an attempt to protect his role in controlling the floor inside the classroom. [Let me add something please]. This again, was interrupted by a student with an **overlap interruption** in an attempt to give his own point of view [≠ if I got to write about ...]. The exchange, after that, ended with acknowledgement feedback supported by the teacher for the student's contribution, [Ok.]

### C-Butting-in Interruption

This type, according to Ferenick (2009:157), occurs as a result of failure in gaining the floor, since the interrupter stops before gaining control of the floor as shown in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
<b>I</b>	T: so, what if these pidgins developed and become widely used by people?	
<b>R</b>	S1: they become creoles.	
<b>F</b>	S2: yeah, and the process is called creolization.	



<b>R</b>	T: yes good, so, creole means the developed pidgins into a variety which is used widely in different situations, [≠] S: [≠sir, amm],[≠]	Butting-in interruption
<b>F</b>		
<b>R</b>	T:[≠sorry, (continue..) by speakers speaking different languages] S: A means of communication.	
<b>F</b>	T: yes, it is a means used for communication but when it develops and be used widely, it will be called creole.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on linguistics delivered to fourth year students. The exchange was started with a question directed to the students. Two students, simultaneously, competed to answer the question each provided his own answer. The teacher consequently supported them with a feedback with some additional information until got interrupted by a student who tried to hold the floor with a turn that did not extend beyond a filled pause [≠ amm...]. The reason was the teacher's *interrupted interruption*, [≠sorry, by speakers speaking different...], by which he got back his stolen turn. In this case, the student's failed interruption, which was stopped by the teacher's interruption, is called *Butting-in interruption*.

### D-Silent Interruption

This type of interruption occurs without overlap, that is to say, there is no simultaneous speech. It is characterized as having "no exchange of turns, no simultaneous speech" and "the first speaker's utterance appears incomplete" (Beattie, 1952:103). This type is shown in the following exchange:

Move Type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
<b>I</b>	T: do you mean that the poet was expecting something that brings happiness but was disappointed?	Silent interruption
<b>R</b>	S: (well, am..), he believes that his child's birth caused his wife's death, [≠]	
<b>F</b>	T: [≠and the child is not to be blamed, ok]	



The present exchange is selected from a lecture on poetry delivered to fourth year students. It was started with a question directed to the students [Do you mean that the poet...]. A student self-selected himself and answered, starting his answer with two filled pauses [well, amm...]. These were used as strategies to keep the floor until the student could find appropriate words to say. The teacher interrupted the student exploiting *silent interruption*, as a result of which, the student cast away before finishing his speaking turn or reaching a TRP (the point at which turn shift may occur). The teacher then started a new exchange and the student's utterance left incomplete.

### 6.1.3 Classification III

Ferguson's third categorization of interruption includes the following types: Parallel interruption, interrupted interruption, non-interrupted interruption, and finally, simultaneous interruption.

#### A-Parallel Interruption

This type differs from overlap interruption only in that the current speaker is the one who keeps his turn from being interrupted by the other participants, not the interrupter. (Marteniz, 2000:125). This type is stated in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
<b>I</b>	<b>T:</b> now, students, if I ask you to write about spring at this moment how you would write it?	Parallel interruption
<b>R</b>	<b>SS:</b> [different responses were given simultaneously ], [≠]  <b>T:</b> [≠ let me add something please, pessimistic like the poet or optimistic opposite to the poet's attitude], [≠]	
<b>R</b>	<b>S:</b> [≠if I got to write about spring I will write about happiness, stability, the joy of spring and youth and all the beautiful things].	Overlap interruption
<b>F</b>	<b>T:</b> ok.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on poetry delivered to fourth-year students. The exchange started with a question which was chorally answered



by the students (choral overlap) in different responses as a result of no selection (who is to speak next), made by the current speaker (teacher). As a result, the teacher made a *parallel interruption* stopping them from finishing their turns or reaching a TRP in an attempt to protect his role in controlling the floor inside the classroom [≠let me add something please...]. This, again, was interrupted by a student with an *overlap interruption* in an attempt to give his own point of view [≠if I got to write about spring...]. The exchange, after that, ended with acknowledgement feedback supported by the teacher to the student's contribution [ok].

### B-Interrupted Interruption

This type occurs when "the interrupter prevents the current speaker from finishing his turn but fails to complete his own because the interrupter's interruption is in turn aborted by the interruptee" (Marteniz, 2000:125). This can be shown in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
<b>I</b>	T: now, another question, what makes teaching difficult in your opinion?	
<b>R</b>	S1: when there is no communication between the teacher and the students. For me, it was difficult because at the beginning they did not understand well what I was saying, but by time they got better and started taking notes with me ,(aaa...) any one faced the same problem or just me?	Filled pause
<b>R</b>	S2: I do not think so, not all students do not understand English, and some of them are good enough to communicate. Of course there are individual cases, but we cannot generalize things, [≠] S1: [≠but you taught students who are different...], [≠] S2: [≠ we were trying, we were trying to make them understand and they tried to speak and some of them were good to the extent that we may call them fluent], [≠ S1: [≠but it is not easy to speak English fluently, they are still young]	Butting-in interruption Interrupted interruption Successful interruption





I	T: so, how can you make them speak well?	
R	S1: Make them practice conversation.	
F	T: thank you, excellent.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on poetry delivered to fourth year students. The exchange started with a question by the teacher directed to the students. A student (S1) made self-selection and answered the question ending his answer with a filled pause [aaa...], and a question directed to the other students [any one faced this problem or gust me?]. A student (S2) responded and gave a different point of view, but got interrupted by the previous student (S1) who failed in controlling the floor because (S2) used another kind of interruption which is *interrupted interruption* with repetition to save the turn and stop the interrupter (S1). Moreover, a supportive strategy was used by student (S2) along with an interruption which is (rising intonation) showing unwillingness to relinquish the floor. S1 made another attempt to interrupt S2 and this time he succeeded in gaining the floor [≠but it is not easy to speak....]. This was classified as *successful interruption*. Consequently, the exchange continued in a normal sequence i.e. IRF sequence.

### C-Non-interrupted Interruption

This type occurs when the current speaker fails to get back his/her turn from the interrupter. The interruptee here fails to stop the interrupter (Marteniz, 2000:125). This type is shown in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchanges	Strategy exploited
I	S: The way the old man was sleeping was related to the Christ. Does this mean that the old man will rise again?	
	T: Ahaa!!! I loved this question we come to the religious interpretations of the novel, why was he sleeping like this?	
R	S1: it is that when Jesus the Christ was crucified he started to climb the road to the Calvary the place from which the Christ went to heaven, [≠]	
	S2: [≠ Jesus the Christ was crucified for three days before he went to heaven],≠	
R	S1: [≠ and (am...)], [≠]	Interruptive interruption



F	S2: [ ≠(continue) and the old man was fighting for three days with the fish, he was suffering for three days] T: yeah, good.	Non-interrupted interruption
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This exchange is selected from a lecture on novel. It was started by a student. This is the only exchange initiated by a student not by the teacher, who usually initiates exchanges. The teacher admired this question and repeated it again as a question directed to the students. A student (S1) made self-selection and responded to the question. His response was interrupted by another student (S2) who prevented him from finishing his speaking turn or reaching a TRP and this type is called *interruptive interruption* [≠Jesus the Christ was crucified...]. The first speaker (S1) made an attempt to get his turn back in the middle of the interrupter's turn (before TRP) [≠and amm...], but he failed to get it because (S2) did not give him a chance to do so. After that, (S2) continued his speaking turn. The failed attempt done by (S1) is classified as *non-interrupted interruption*. The students, both, got feedback from the teacher [yeah good].

### D-Simultaneous Interruption

This type occurs at a possible TRP where the current speaker leaves his turn unfinished to give the other participant a chance to hold the floor (ibid: 127). This type is shown in the following exchange:

Move type	Exchange	Strategy exploited
I	T: now what are the positions of premodifiers?	Filled pauses
R	S: (well, amm), determiner, predeterminer, postdeterminer, adjective, noun and noun head.	
I	T: this is concerning premodification what about postmodification, yes (gesture)	Simultaneous interruption
R	S1: It comes after the noun head, [≠] S2: [≠everything before is pre and what is after is a post determiner].	
F	T: ok.	

This exchange is selected from a lecture on grammar. It was initiated with a question about the positions of premodifiers. Then, a student made self-



selection and answered the question which started with two sequential filled pauses. The first was a lexicalized pause type [well], whereas the second was filled with a phonetic combination [amm...]. This strategy was used by the student in order to have enough time to think of precise wording and accurate answer. But, the teacher did not make a feedback; instead, he raised another question about postmodification. The teacher selected a student to answer. After that, the selected student was interrupted by another student simultaneously, as a result of expecting a possible TRP. That type was *simultaneous interruption*, [≠ever thing before is pre and....].

## 7. Conclusions

Depending on the findings of this research, the researchers arrive at the following conclusions:

1. Interruptions occur when there is no transitional point (TRP) at which interlocutors exchange turns as a result of either wrong estimation or deliberate neglect of this point by the incomers in some instances of interruption.
2. Teachers' interruptions are always supportive or non-competitive, while the students' are competitive affecting the flow of speech in some cases.
3. Interruption is not always aggressive or impolite but sometimes, is a strategy used for cooperative purposes. Interruptions are sometimes used by students to support additional information. As for teachers, they use interruptions for different purposes such as controlling the class, showing power over students, correcting mistakes, asking students to raise their voice, providing answers, and raising questions.
4. Interruptive interruption type is mostly used by teachers to show power and authority over students in administrating the discussions.
5. Certain kinds of interruption rarely occur in the context of classroom, as a genre having its own rules and regularities. They are stopped whenever they occur by the teacher, as a person soliciting and guiding the interaction inside the classroom, such as successive interruption, complex interruption and compound interruption as being chaotic affecting the organization of talk.

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