



Challenging and Objecting: Functions of Third Position Turns in Student-Initiated Question Sequences

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ABSTRACT: Research on the classical IRE-sequences in the classroom context has highlighted teachers' use of questions as teaching tools and how questioning processes serve as efficient learning tools. One especially important turn in questioning processes is the third position of the sequence which incorporates the potential to enhance learning and provide resources for students. This article examines sequences similar to the IRE-sequence – student-initiated question sequences – focusing on the third position of these sequences. In the default question sequence, the third position is used to signal an acceptance of the prior response. The analysis examines turns that signal disalignment with the teacher and may therefore communicate a challenge or an objection to the teacher. The aim is to demonstrate how the different formats of third positions are used to express fine-grained challenges concerning the granularity of knowledge and epistemic responsibilities. Thus, non-aligning dialogue particles, follow-up questions or post-expansions in third position can convey a challenging quality. The research method adopted is ethnomethodological conversation analysis. A detailed sequential analysis demonstrates that troubles encountered in mutual understanding may be related to issues of epistemicity and moral order. A central result is that question sequences provide the participants with learning tools that connect to the organisation of emotional and moral issues.

Keywords: classroom interaction, question sequences, third position turns, epistemicity

1. INTRODUCTION

Research in the field of conversation analysis (CA) has revealed the highly organised way that learning interactions are talked into being (Lehtimaja, 2012; Margutti, 2006; Markee and Kasper, 2004; Seedhouse, 2004; Sert, 2015). The classical IRF or IRE sequence (*initiation, response, feedback/evaluation*) that was initially introduced by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and Mehan (1979) has been a topic of numerous conversational analytic studies. Several of these studies focused on detailed sequential analyses and contributed fine-grained insights into the interactional mechanisms of IRE-sequences within classroom interaction (Lee, 2006; Waring, 2008, 2013; Zemel and Koschmann, 2011; inter alia). Some studies have criticised the teacher-fronted nature of the IRE-sequences and argue that this may reduce learner autonomy (Markee, 1995; see Waring, 2012, pp. 453-454, for an overview on teacher questions). Other studies have analysed the pedagogical activities that are embedded and accomplished within the sequence and through it, as for example the teacher's continuous evaluation of their students (Heinonen, 2017) and its potential to assume progressivity in the interactive pedagogical project (Lee, 2008). Regardless of the teacher-frontedness of the IRE-sequence, Lee (2008) states that it generates resources for the students and should therefore be considered a learning tool (ibid.). Lee focused on the teacher's third position turn in the form of yes-no questions and their ability "to call for and point to knowledge required of the student" (ibid., p. 257).

Whereas the above studies were concerned with teacher questions, recent work in CA research has contributed valuable insights into student questions and initiatives, and has led to a discussion on the sequential emergence of learning opportunities related to student-initiated sequences (Jakonen, 2014; Majlesi and Broth, 2012; Merke, 2016a, 2017; Waring, 2011) and

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student noticings (Kääntä, 2014). One main focus of these studies is the issue of whether and how student initiatives enhance participation and promote learning opportunities.

The present study provides an additional example of how students take initiative and become agents of their own learning processes (Jacknick, 2011; Kääntä, 2014; Evnitskaya and Berger, 2017). The present analysis focuses on student-initiated question sequences (SIQS) and more precisely on its third position turns, especially those that challenge the teacher using data from a university context. The students are young French adults studying Finnish-as-a-foreign-language in their first and second year. The primary aim is to identify the interactional functions of the third position that relate to issues of epistemics and morality.

1.1. Background

Questions in the classical IRE-sequence have been described as questions that have known answers (Mehan, 1979). Compared to teacher questions, student questions are genuine questions in the sense that students communicate a gap in their knowledge. To emphasise the dynamic nature of knowledge co-construction processes of SIQSs, I will conceptualise them as epistemic search sequences (Jakonen & Morton, 2015). This term underscores the collaborative nature of the questioning activity that needs both sides, teacher and student, to successfully fill the established knowledge gap. Moreover, the term *search* also emphasises the students' role as active learners.

Koole (2010, p. 207) reports that teachers can address gaps in learner knowledge by using at least two different response types. Teachers may respond with explanations that are organised in a discourse unit or with a dialogue type of interaction that exploits the IRE-sequence. Furthermore, Koole demonstrates that students react to these two types differently. While both types require a claim of knowledge in the third position turn, only explanations in a discourse unit are received with an optional and additional demonstration of understanding. The analysis, thus, allows to precisely determine how the cognitive notions of *doing knowing* and *doing understanding* are realised in interaction (ibid., p. 208).

In addition, concerning the third position turn of any sequence, Schegloff (1992) claims that the turn grants speakers an opportunity to check correct understanding so that it ensures mutual understanding. This suggests that understanding should be conceived of as a mutual achievement and as a process that can fail or succeed (Macbeth, 2011). In the classroom context, student understanding is of interest because it can be related to the instructional outcome (ibid: 441). Nevertheless, Macbeth applies a conversational analytic viewpoint and suggests that the tacit understanding of how learning lessons are interactionally organised is primary. The understanding of instructional content is only the second step because it is embedded in interaction and transported by it. Participants of learning lessons need to understand the type of turn that is adequate at a point of the interaction. For example, students need to know the mechanics of the IRE-sequence in order to capture whether or not a teacher's third position signals acceptance (Macbeth, 2011, p. 443).

If we now return to student-initiated question sequences and examine the third position of SIQSs, which is a student turn, we can then observe that understanding also has the same dimension, here. The third position turn is a sequential environment in which students assess whether or not the prior turn, the teacher's response, was satisfying or understandable.

Participants also possess tacit knowledge concerning the distribution of epistemic rights and responsibilities and how they are interactionally achieved (Heritage, 2012). The distribution

of knowledge territories in the classroom makes the teacher an expert while the student collective represents the lay side. This means that learners have the right to claim gaps in their knowledge and pose questions and they can then expect a sufficient response in the next turn. It is important, however, that the student question needs to occur in a sequential position that allows student participation as well as an interruption in the teacher's agenda (see Kääntä, 2014, p. 97 for the positioning of student initiatives).

Considering epistemic responsibilities, students should not inquire about matters that they already know. They are responsible for knowing information that has been on the agenda and they can be held accountable for being informed. (Merke, 2017.) At the same time, students have the right to assess prevailing linguistic information and thus to claim knowledge. In this respect, they may be as competent as the teacher is and respond to peer student questions (Merke, 2016b).

An additional dimension concerns the participants' tacit understanding of moral matters that arise in epistemic search sequences (Mondada, 2011; Stivers, Mondada & Steensig, 2011). It is important to note that the distribution of epistemic rights and responsibilities is negotiated turn-by-turn in ongoing interaction (Heritage and Raymond, 2012). Mondada (2011) offers an example from a car rental service where one party, the mechanic, is considered as a participant who *should* know and to whom other participants attribute knowledge. This is displayed by the participants' way of claiming or disclaiming knowledge in a precise sequential environment. Turns can therefore acquire a challenging quality when a participant questions the precision of information (ibid.) or the distribution of knowledge and epistemic primacy normally ascribed to participants in an institutional context (Merke, 2017, pp. 124-125).

1.2. The current study

This study analyses SIQs, and particularly the third position of SIQs from the perspective of *epistemicity* and *moral order* (Bergmann & Luckmann, 1999; Heritage, 2012; Stivers et al., 2011). In relation to the distribution of knowledge in an educational setting, sequential alignment obtains further layers that are related to epistemic primacy and issues of right and wrong, in the sense that students want to be "good" students. A good student is conceptualised as a thorough and conscientious learner. As will be demonstrated, the third position turn is an environment where epistemic and moral issues surface.

The actions that occur in the third turn can be described as agreement and disagreement. I will refer to these as a *(dis-)alignment*. Alignment is defined as a turn that adheres to the structural and action form of the prior turn and that advances the ongoing activity (Stivers et al., 2011) as will be demonstrated in section 3.1.

In the present data, negotiations and divergent viewpoints related to epistemic rights and responsibilities can occur at the teacher-student level as well as at the student-student level. The phenomenon discussed in sections 3.2 and 3.3 offers examples of students using the third position turn to express the insufficiency of the prior response (section 3.2) or to disagree with the prior speaker, mainly the teacher (section 3.3).

The purpose of the study is to investigate sequential environments that indicate trouble in (mutual) understanding and action progressivity and, at the same time, create learning opportunities. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the sequential and interactional functions of third position turns in SIQSs?
2. What kind of epistemic and moral matters participants negotiate through SIQSs?
3. How do the third position turns of SIQSs indicate linguistic expertise?

2. METHOD

The data were collected at a French university in Finnish-as-a-foreign-language classrooms. The data consist of two data sets from four different Finnish courses, two beginning Finnish classes and two classes for advanced learners of Finnish. The first set was collected when the teacher was a novice and the second set was obtained five years later when the teacher was an experienced teacher. Each of the sets were videotaped during a two-weeks period. At the point of data gathering, the duration of the beginner courses was nine months and the advanced courses was more than one and a half years. Thus, the students were well acquainted with each other and their teacher. The Finnish-speaking teacher was the same for both settings. The group sizes varied between four and nine students. The students were all French-speaking native speakers who were mainly aged between 17 and 22 years. The data were collected using two video cameras, one capturing the student group and the other filming the teacher and the blackboard. The data have been transcribed according to the transcription system proposed by Gail Jefferson (Sacks et al., 1974) and glossed according to the Leipzig Glossing Rules. The data set included 12 hours of lessons that contained over 70 student-initiated question sequences (SIQS). All third positions with a challenging function were extracted from ten examples.

The analysis was conducted within a conversational analytic framework and the study contributes to the paradigm of conversational analytic research in the SLA field (CA-for-SLA) (Sahlström, 2009; Kasper and Wagner, 2011; Pekarek Doehler, 2013). The broader aim of the research project was to provide additional insights into the sequential organisation of SIQSs and their interactional functions related to pedagogical objectives and the language-learning process. At the beginning of the analysis, the SIQSs were classified in terms of the syntactic format of the question as well as its position in the course of action. As a second step, the syntactic formats were related to the action type they represented. For example, questions that contained a causal marker *why (not) X* were analysed as requests for clarifications whereas assertive yes–no questions were categorised as confirmation checks. Excerpt (1) illustrates this. This first excerpt also reveals the default way in which SIQSs are sequentially organised.

Excerpt 1: The accusative of *tuo*

- 01 Gae dans la deuxième phrase *tuo-n* c'est la première personne
 in the second sentence bring-1SG is it the first person
- 02 Tea hh. non c'est l'accusatif de *tuo*
 hh. no it's the accusative of this.NOM
- 03 Gae °d'accord°
 °*allright*°

As is evident in the first excerpt, the default SIQS consists of a three-part-sequence that ends in third position with either a student acceptance or display of understanding. I will refer to the sequence-closing turn of a SIQS as a *feedback-turn*, in the sense that the turn signals the green light to continue, which is comparable to the function of the third turn of the classical IRF/IRE-sequence. In conversational analytic terms, a first turn implies the presence of an obligatory second turn, a response, and a sequence-closing third turn by the first speaker (Sacks et al., 1974; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 2007). Jacknick (2011, p. 45) observes that students do

indeed orient to the conversational bias for the sequence-initiating speaker to speak again in third position. This also applies to teacher-directed classroom activities, even though it has been suggested that the institutionally asymmetrical setting of a classroom hinders students from participating equally in interaction by placing the teacher in a more powerful position (Markee, 1995).

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Aligning with a response

Third position turns of SIQSs may acquire different functions. One criterion is to ascertain whether the third turn advances the on-going action or puts it on hold. Firstly, I will present two excerpts featuring the third position that supports the on-going activity. In excerpts (1, reproduced) and (2), the speakers align with each other: they confirm the prior turn as being appropriate in form and function, which assures mutual understanding and leads to sequence closing.

Excerpt 1: The accusative of tuo (reproduced)

- 01 Gae dans la deuxième phrase **tuo-n** c'est la première personne
 in the second sentence bring-1SG is it the first person
- 02 Tea hh. non c'est l'accusatif de **tuo**
 hh. no it's the accusative of this.NOM
- 03 Gae °d'accord°
 °**allright**°

In line 01, Gaëlle checks her understanding of a lexical item. The teacher subsequently disconfirms Gaëlle's interpretation (line 02) and produces the correct linguistic categorisation. In line 03, Gaëlle acknowledges her teacher's response. The acknowledgment tokens (*d'accord, ok*) in third position generally signal an acceptance of the prior turn and allow sequence closing. Nevertheless, sequences are often more elaborate than those that occur in excerpt (1). Let us examine the next excerpt (2). The knowledge gap here is detected (line 01) and the teacher has responded to it by offering an explanation (lines 03-06). However, the teacher assesses the literal translation of the lexeme in question (*molemmat*) as being difficult to determine. Lucie demonstrates her understanding in third position (line 07) (Koole, 2010) by naming the English equivalent of the lexeme¹.

Excerpt 2: Molemmilla what's that?

- 01 Lucie et **molemmilla** c'est quoi?
 and molemmilla what's that?
- 02 Tea **m::olemm-i-lla.**
 both-PL-ADE
- 03 ça remplace ↑**Ilpo-lla** ja ***Anne-lla**
 it replaces Ilpo-ADE and *Anne-ADE
 *((turns to the blackboard))
- 04 Tea **molem↑**ma-t** ça veut dire les deux,**

¹ *Molemmilla* is the adessive case of the pronoun *molemmat* 'both', a local case, which can be used in the Finnish possessive construction.

- both-NOM.PL it means both**
 ((removed: teacher explanation concerning the molemmat-lexeme and its syntactical function in the exercise sentence))
- 05 Tea oui ou est-ce que v- >c'est quand même difficile à< (0.5)
yes or is it v- >anyway it's difficult to< (0.5)
- 06 à traduire
to translate
- 07 =>Luc c'est l'équivalent de ↑both >en anglais en fait<
it's the equivalent of both in English actually
- 08 Tea euh- <yes> joo kyllä
uhm- <yes> PRT correct

The teacher's response in excerpt (2) is a multi-unit explanation (lines 03-04) followed by an assertion (lines 05-06). Lucie's feedback turn (line 07), which is an assertion, can be classified as a non-minimal post-expansion (Schegloff, 2007) that invites a further teacher response (line 08). Lucie thus uses the third position not only to accept the teacher's explanation but also to claim knowledge and to demonstrate understanding. Koole (2010) states that the demonstrations of understanding in his data are not sequentially invited. At any rate, the teacher's statement in the above excerpt invites collaboration because she indicates that she is encountering a challenge. Thus, teacher responses may trigger demonstrations of understanding as Lucie helps to solve the problem and fills the knowledge gap to everyone's satisfaction. However, non-minimal post-expansions can be used in rather different ways as well. In the following cases, students use the third position of a SIQS to convey disagreement. In doing so, they disalign with the previous speaker or with a previous state of affairs.

Let us now turn to the next step of the analysis, which will assess the validity and sufficiency of a teacher response. In this context, three different third-position turn types will be discussed (section 3.2). Firstly, students may produce a non-aligning dialogue particle. Secondly, they may ask a follow-up question and, thirdly, they may use an assertion to state a competing fact. Afterwards, the analysis will concern those cases in which students disagree with issues on epistemic access (section 3.3). In these cases, the ability to know is assessed differently by students and the teacher.

3.2 Challenging the content of a response

3.2.1. Marking insufficiency

The default SIQS contains a teacher response that fills a knowledge gap or offers an explanation that helps the student understand. Participants have normative expectations concerning their teacher's response, which should be sufficiently detailed and clear so that it enables better understanding. The sufficiency of a response thus depends on the level of precision that the student might expect and which the teacher considers appropriate at that point in the course. The next excerpt illustrates negotiations concerning the degree of precision of an explanation.

The group in excerpt (3) is translating Finnish texts into French. Prior to this excerpt, Lucie has translated the sentence *koiralla on pitkä turkki* 'The dog has long fur' into French using the French word *poil* 'hair' in its plural form *des poils*. Another possible translation solution would have been the word *fouurrure* 'fur'. The teacher has accepted Lucie's answer

when H el ene inquires about the noun *turkki* in the original Finnish sentence and its grammatical case, the nominative.

Excerpt 3: Why not turkkia

- 01 H el => pourquoi c'est pas du partitif   cet endroit l 
why isn't it a partitive in that place
- 02 Tea .hh  - turkki-a?
.hh uh- fur-PART
- 03 H el oui?
yes ?
- 04 Tea .hh parce que c'est l'ensemble de tous ses,
.hh because it's the totality of all its,
- 05 (0.5)
- 06 Lucie  c'est comme on disait cheveux (xx)  
 it's as you would say hair (xx)  
- 07 Tea [de tous ses poils]
[of all its hairs]
- 08 Gae [ftu peux compter les poiles] un par un 
[fyou can count the hairs] one by one 
- 09 ((G and L laughing))
- 10 H el ((gazes to G and L))
- 11 => H el ((gazes down)) uhum. (.) uhum
- 12 Tea c'est [oui c'est consid er  [comme comme *tukka*] aussi
it's just considered like like the (human) hair too
- 13 H el [bah justement
[PRT exactly
- 14 Lucie [xx xxxxxx xxx x]
- 15 => H el bah [justement je trouve que (xx)]
PRT [exactly I find that (xx)]
- 16 Tea [tukka (.) c'est l'ensemble]
[(human) hair (.) it's a totality (of sth)
- 17 (.)
- 18 H el un de l'in- de ind enombable. du poil? de la four-
a of un- of uncountable. (ART.PART) hair? (ART.PART) fur
- 19 une fourrure on parle d'une fourrure d'un chat d'un chien
a fur you talk about the fur of a cat a dog

Hélène formulates her question as a negative why-question, which indicates that instead of a nominative, she had expected another grammatical case, the partitive². It is important to note that her peers self-select and respond (lines 06 and 08) to her question. Lucie's turn is positioned in the middle of the teacher's response and Gaëlle's turn is in overlap with the last part of the teacher's response. This means that sequentially, both students' turns occupy the second position of the SIQS and compete with their teacher.

From this, we can also conclude that there may be more than one addressee for the feedback turn (line 11). Several possible responders may cause problems because Hélène selected (line 01) the teacher, the expert in Finnish, to be the next speaker. In this sense, Hélène's feedback turn likewise conveys her bias to re-address the teacher (Sacks et al., 1974).

The feedback turn consists of a duplicated *uhum uhum* (line 11), which includes a short pause. This turn fills the third position of the SIQS but compared to the default feedback turns, such as *oké* or *d'accord*, this particular turn is ambiguous because it neither accepts nor rejects the explanation clearly. On the one hand, it does not allow sequence closing but, on the other hand, it does not advance the activity of solving the problem in understanding. The teacher's further explanation occurs in overlap with both Hélène (lines 13 and 15) and Lucie (line 14). Moreover, Hélène responds, but it is unclear to whom she is speaking. In any case, she defends her question and her right to ask it.

Thus, the sufficiency of the teacher's explanation is challenged. Evidence that the teacher recognises this challenge as expressing non-understanding or dissatisfaction with her previous explanation is that she continues to explain (line 12). At this point, she compares *turkki* 'fur' to the lexeme *tukka* 'hair', which is considered a countable entity in Finnish language usage³.

At the end of the sequence, the participants do not indicate mutual understanding. This sequence actually contains two interactional moves that run counter to the norms. The first one is that the non-addressed participants choose themselves as the next speakers and take the floor. The second is that the learners assume the role of experts over a peer student. Finally, the trouble in turn-taking translates into problems of achieving the common objective of solving the problem in understanding.

As mentioned previously, the expertise in the classroom is normatively distributed in the sense that the teacher adopts the role of the expert while students are non-experts. However, these roles are far from being fixed. For example, the distribution of expertise in excerpts (02) and (03) is reorganised when students claim linguistic knowledge. In excerpt (02), the teacher confirmed Lucie's interpretation and attributed knowledge to her. This does not occur in the previous excerpt (03), where the distribution of expertise divides the students into at least two groups: Hélène claims a gap in her knowledge, whereas Lucie and Gaëlle display their expertise by responding to the question and even ridiculing it. At the same time, Hélène maintains that the teacher's and the peers' responses are insufficient.

Thus, expertise can only be ratified when it is simultaneously connected to the *right* to claim knowledge. The aforementioned case attests to how students do not attribute the same right to know to their peers as they do to the teacher. A student's decision to challenge the group and to disalign with a state of affairs might be connected to the (unexpected) distribution of knowledge.

² This case is used to mark the uncountable aspect of nouns.

³ The countable aspect requires the use of the nominative form *turkki* 'fur' as compared to the partitive *turkki-a* 'some fur'.

As shown in excerpt (3), students are the experts of their own learning and understanding process. When participants consider their right to request further information to be constrained or challenged, the situation may become emotionally charged. The student can thus reject a teacher's explanation by signalling disalignment in the third position of a SIQS. This is a means of claiming independent knowledge and, as demonstrated in the case earlier, of refusing to assume the role of the non-expert.

The insufficiency of a response can also be expressed directly. Learners might need or expect that the teacher provide further accurate information or offer distinct explanation in her response. Discrepancies may emerge when the participants differently interpret the degree of detail of linguistic knowledge that is needed to clarify a linguistic detail.

In excerpt (4), the group studies the possessive construction. Lucie has completed an exercise and succeeded well. However, she has made a mistake in her use of nominal phrases accompanied by numbers and the obligatory following partitive singular⁴. Instead, she uses a partitive plural, a form that the group has not yet studied. The students know this form *laps-i-a* 'children-PL-PART' by pure coincidence: immediately preceding the example, the group discussed how to say 'I want children' in Finnish. However, another student, H el ene, knows the correct form, *las-ta* 'child-PART', which the teacher confirms. At this point, Clarissa interrupts the teacher with her question (line 01).

Excerpt 4: Why the partitive singular

- 01 Cla <<h>mais pour[quoi pourquoi (c'est le partitif) au singulier]>
<<h>**but why why is it the partitive singular**>
- 02 Ga e [ a sera toujours le partitif singulier]
[**will it always be the partitive singular**]
- 03 Cla <<h>pourquoi (--  crire)>
<<h>**why (-- writing)**>
- 04 Luc bah parce que c'est le partitif singulier apr s tous les
chiffres non
**well because it's always the partitive singular after
numbers isn't it**
- 05 Tea joo
yes (in Finnish)
- 06 =>Cla mais pourqu[oi?]
but wh[y ?
- 07 =>Ga e [mais c'est nul
[**but that's stupid**

Ga elle supports Clarissa's question (line 02). Both declare that the lexeme *lasta* in the given context requires further clarification and is insufficient to clarify the use of the partitive singular. Compared to the default SIQS, where the teacher responds to student questions, in this case, it is Lucie who explains and reminds the students of the rule (line 04), something that the

⁴ Finnish NPs that are accompanied by numbers (four cars) are declined in the partitive singular case (*nelj  auto-a*).

group has studied earlier in the course. In third position, the teacher accepts Lucie's response. Gaëlle also accepts her response (line 07), even though Gaëlle considers the rule to be stupid.

However, Clarissa does not accept the response but continues to pose a follow-up question. The follow-up question in third position expands the sequence and obliges the teacher to offer a more precise explanation of the phenomenon. Clarissa therefore insists on her right to be the non-expert and to request accurate information. I will return to this excerpt in section 3.3.

The students' reactions to the claims by their peers indicate that they negotiate epistemic rights and obligations among themselves. Firstly, as mentioned before students do not overtly attribute the same degree of knowledge to their peers as they do to their teacher. Secondly, students need to claim *independent* knowledge. If they judge their personal stock of knowledge to be superior to that of a peer, they can assist the peer who has a problem in understanding. On the other hand, they may not listen to a peer's teaching and refuse to take it into account.

3.2.2. Claiming ancillary knowledge

The third position turn in a SIQS can be classified as a non-minimal post-expansion when it hinders sequence closing by creating space for a further response. The following excerpt is an example of a non-minimal post-expansion that it used to claim independent access to knowledge.

The participants in (5) discuss the declination rules for foreign names. First names that end with a consonant normally take the vowel *i* added to their stem to make declination possible⁵. The teacher ratifies Gaëlle's request for confirmation (line 01) in line 02. She continues by using Gaëlle's first name as an example. In this instance, Gaëlle herself has a different opinion regarding the pronunciation of her name.

Excerpt 5: Final vowel

- 01 Gaë et- quand ça finit par une voyelle on ajoutera rien?
an- when it ends with a vowel we do not add anything?
- 02 Tea >c'est ça< oui.
>exactly< right.
- 03 Tea pour toi on a pas besoin de, de, rajouter [quoi que ce[soit=
in your case we do not need to, to, add anything
- 04 Luc [ɛ-----[Gaëll[e-lla
lname-ALL
- 05 Gaë [=même
[=even
- 06 Gaë si ça se pro[nonce pas, ((gaze shifts down))
if it's not pronounced
- 07 Tea [Gaëlle-lla mä voin sanoa Gaëlle-lla
lname-ADD I can say lname-ADD
- 08 ((Lucie and Clarissa discussing))
- 09 =>Gaë *même si la voyelle se prononce pas dans la langue d'origine=
***even if the vowel is not pronounced in the original language**
 *((lifts gaze))
- 10 Tea =Gaë:lle

⁵ Finnish case endings predominantly begin with a consonant (-ssa; -lla; -ksi) and this makes a final vowel in the stem necessary to assure the pronounceability of the word. This phenomenon occurs in loanwords (Swedish: banan; Finnish: banaani => banaani-ssa) and in the declination of foreign names (Paul: Pauli-lla).

The Finnish-speaking teacher classifies the name *Gaëlle* as ending in a vowel. Gaëlle takes her turn in third position, which is a concessive construction that points out a divergent viewpoint. She claims that the vowel is not pronounced in spoken language and she wants to know if the rule still applies. This turn is a syntactic continuation that builds on the teacher's previous turns. However, the first attempt by Gaëlle (line 05) occurs in overlap with Lucie, who begins testing the pronunciation of *Gaëllella*. The teacher joins Lucie by concretely providing an example of using the form *Gaëllella*. Gaëlle subsequently discontinues and disengages by gazing down (line 06).

When the next possible transition relevance place (TRP) arises, Gaëlle reformulates her request for clarification (line 09). She does this by recycling her turn, but she increases her level of precision. She refers to the original language that might have different phonetic rules from Finnish. In other words, she claims expertise by taking into account the constraints of different phonetic systems. Her concession also shows that the teacher's explanation is too general to account for all the possible cases and applications of the rule. The teacher addresses Gaëlle's criticism and begins testing the sound of the final phoneme in her name. Even though Gaëlle's turn is syntactically linked to the teacher's turn, it is independent at the action level. In other words, Gaëlle's turn interrupts the teacher's explanatory activity and challenges the general validity of the rule.

The third position turn allows students to claim knowledge over the teacher, or at least to signal their independent access to knowledge. In the aforementioned case, the post-expansion turn suggests that the teacher offered a weak argument in the previous turn, which simultaneously created an opportunity for the teacher to revise her argument.

These excerpts illustrate the type of interactional environment that fosters student participation. The analysis particularly identifies the environment that allows students to participate by criticising or challenging their teacher. SIQSs are naturally productive because they grant the first speaker the right to talk again in the third position (Sacks, 1992). In particular, non-minimal post-expansions that occur in third position are productive because they create space for further discussion so that speakers actively may use them to redirect talk. In addition, the feedback turn of a SIQS is a place for students to express their independent access to knowledge and to claim expertise. They accomplish this by marking a response as being insufficient or by sharing their own analysis with the others.

Regarding the distribution of linguistic expertise among the participants, these types of turns challenge the normative distribution of access to knowledge and the rights to know or not to know. At the same time, the students appeal to their teacher as an expert in the sense that they rely on the teacher's obligation to explain topics correctly and in a sufficiently precise manner. A challenge thus evokes matters pertaining to the legitimacy of actions. According to Schegloff (2007, cited in Jacknick, 2011, p. 48) after a challenging post-expansion, one or both of the parties must back away from their position to resolve the disalignment. In classroom interaction, disalignment must likewise be addressed. On the sequential level, disalignment can be solved by taking into account the challenging turn and by discussing it. In addition, participants can reconsider their epistemic position. By considering the challenge, the teacher backs down from the epistemic position of being the expert. Consequently, students can also become experts.

One of the factors that defines an institutional setting is that participants have a common goal. The main objective of a learning setting is to educate the lay participants so that they become experts. Towards this aim, third position turns advance students' understanding of linguistic topics while offering them the opportunity to develop their expertise.

3.3. Objecting to a reproach: Defining knowledge responsibilities

In the previous section, I discussed two matters: firstly, how students signal the insufficiency of a response and secondly, how they claim expertise, refuse non-expertise or insist on their right to be non-experts. As was demonstrated in excerpt (5), students can attribute knowledge to themselves, especially when the topic belongs to their personal epistemic domain. The main objective of the following section is to demonstrate that students are aware of their epistemic responsibility. In other words, they know what they are expected to know and what they cannot yet know. In this respect, students are sensitive to their teacher's possible reproaches, or to any statements that attribute knowledge to them that they actually do not have or did not have at a certain point in the past.

When the environment contains veiled criticism, the feedback-turn allows a participant to defend her own non-expert position and to object to a possible reproach. Thus, these types of third positions can be better classified as protests rather than challenges, even when they convey a challenging quality. In other words, the students refuse their teacher's claim and advance into her knowledge domain, knowing which linguistic topics have been discussed at which point.

Excerpt (6) continues excerpt (4) in that Clarissa and Gaëlle were surprised that they have to use the partitive singular form after numbers. Whereas Gaëlle accepts her peer's explanation, Clarissa insists on asking for further detailed information. The general confusion regarding the matter amuses all participants except Clarissa, who does not join in their laughter (line 08). Instead, Clarissa reformulates her request for clarification a third time (line 09).

Excerpt 6: But before we didn't know the partitive plural

08 [((laughter))]
09 Cla [*comment on peut mettre (le pluriel à deux enfants)]
 ***how can you put (the plural to two children)**
 *gazes down
10 Luc [(----)]
11 Tea  ça a toujours  t  comme  a 
  it has always been like that 
12 H l  d s le d part  heh heh
  from the very beginning  heh heh
13 Tea  on a rien chang    la r gle 
  we didn't change the rule in any way 
14 Luc  on veut dire **lapsia**
 we want to say laps-i-a
 child-PL-PART
15 => Cla @mais avant on connaissait pas le partitif pluriel
 @but before we didn't know the partitive plural
16  on avait jamais entendu parler alors@
 we had never heard about it PRT@
17 H l   a valait le coup de filmer cette heure-l  
  this lesson was worth to be filmed 
18 ((laughter))

Clarissa's turn (line 09) occurs in overlap with laughter and other talk and she withdraws her gaze. In line 11, the teacher finally responds to Clarissa's initiatives but rather than clarifying them, the teacher states that the rule has always (*toujours*, line 11) been like this, implying that there is nothing new to say about it (*we didn't change the rule in any way*, line 13).

Lucie defends the plural form, *lapsia*, by giving a humorous account as to why they should use it. At this point, Clarissa insists on her right to be the non-expert (line 15). She points out that *avant* "before" they were not aware that the partitive plural even existed, and she then defends her right to be surprised about it or about its (non-) use. In brief, Clarissa protests against the teacher's claim that the matter in question was already within their knowledge domain.

The sequence continues through the expanded teacher explanations (not shown) regarding the use of numbers and the use of the partitive singular case. The teacher's decision to expand her explanations demonstrates the legitimacy of the student protest and underscores the students' insistence on the right to get explanations, at least in this classroom.

Let us consider one final example. Excerpt (7) is the continuation of the same sequence in which the participants have been discussing the possessive construction and the use of numbers. Immediately preceding this excerpt, Gaëlle has asked a question concerning a clause written on the blackboard *Maijalla on auto* 'Maija has a car', in which the possessed object occurs in the nominative case. Gaëlle clarifies that she would have expected something other than the nominative for *auto* 'car', such as the accusative (auto-n).

When the teacher responds to Gaëlle, she reminds her students of a syntactic construction, the existential phrase, which has a structure that is analogical to the possessive construction and which they have already studied. Finally, the teacher states that the accusative case is never used with this syntactic structure (l. 09). The target line is Gaëlle's response (line 10) to the teacher's assertion.

Excerpt 7 : Phrase existentielle

- 01 Tea ↑est-ce que vous vous souvenez de la ↑phrase existentielle.
do you remember the existential clause
- 02 des règles pour la phrase existentielle.
the rules for the existential clause
- 03 Luc la phrase existentielle, ((reflecting))
the existential clause,
- 04 Cla bah c'est le [sujet qui
PRT it's the subject which
- 05 Tea [c'est le ch-chapitre ↑quatre oui?
it's in chapter ↑four yeah?
- 06 donc là il fallait également dire
so there you had to say as well
- 07 sur la table il y a un livre. pöydä-llä, (.) on, (.) *↑kirja.
*on the table there's a book. table-ADD (.)be.3sg *book.nom*
- gaëlle the teacher's hand which points to the book on the table
 (*)
- 08 (.)
- 09 on avait ↑jamais* mis un accusatif ↓dans cette structure,
we ↑never put an accusative into this structure*
- gaëlle *((pulls down the corner of her mouth))

- 10 => Gaë ((lifts gaze)) °foui parce qu'on connaissait ↑pas£° heh
eyes because we didn't know (it) heh£
- 11 ((laughter))
- 12 Tea £mais ↑oui parce que vous connaissiez ↑pas ↓alors£
£PRT right because you didn't know well£
- 13 ((laughter))

The teacher begins her explanation by refreshing the students' memory: 'do you remember' (l. 01). During her explanation, the teacher points to the book when she pronounces the nominative form of *kirja*, 'book' (l. 07). Gaëlle directs her gaze to her teacher's pointing gesture (l. 07). The negative adverbial *jamais* 'never' in the following segment (l. 23) is pronounced in a higher pitch, which makes it sound prominent. During the adverb *jamais* 'never', Gaëlle widens the corners of her mouth slightly downwards, which may display her recognition of a problematic issue.

The teacher's turn (l. 09) constitutes a strong claim (for *extreme case formulation*, see Pomerantz, 1986) concerning the existential phrase and how the group has approached it. This implicates three points. The first is that in this context, the students have never used an accusative case and they continue to have no reason to do so. Secondly, this implies that someone wants to use it. The third point is that the teacher's claim suggests that the students already know the necessary rule needed to correctly create a possessive structure.

The student who introduced the use of the accusative case in the first place, Gaëlle, agrees with her teacher's first claim that they have never used the accusative case, but she rejects the last implication (l. 10) that the matter would already be in their knowledge domain. Gaëlle's turn expands the teacher's turn on a syntactic level. She first agrees with her teacher and, she subsequently states a reason that is in contrast with her teacher's claim. Gaëlle then "mis-projects the content" of the teacher's turn by using a collaborative completion (Lerner, 2004, p. 226). Gaëlle claims that the students were not mistaken before because they did *not know* about the accusative. By making this opposing move, she defends her entitlement to ask specifically that question and to be the non-expert.

The teacher's turn (lines 07 and 09) contains elements that index 'doing teaching', such as her use of slower speech rate and syllable stress (Keppler, 1989). Even so, the teacher's assertion is not recognisable as a reproach. Her assertion unfolds as a reproach only by virtue of the simultaneous monitoring by the students. The up-coming problematic issue is fore shadowed through her students' gaze and facial expressions combined with the elements of the 'doing teaching'. Finally, the quality of the teacher's reproach enters the interaction when the student objects or protests (on *retro-sequences*, see Schegloff, 2007). This occurs when students challenge a previous claim or a previous representation of a state of affairs.

The above excerpts are evidence that non-aligning turns in sequentially third position may also comment on epistemic access and ability. They convey the students' awareness of both their own knowledge and the necessity for study content to be represented in a chronologically coherent manner.

The excerpts in this section were third positions that can be classified as protests and the analysis demonstrates that protests often receive a humorous reception. This suggests that they are considered to be outside normative expectations even when they are not themselves sanctioned. For example in (7), the teacher joins in and acknowledges the pre-emptive continuations as correct in the receipt slot (on *collaborative completions*, see Lerner, 2004, p.

247). She concurs with Gaëlle's argument that the students did not possess this knowledge and accepts the momentary confusion.

Protests arise from the teacher's expectations where the depiction of the students' epistemic responsibility is subjected to scrutiny. Thus, participants test whether protesters' comments on the students' access to knowledge and their ability to be knowledgeable in specific situations can be acknowledged by the group. In this sequential position, the divergent viewpoint concerns the distribution and responsibility of knowledge that students may or may not possess.

3.4. Summary

The analysis of third position turns demonstrates that the participants negotiate epistemic rights and responsibilities on two different levels. Firstly, students indicate whether they accept the validity of their teacher's explanation and whether they confirm that explanation as sufficient. Hence, the epistemic asymmetry between students and the teacher is inverse, as students are the experts regarding their own understanding. Students may also insist on their right to be non-experts. On the other hand, they can refuse the role of the non-expert attributed to them and respectively adapt to the role of an expert. At this point, they may also introduce new ideas and their own viewpoints on the topic.

Secondly, the teacher's response may refer to prior grammatical topics or book chapters and consequently imply that certain topics belong to the students' epistemic domain. In third position, students demonstrate whether they align with the possible claim of whether or not a certain grammatical detail has already been in their knowledge domain. In other words, they display their access to knowledge concerning the topics discussed in the course as well as their chronological order.

The teacher's response is thus interpreted as one of expressing criticism or a reproach in the sense that the teacher appeals to the students' ability to recall or know something. In this context (section 3.3.), the third position turn was qualified as a protest, whereas the cases in section 3.2. were classified as a challenge. Both environments reveal that classroom participants sensitively deal with matters of epistemic rights and responsibilities.

To summarise, a challenge can be described in terms of sequential progressivity, or from the viewpoint of epistemicity and morality. Sequentially, the challenge arises when the student does not advance the ongoing interaction, but instead calls a prior turn into closer inspection. In terms of epistemicity and morality, the challenge originates in the speakers' expectations regarding their epistemic rights and responsibilities and the violation of these expectations. For example, while participants must deal with situations where a student advances into the teacher's knowledge domain, situations also arise where the teacher's turn conveys veiled criticism so that the students use their turn to defend their epistemic position in order to maintain their integrity as "good" students. The violation of normative expectations may thus lead to heightened emotional involvement and to moral issues.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined student-initiated question sequences, specifically the third position turns that were classified as feedback turns. The third position turns generally signal understanding and acceptance and make sequence closure possible. However, in the analysed excerpts, the third position turn is used to communicate a divergent viewpoint, a phenomenon that has been described in terms of disalignment. The third position turn thus represents an action that does not advance the ongoing activity but invites the participants to negotiate mutual

understanding. More precisely, in this context mutual understanding mainly concerns matters of epistemic access and epistemic responsibilities.

One main feature of third position turns is that they allow the students to share their linguistic expertise and their expertise as learners. The students accomplish this by criticising the sufficiency of their teacher's response and by claiming knowledge themselves. They can claim independent linguistic knowledge or information concerning linguistic topics and their chronological order in their language course. In other words, third position turns create a space for students to initiate and engage in criticism of their teacher. This criticism may relate to the granularity of knowledge or the availability of linguistic knowledge in a specific instance.

These actions may challenge the teacher for several reasons. Firstly, the teacher needs to back down from her agenda and secondly, she may have to revise her previous expert claim. Her delivered response may be judged as inadequate because it does not provide knowledge that is sufficiently detailed. This challenge can therefore turn the interaction into moral communication because speakers foreground issues of epistemic primacy. The challenge in the third turn pertains to matters of legitimacy because the students challenge their teacher's epistemic authority and create an independent epistemic stance, something which stands in contrast to the default distribution of expertise in the classroom.

Concerning turn-taking and the position of the third turn in the ongoing action, it is important to note that the sequential environment is productive for the (re-)negotiation of epistemic access and for the (re-)negotiation of epistemic rights and responsibilities because the questioner has expressed a need for information or clarification. Furthermore, students initiate the question sequence in that they have the right to speak again in third position. Finally, a non-minimal post-expansion creates interactional space for further response to enable the recipients of the post-expansion to have the possibility to address the challenge and the criticism. In this sense, initiators of question sequences identify themselves as legitimate speakers and active independent participants, at least in terms of sequence expansion turns. Those who initiate question sequences may also redirect talk and invite participants to revise their distribution of expertise or to renegotiate their epistemic access and responsibility.

To conclude, the analysis demonstrates the significance of the third position turns for both the establishment of mutual understanding (Schegloff, 1992) and for testing the reliability of linguistic facts. Moreover, the analysis reveals that the mutual understanding in the classroom extends beyond the understanding of content and of sequential processes. Participants must be aware of these moral aspects that relate to question sequences in classroom interaction because the moral aspects are as important as their knowledge of the organisation of typical classroom turn-taking systems. Most students want to be thorough and conscientious learners. Thus, teacher claims that suggest a deficiency in a student's position are therefore objected to strongly. During the ongoing interaction, speakers are continuously held accountable for their previous claims and sometimes they need to revise them in terms of what is "right" and "wrong". As is evident from the protests, students tend to defend their positions as "good" and conscientious students. This means that the teacher's mission is to establish a balance between supportive turns that stick by the students and their learning progress, and turns that indicate knowledge deficiency and motivate students to better keep track of learning content.

5. ADDITIONAL TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

<h> turn pronounced with high pitch
name simultaneous gaze behaviour or gesture

*frown point in the turn where the simultaneous behaviour starts

PL plural
 PART partitive
 NOM nominative
 PRT particle
 ART article

6. REFERENCES

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