

University of Hradec Králové  
Faculty of Education

**Bachelor Thesis**

University of Hradec Králové  
Pedagogical Faculty  
English department

### **Testing Interaction**

Evidence for L2 Interactional Competence during an Oral Exam from General English  
Bachelor thesis

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## Zadání bakalářské práce

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**Název bakalářské práce:** **Jak testovat interakci? Projevy L2 interakční kompetence během ústní zkoušky z všeobecné angličtiny**

**Název bakalářské práce AJ:** Testing Interaction: Evidence for L2 Interactional Competence during an Oral Exam from General English

### **Cíl, metody, literatura, předpoklady:**

Tato práce je explorativního charakteru; jejím cílem je prozkoumat možné projevy interakční kompetence (Hall & Doehler, 2011) kandidátů při několika specificky upravených úlohách subtestu mluvení. Student pod vedením školitele pořídí nahrávky, jež budou zachycovat interakce dvojic kandidátů během ústní zkoušky z všeobecné angličtiny (cca 1-2 hodiny), nahrávky přepíše a zanalyzuje optikou konverzační analýzy (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). Výstupem práce budou možné implikace pro design úloh a tvorbu hodnotících deskriptorů a škál. Práce bude psána v angličtině.

This thesis is of an exploratory nature; its aim is to look at various displays of candidates' Interactional Competence (Hall & Doehler, 2011) whilst they engage in specifically designed tasks during a speaking subtest. With the help of the supervisor, the student will collect recordings that feature interaction of pairs during an oral exam from General English (appx. 1-2 hours), transcribe them and analyse them from the perspective of Conversation Analysis (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). It is expected that the thesis will generate certain implications for assessment task design and the construction of descriptors and scales. The language of the thesis is English.

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that I have written this bachelor thesis independently (under the supervision of my thesis supervisor) and have listed all sources and literature used.

Hradec Králové on...

## **Annotation**

This thesis explores L2 interactional competence through conversation analysis of students' behaviour during oral exams. The study investigates the effects of task instructions that are unclear and student focus on worksheets provided on the assessment of collaborative problem-solving.

The findings show that encouraging collaboration through clear instructions can motivate student engagement, sparking insightful debates and enhancing agreement among peers. However, concentrating too much on a worksheet prevents natural conversational flow, eye contact, and turn-taking.

Overall, this thesis provides evidence-based insights into interactional competence, informing instructional strategies and assessment practices. By fostering meaningful interactions and reducing worksheet dependence, educators can enhance the effectiveness of interaction assessment.

**Keywords:** Interactional competence, oral exam, second language learning, conversation analysis, student focus, worksheet dependence, instruction quality

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## Introduction

This thesis investigates the concept of L2 interactional competence (Hall et al. 2011) with an emphasis on how students behave during oral exams. The finding that interaction is frequently not sufficiently examined in such tests served as the impetus for this research. This essay intends to provide light on the dynamics of student contact and the value of meaningful engagement in educational environments through the analysis of clear instructions, student focus on worksheets, turn-taking dynamics, and cooperative decision-making.

We begin with a thorough investigation of pertinent literature written by subject-matter experts in the quest to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon of L2 interaction competence. The literature review prepares the ground for the subsequent investigation by delving into the areas of L2 interaction competence, assessment of interactional competence, and various facets of interaction.

Following the literature review, the thesis demonstrates the methodology used for the selection and analysis of the data, along with a thorough description of the data's origins. Simultaneously, the research questions that underpin the data analysis are introduced, guiding the investigation towards key aspects of interest.

The core of this thesis is the data analysis chapter, which carefully selects and then thoroughly describes data extracts. These descriptions then act as primary sources for identifying fascinating phenomena, which will form the core of the discussion chapter that follows.

The discussion chapter presents the most compelling information discovered from the analyzed extracts and conducts a comparative analysis with the findings of earlier researchers. The patterns and insights that have been observed can be better understood thanks to this comparison.

In the end, the conclusion chapter offers a thorough synthesis of the thesis, including all significant findings. The overall implications and contributions of this research project are encapsulated in this final section, which also serves as a summative reflection.

## Literature Review

Interactional competence in second language learning

The concept of Interactional Competence (IC), which Roever and Kasper (2018) briefly define as the ability of an individual to interact and communicate well with others, especially in social or conversational contexts. It consists of various concepts, including turn-taking - managing the flow of conversation and smoothly transitioning between speakers, sequence organisation - understanding how conversational sequences are structured and connected, repair - recognizing and rectifying communication breakdowns or errors in conversation, and preference - displaying preferences for certain actions or linguistic forms during interaction. The ability to interact meaningfully with others in the target language is made possible by interactional competence, which is a crucial component of second language learning. Since conversations may be thought of as intricate turn-based exchanges, IC seems to be a crucial component. Seeing it as such, it is desirable to test this competence together with other aspects whilst examining students' English.

The idea of IC was first suggested in the context of language evaluation by Kramsch (1986). She brought attention to potential inconsistencies between the pedagogy of communicative language teaching, which typically places an emphasis on group involvement, and the assessment of individual contributions in paired speaking examinations, which frequently gives assessment criteria precedence. Kramsch also underlined that the evaluation of competence should give major weight to collaborative elements, negotiating, and other co-created aspects in addition to individual contributions like functional language, fluency, and accuracy.

According to Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger (2015), who focus on interactive competence in a second language (L2), this skill evolves through a process of calibration and diversification. L2 speakers who are less skilled at interactional tasks at first rely on a reduced set of interactional practices. But as competence grows, techniques diversify, allowing behaviours that are tailored to the environment. Learning to discuss, apologize, and ask for things in a foreign language are all communicative skills that L2 students gradually develop and extend. Thus, testing IC is deemed desirable.

## Assessment of IC

According to Roever and Kasper (2018), interactional competence must be tested for a thorough language assessment. Speaking tests can gauge observable facets of IC by examining interactional techniques like prefaces and pre-sequences (conversational moves that set the context or create a supportive environment for a forthcoming action or speech act. An example of a pre-sequence would be an utterance: “May I ask?” before asking the actual question.) This broadens generalizations and supports inferences about test-takers capacity for interaction. The validity of the assessment is increased and interactive skills are not underrated by assessing IC. Fluency is redefined from an IC perspective, which acknowledges disfluencies as interactional resources. It also emphasizes how crucial non-verbal cues like gestures and eye contact are for coordinating conversation between L1 and L2 speakers.

Galaczi and Taylor (2018) emphasize that evaluating interactional competence requires taking into account a number of factors which add up to a thorough assessment of a speaker's communication skills, including co-constructing meaningful interactions, effectively utilizing linguistic and nonverbal resources, identifying microfeatures from Conversation Analysis research, being genre-aware, displaying politeness and appropriate nonverbal behaviours, demonstrating mediation skills, and ensuring context-specific relevance in assessment tasks.

Multimodal conversation analysis (CA) (Goodwin, 2013) gives us the means to investigate IC as a source of information and a goal for language evaluation, which advances our knowledge of interactive competence.

## Aspects of Interaction

In this chapter, we explore important interactional aspects that are of utmost significance in answering our research questions. These aspects encompass establishing the context of tasks, exploring turn-taking and discussions, examining student gaze and eye contact, and understanding participation frameworks.

### Establishing context of tasks

In the field of language testing and assessment, the role of test instructions in influencing test takers' performance has been widely acknowledged. As Bachman (1990) states: “Test instructions play a crucial role in test takers’ performance, since their performance depends, to a great extent, on how well they understand the conditions under which the

test will be taken, the procedures to be followed and the nature of the tasks they are to complete.” (cf.123). To which Roever (2021) adds that context must be established when creating test assignments for L2 pragmatics and interactional competence. The interaction's goal and format are both factors in the context and it is crucial to explicitly explain the conversation's aim in pragmatics exercises because how the discussion is held depends on the setting, method of communication, and time of interaction (cf. 33-36).

Furthermore, the significance of time management in speaking test tasks should be emphasized because, as Wigglesworth and Elder (2010) argue, even though students' performance might not be impacted, it is important to take into account the express preference for planning time, if only for face validity reasons. Giving examined the chance to plan ahead could increase their confidence in speaking tests and help them accept their results more readily. Although the authors found no significant advantages with longer planning times, they stressed that speaking tests can still benefit from allowing at least one minute for preparation.

#### Turn-Taking and Discussion

Turn-taking in conversation was introduced by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (Sacks et al., 1974), who emphasised that there is a set of rules that speakers observe in conversation; mainly, usually only one party talks at a time; overlaps between speakers are common but brief; transitions with no gap and no overlap are also common; turn order and turn size are not fixed, but vary; the length of conversation is not specified in advance (cf. 700–701).

They also distinguish between a "turn" and the units that make up a turn, known as turn construction units (TCUs), which might differ in length and completeness. Transition Relevance Places (TRPs), or prospective points of transition between speakers in discourse, are points that participants can predict. The distribution of the right to speak is a key component of turn-taking, and it involves two strategies: self-selection for the next speakership and the current speaker choosing the next speaker.

These strategies are desirable whilst testing L2 speakers, as Fulcher (2014) acknowledges: "The learner needs to be able to open and close conversations in acceptable ways and manage the switch between topics. She needs to know the conventions of turn-taking, when to begin speaking and when to stop" (cf. 46), telling us the importance of considering the turn-taking ability whilst testing interaction.



### Student gaze and eye contact

The common turn-taking model primarily emphasizes vocal-auditory cues, but face-to-face interaction is multimodal and includes visual cues such as gaze, which was explored by Kendrick, Holler and Levinson (Kendrick et al., 2023) Who said that the effectiveness and complexity of turn-taking are increased by combining vocal and visual cues, highlighting the interdependence of both elements in promoting effective communication. For example, gazing away indicates holding the floor, whilst looking at the addressee yields the floor and signals an expectation of a response.

Understanding the mechanics of communication, as marked by Rossano (2012) requires an understanding of gaze behavior in discourse. People typically glance at the speaker while listening. Additionally, eye contact signals a want to communicate, while averted gaze signals a willingness to cede. Intentions and attention can be inferred from gaze patterns. Contextual factors and cultural norms affect gaze behaviour. In general, comprehending gaze cues helps us better understand communication dynamics.

Furthermore, Hayashi (2012) addresses the use of address phrases and gaze direction as two explicit techniques for addressing in conversation. More typically, a speaker would gaze at a particular co-participant in order to let them know they are being addressed.

### Participation frameworks

By introducing participation frameworks that cover a wider understanding of communication dynamics, Goffman (1981) challenges the traditional two-person paradigm of communication in his work. He emphasizes the presence of onlookers and the value of nonverbal communication during conversations. In the context of the social situation, Goffman also distinguished recipients into four main categories. Addressees, the intended recipients who are actively participating in the ongoing conversation, are included in the first category as its main targets. The second group consists of side participants, who are present in the conversation but are not directly addressed or involved in it. Bystanders, who are present physically but who don't participate in the conversation or actively listen, make up the third group. Overhearers, who are not a part of the close conversation environment but can still hear what is being said, make up the fourth category. Overhearers were further divided into two groups by Goffman: listener-ins, who unintentionally overhear nearby conversations while not intending to eavesdrop and

eavesdroppers who listen in on private or confidential conversations without the other person knowing.

For the purpose of our thesis, we will focus on specific participation frameworks relevant to the speaker-listener model. Dividing between the Student-Examiner framework and the Student-Student framework with the Examiner as a side recipient, we will also look deeper within the Student-Student framework, specifically at situations that either encourage or discourage collaboration. By taking into account these participation frameworks, this thesis aims to improve our comprehension of the complexities of testing interaction.

## Data and Method

### Method

#### Research Design

This thesis employs a qualitative research design. Qualitative research, as described by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (Miles et al., 2018), involves the researcher aiming to gain a holistic understanding of the context, structure, functioning, and implicit rules of a phenomenon in its natural settings. The focus is on capturing participants' perspectives through attentive listening, empathetic understanding, and suspending preconceptions. Analysis primarily relies on words, which can be organized, compared, and analysed for patterns. Qualitative research was chosen as it is more suitable for exploring the complex and nuanced nature of student focus during interactions.

As hinted beforehand, the method used for analysing our data will be Conversation analysis. Pomerantz and Fehr (2011) wrote “CA’s analytic project is to provide an empirically grounded explication of the social organisation of naturally occurring human action and interaction. More specifically, CA aims to explicate the methods or practices people employ to assemble the actions and activities of everyday life.” (cf.166).

Hutchby with Woofit (1998) further describe the qualitative research design in CA as building "collections" of objective examples of conversational phenomena and examining patterns in the sequential arrangement of talk-in-interaction are the two main focuses of conversation analysis. With the help of this method, researchers can make solid assertions about the successful completion of mutually recognisable interactional tasks and the strategic uses of conversational sequences.

Our data will be collected, assembled and transferred into multimodal transcriptions using transcriptional conventions according to Jefferson (2004), which were supplemented with embodied conduct records. Then they are to be firstly studied via unmotivated looking, which ten Have and Psathas (1995) introduce as the initial step in conversation analysis, involving repeated exploration of the same data for understanding what is happening without searching for a pre-identified or pre-theorized phenomenon, requiring the analyst to be open to discovering the nature of the data rather than imposing interpretations on it.

After finding a reoccurring phenomenon, the transcriptions are going to be analyzed multimodally, which (Goodwin, 2012) describes as an examination of how

speech, gestures, body language, and spatial organization interact, including reviewing the coordination of various modalities, transcribing both verbal and non-verbal elements, and analysing video data. This methodology offers insights into how various modalities affect how interactions are organized and how conversational structures are created.

#### Data

Data utilized for this thesis was gathered at the Czech University of Hradec Králové in the fall of 2022. Eighteen video recordings were gathered from a segment of an oral exam in general English and then transcribed for further analysis. It's important to note that all recordings were made with the consent of the students and teachers, and that they did not disrupt the exam proceedings. The data for this thesis was collected from the speaking part of an overall exam that follows the form of a B2 exam from the Cambridge B2 First handbook for teachers.

There are four sections to the speaking exam. The examiner questions each student individually about their lives, interests, and hobbies in the first section. Students must compare and describe two images for the second part. The third part involves students discussing a problem together. In the fourth and final section, students respond to questions that are thematically based on the previous task. The exam lasts for about 14 minutes overall, but if there are trios, it lasts for 20 minutes.

Grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation, and interactive communication are the assessment criteria used to judge how well students performed on the speaking exam. For the purpose of this thesis, particular attention is given to Discourse Management and Interactive Communication as these assessment scales contain criteria relevant to the study of interaction. These criteria include using a variety of cohesive devices and discourse markers, speaking for extended periods of time despite hesitancy, initiating and responding appropriately, and maintaining and developing the interaction. In the thesis, the focus is specifically on the second part of Task 3, where students have been discussing a given topic for about 2 minutes with the help of a worksheet (#1). They then have about one minute to choose a single item that they all agree is most crucial. This exam section is of particular interest for research on interactional competence and the dynamics of student collaboration and communication to reach a shared decision.

. In addition to the students, who were grouped in pairs or groups of three, an examiner and a researcher were also present in the room. The interaction during the exam was recorded through two cameras, one focused on the students and the other on the

examiner, in addition to a voice recorder set up on the table in between them. It is pertinent to note that although discussions were encouraged at the start of the test and in earlier tasks, they were rarely brought up during the introduction of this specific part.

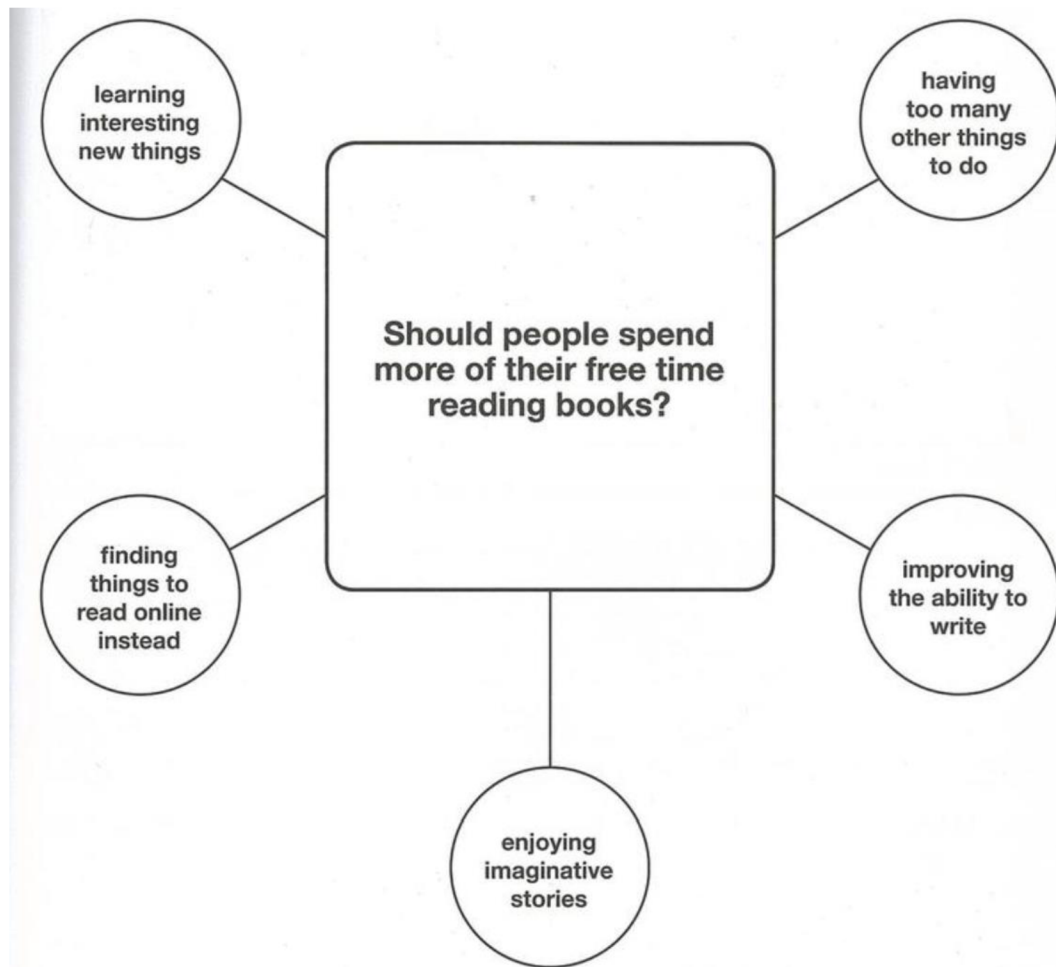


Figure #1

#### Research questions

The two main research questions in this thesis will be investigated through qualitative research using the multimodal conversation analysis method. How does instruction vagueness affect collaborative work during interactions? And does excessive student focus on the worksheet hinder opportunities for effective interaction?

## Analysis of the data

Two intriguing phenomena emerged while employing the method of unmotivated looking to examine the dynamics of student interaction. Firstly, a significant number of students were observed to exhibit a distinct focus on the provided worksheets, diverting their attention away from their peers and obstructing the possibilities of meaningful interaction. Secondly, an omission of assigning the task as collaborative often led into confusion resulting in either unideal task solving or the need for further specifications. These findings shed light on the challenges posed by individualized task engagement, which inherently limits opportunities for collaborative work. In this chapter, I delve into the analysis of this phenomenon, exploring the impact of student focus on the worksheet and task assignment on interactional dynamics.

The following extract demonstrates all the factors which will be the primary focus of the analysis. It shows a combination of elements such as the misunderstanding of the assignment due to suboptimal presentation and students displaying excessive focus on the worksheet, yet additionally showcases an appropriate turn allocation and a successful completion of the task.

**Extract 1** (0.6.wmv; 1:15:36; there is a worksheet (WS) with arguments in front of the students)

- 1 TEA +M. So thank you now you have about  
+Gazes at WS  
+ST1 gazes at TEA  
+ST2 gazes at TEA
- 2 TEA a minut+e to +decide what you think  
+ST1 Glances at WS  
+ST1 Glances at WS
- 3 TEA is the biggest advanta+ge of keeping up to  
+ST2 Glances at WS
- 4 TEA date w+ith all the changes in the world.  
+Makes EC with both ST1 and ST2
- 5 TEA +Once again, what do you think is the biggest advantage  
+ST2 gazes at WS
- 6 TEA of keeping up to date
- 7 TEA with all the changes in the w+orld?  
+ST1 gazes at WS
- 8 (4.6)
- 9 ST2 I think it's advantage in li+ke, you know everything,  
+Makes short EC with TEA
- 10 ST2 so (.) if you need to solve some problem in some
- 11 ST2 kind of stuff like t+echnology, YOU KNOW THAT.  
+ST2 Makes short EC with TEA

12 ST2 If you need to some-  
13 ST2 +Solve something in fashion, you know t+hat.  
+ST2 Makes EC with TEA +ST1 gazes at ST2  
14 ST2 But, it's not possible, to know ev+erything  
+ST2 makes EC with TEA  
15 ST2 in these days with all the technology stuff.  
16 TEA You have to decid+e tog+ether.  
+Points at both students  
+ST2 Lks at WS  
+ST1 Lks at ST2  
17 ST2 Heh-heh, (2.3) What do y+ou think?  
+Makes short EC with ST1  
+ST1 gazes at WS  
18 ST1 Oh, +heh-heh  
+Leans forward and back  
+ST2 Lks at WS  
19 ST1 Um, I think that +you're right (1.2) um  
+ST2 Lks at ST1 +ST2 Glances at WS  
20 (4.5)  
21 ST1 Today +is (.) um, technology (.)  
+ST2 Lks at WS  
22 ST1 and a people can um find it  
23 ST1 on internet +(.)  
+Glances at and makes short EC with ST2 (#2)  
+ST2 Glances at ST1 and raises their  
eyebrows (#3)



Figure #2



Figure #3

24 ST2 [Yeah, yeah like]  
25 ST1 if (.) they want to.  
26 ST2 now with the +internet and all the information there.  
+Glances at ST1  
27 ST2 +I THI+NK WE DON'T NEED TO KNOW EVERYTHING  
+Lks at ST1  
+ST2 Gazes away  
28 ST2 BECAUSE WE CAN FIND IT ON THE INTER+NET, do you agree?  
+ST1 makes EC ST2  
29 ST1 +Yeah, yeah I agr+ee.  
+Lks at WS +ST2 Glances at WS  
+ST2 makes short EC with TEA  
30 TEA Thank you, so now we are going to talk together.

In the lines 1 to 7, TEA begins by giving instructions for the following tasks. Firstly, he makes sure to grab students' attention and then follows by telling the students they have a minute to decide upon the biggest advantage of keeping up to date with news. Then, a 4.6-second pause in line 8 follows as students gaze at the worksheet.

Lines 9 to 15 are compounded of ST2 stating both their opinion and the reasoning behind it. During this, specifically in the lines 9, 11, 13 and 14, ST2 makes series of short gazes towards the TEA resulting in eye contact. In line 15, ST2 finishes their statement while maintaining long eye contact with TEA. Immediately after that, TEA uses the opportunity of said eye contact and tells students that the decision should be made together in the line 16. ST1 reacts to this information with a chuckle in line 17, followed by a 2.3-second pause and an explicit allocation in both verbal and non-verbal forms.

ST1, after being asked on their own opinion, uses this turn to first agree with ST2 in lines 18 and 19 and then takes a 4.5 second pause to think of their own opinion which ST1 presents in the lines 21 to 23. Whilst ST1 is speaking, they do not look up from the worksheet at all, except for a short glance at ST2 during a short pause in the line 23. This short glance together with falling intonation leads to a speech overlap in the line 24, as ST2 uses the opportunity of this TRP whilst ST1 adds an increment (Schegloff, 2007) to their speech. ST2 continues to speak in the lines 26 to 28. Whilst ST1 is gazing at the paper. As ST2 is trying to get ST1's attention, their speech in lines 27 and 28 gets more emphasised. At the end of line 28, when ST1 makes eye contact with ST2, ST2 asks ST1 if they agree with what was said, trying to reach the final decision and with it a solution to the task, to which ST1 responds with agreement in line 29. ST2 then makes eye contact with TEA signalling the end of the task, which TEA in line 25 accepts.

A number of significant findings are highlighted by the analysis. First of all, the interaction's initial 4.6-second pause can be attributed to the typical response delay and does not signify confusion because ST2 immediately reacts with a well-organized response. Notably, ST2's answer was marked by a series of quick glances at TEA rather than ST1, suggesting a more monologue-like exchange that constrained the possibility for a discussion.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the teacher's clarification of the task in line 16 ensured its proper completion, followed by ST2's chuckle indicating acknowledgment. Additionally, lines 23-24 show the ability of ST2 to track the incoming TRP and correctly time the start of its turn, which can be considered a subset of IC.



From the perspective of participation frameworks, ST1 chose TEA as the addressee up to line 15 creating a student-examiner participation framework, which led into much less interactive task solving. On the contrary, when they were told to work together by the examiner in line 16, the participation framework changed into a student-student participation framework and as we could see throughout the rest of the task, this framework was supporting collaboration as the students were focusing on each other leaving the examiner as side recipient.

Ultimately, both students reach an agreement and successfully complete the task, but it is noteworthy that the teacher had to explicitly encourage them to find the solution together, as the interaction initially lacked spontaneous collaboration.

The next extract also shows a situation where the task instructions are not sufficiently clear and the students' visual attention is focused on the worksheet, impeding interaction. This extract varies from the others in that it also exhibits an interesting form of turn allocation.

**Extract 2** (0.6.wmv; 1:55:20; there is a worksheet (WS) with arguments in front of the students)

1 TEA +Okay, now (.) +thank you, um, you have about a minute,  
+is looking at WS  
+glances at ST1  
+ST1 Gazes at TEA  
+ST2 Gazes at TEA

2 TEA to decide, which is the most +impo+rtant reason,  
+ST2 Gazes at WS  
+ST1 Gazes at WS

3 TEA +for changing the way we spend our free time.  
4 (2.8)  
+ST1 makes EC with TEA

5 ST1 Um, shall we discuss it?

6 TEA Yes.

7 ST1 +Yeah, um (2.4)+ well from my+ experience, eh,  
+Lks back at WS.  
+Gazes at ST2  
+ST2 makes EC with ST1

8 ST1 I have already the fami+ly and the+ kids and emm,  
+Gazes at WS  
+ST2 Gazes at WS

9 ST1 I prefer to spend the time with the::, with the::,  
10 ST1 family outside, or doing some exercise,  
11 ST1 I (want) to sho:w u:p +to my eh, ki-,  
+Lks around

12 ST1 eh +(.)+children um,  
+Makes EC with ST2  
+ST2 Gazes at ST1

13 ST1 th- make+ oppo+rtunities what they  
+ST2 Gazes at WS  
+Gazes at WS

14 ST1 can do, their life just consists in front of

15 ST1 the TV or in front of the in+ternet,  
+ST2 Leans back

16 ST1 so,+ maybe it+'s different, then, yo+ur opinion.  
+Gazes at ST2 (#4)  
+ST2 makes EC with ST1(#5)  
+ST2 Leans forward  
+ST2 Gazes at WS(#6)



Figure #4  
Figure #5  
Figure #6

17 ST2

[A:::h]

18 ST2 =no-, a::h, ye-, I uders--+ eh  
+ST1 Glances at ST2

19 ST2 I a- agree with you a:h, a:h,

20 ST2 +for me, umm, meeting friends, spending more,  
+ST1 Glances at ST2

21 ST2 eh, time outside, I, I r+eally need it, and I really  
+ST1 Glances at ST2

22 ST2 like it, beca:use eh of my +eh health  
+Makes short EC with ST1

23 ST2 and I think It's imortant for, everyone (.)

24 ST2 for +healt- life.  
+glances at TEA

25 TEA +Thank you.  
+Leans forward and clicks their tongue.

In the lines 1 to 3, TEA gives instructions for the upcoming task, telling students to decide on the most important reason for changing the way people spend their free time. When TEA mentions the words “important reason” both students gaze at the worksheet in front of them.

Then a 2.8-second-long pause comes in the line 4, throughout which ST1 makes eye contact with TEA and asks them for if the task should be solved via discussion in line

5. TEA ensures students in the line 6, which leads into ST1 opening up the discussion in the lines 7 to 16.

Firstly, in the line 7, ST1 acknowledges TEA, uses a turn-holding token (Schegloff, 1982) to stay the current speaker and after a 2.4-second-long pause gazes onto ST2 to check for reciprocity and starts their speech. After maintaining the short eye contact, ST1 gazes onto the worksheet in the line 8, which is quickly followed by ST2 gazing onto the worksheet as well. This gaze stays unbroken until the line 11, where ST1 looks around, which in line 12 prompts ST2 to gaze on ST1 who then makes an eye contact before returning back to the worksheet, which ST1 follows.

The line 16, last one of this turn, consists of ST1 finishing their speech whilst gazing at ST2 and mentioning their opinion. After doing so, ST2 quickly leans forward and gazes at the worksheet. Slightly startled by sudden turn allocation, they overlap ST1's final word in the line 17 and still gazing at the paper begin their turn by a number of turn-holding tokens and self-repairs (Kitzinger, 2013) in the line 18, which also includes agreement with the choice of ST1.

ST2's turn lasts from the lines 17 to 24, in which two different reasons are stated, one of them shared with ST1. During these lines, ST2 remains gazing onto the worksheet, with an exception of a short eye contact with ST1 in line 22, who is glancing at ST2 throughout the whole turn. Finally, at the end of their turn in the line 24, ST2 glances at TEA whilst completing their turn. TEA thanks students in the line 25, showing satisfaction with their answer.

The analysis of the extract reveals important findings about the interaction. The initial instructions lacked clarity, but ST1's inquiry in line 4 about the need for discussion helped establish a clearer understanding and promoted more interaction between the students. This could have been avoided by using the word "together" or "discussion" whilst presenting the task to the students.

Moreover, the actions accompanying lines 11 to 13 are particularly noteworthy. Although ST1 had already chosen the reason from the worksheet, they returned their gaze to the paper before making eye contact with ST2. This may have led to a messy turn allocation in line 16, where ST1 completed their turn unexpectedly, resulting in ST2's overlapping speech, a rapid turn opening and several self-repairs. This sequence highlights the significance of eye contact and turn-taking cues in smooth conversation flow.

However, ST1's agreement in line 19 demonstrated active listening and engagement, indicating successful interaction. In conclusion, while the students managed to engage in dialogue and successfully complete the task in a student-student participation framework, improvements could be made to enhance interaction, particularly by minimizing reliance on the worksheet which hindered the collaboration.

The upcoming extract shows yet another case of insufficient instructions as well as distinctive form of turn-taking, observable in both turn beginning and turn conclusion. In these instances, student's focus is shifting from the worksheet to the TEA, but never to other students, allowing us to further explore the potential implications of this gaze pattern on student interaction, collaborative decision-making and overall task solving.

**Extract 3** (22-04-11\_05\_full.mp4; 14:11; there is a worksheet (WS) with arguments in front of the students; there are 3 students in the room this time)

1 TEA +okay, so now, you have about+ a minute  
+ST2 gazes at TEA +ST3 Gazes at TEA

2 TEA +to decide what y+ou th+ink is the best  
+Makes eye contact with each student one by one  
+TEA Lks at WS and points at  
+ST2 Lks at the WS  
+ST3 Lks at the WS

3 TEA reason for+ learning new things without a teacher.  
+ST1 Lks at the WS

4 (3.7)

5 ST2 without+ (.) the +teacher  
+glances at TEA  
+ST3 Lks at ST2  
+ST3 Lks at WS

6 TEA +mm.  
+ST2 nods head

7 (1.2)

8 ST3 what is the best↓  
+frowns

9 (9.0)

10 ST3 for me+ it's--+ I think +It's +the first one,  
+ST1 lks at ST3 +ST1 lks back at WS  
+ST2 Lks at ST3 +ST2 lks back at WS

11 ST3 being independent (.)because I think we can

12 ST3 (.) get +help online um like  
+makes EC with TEA

13 ST3 anywhere, everywhere.

14 ST3 +it doesn't+ mat+ter if I'm +having a teacher heh, um  
+lks at ST2+lks back at at WS  
+TEA Lks at ST1 and ST2 (#7-8)  
+ST2 Lks at ST3  
+ST2 Lks back at WS



front of them. As soon as TEA makes eye contact with all the students, they focus on the worksheet in line 2, leading to ST2 and ST3 looking at said worksheet. Line 4 consists of a 3.7-second-long pause explained in line 5, which shows the self-allocation of a turn by ST2 followed by a repetition by the end of the task instructions. This repetition serves the purpose of asking for reassurance, which can be proven by the ST2's glance at TEA implicating ST2 is awaiting an answer, which is given by TEA in line 6.

Then, a short pause follows in line 7 as all the students are looking into the worksheet. This pause likely emphasizes the confusion of students, which is underlined even more the line 8 with the unfinished statement of ST3 followed by a frown. The line 9 is the final proof of the said possible misunderstood assignment, as it contains 9.0 seconds of silence complemented by all the students gazing at the paper.

Following lines 10 to 14 show a self-allocated turn by ST3, which might have been unexpected by ST1 and ST2, judging from line 10 as they both look at ST3 when they start speaking. Shortly after ST1 and ST2 gaze back to their paper. The lack of interaction between students in this turn could be allotted to the ST1 and ST2 orientation towards the worksheet and written arguments, or to them still being slightly confused by the instructions. In these lines, ST3 states their answer as well as the reasoning behind it.

In the line 14, TEA unsuccessfully tries to make eye contact with both ST1 and ST2, prompting them for a next turn before ST3 ends their statement with a short laugh followed by a silent focus on the worksheet. Both TEA's unsuccessful try and other student's focus towards worksheet combined with the missing allocation of the next speaker in any other form than laughter have led to 3.5 more seconds of silence in the line 15.

In line 16 yet another speaker, this time ST2, self-allocates, first announcing himself as a speaker by producing a short hesitation token "um", and continuing to state their answer up to line 24. Whilst speaking, ST2 makes a series of short eye contact with TEA likely checking reciprocity from them as can be observed from their nodding.

Another thing is happening whilst ST2 is finishing their turn in line 24, and that is ST1 making eye contact with TEA. This eye contact is quickly followed by ST1 taking their turn and stating their answer in lines 25 to 27.

ST2 indicates the end of the task by nodding at the examiner, who chooses to be satisfied with the answer, as we can see in line 28.

A closer examination of the extract provides several significant observations about the interaction during the task. Firstly, there was no mention of the task being a

collaborative discussion in lines 1 to 3 of the instructions provided by TEA. As a result, there was little to no conversation among the students, as well as even less visible interaction. This is clear from the students' unwavering attention to their worksheets and the absence of dialogue between them.

Furthermore, the self-allocation of turns was prevalent throughout the entirety of the task, with just a single exception. ST1, in line 25, opened their turn once they made eye contact with TEA. This brief moment of gaze allocation, initiated by the teacher, demonstrated ST1's attentiveness to possible transitions and suggested a monitoring of the conversation flow, even in the absence of active interaction between the students.

Additionally, although ST2 checked for reciprocity from TEA by means of short eye contacts during their turn, there was no evidence of reciprocity checks toward other participants. This further endorses the limited interaction and lack of engagement among the students.

Despite each student providing their individual opinions and explanations, there was no collective agreement or evidence of collaborative decision-making. The entire task was held in a student-examiner participation framework and thus remained individualistic, as the students remained side participants and did not actively seek an agreement or engage in a discussion to reach a consensus.

In conclusion, the absence of clear instructions for collaborative discussion, paired with a predominant pattern of self-allocation and minimal interaction with student's focus on the worksheet, impeded students' capacities to engage in meaningful dialogue and reach a shared conclusion. While individual opinions were expressed, the task did not foster an environment conducive to active discussion and cooperation among the students.

The following extract shares not only the unclear instructions, but it also includes a undesirable form of turntaking. Overall, it is a noteworthy example of one of the least desirable methods for completing the task, displaying a situation in which the teacher takes on the role of a discussion moderator rather than altering the task assignment or letting students work independently.

**Extract 4** (22-04-13\_03\_full.mp4; 16:21; there is a worksheet (WS) with arguments in front of the students; there are 3 students in the room this time)

```
1      TEA      +Thank you
           +Smiles and gazes at the WS
           +ST1 Gazes at TEA
           +ST2 Gazes at TEA
           +ST3 Gazes at TEA
```

2 TEA +Now you have about a minute to decide  
 +Makes EC with all three students

3 TEA what you think is the +best reason for people to spend  
 +ST2 Glances at WS

4 TEA more of their free time reading +books  
 +ST1 Gazes at WS  
 +ST2 Gazes at WS  
 +ST3 Gazes at WS

5 (21,2)  
 +ST2 Glances at ST1 (#11) +ST1 glances at ST3 (#12)



Figure #11

Figure #12

6 TEA +Aneta?  
 +Lks at ST2

7 ST2 +Em: I think the best reason, is probably, improving the  
 +ST1 Gazes at ST2  
 +ST3 Glances at ST2 +ST3 Glances at ST2

8 ST2 ability to write

9 ST2 +because we are talking about the children,  
 +Makes EC with TEA

10 ST2 so+, yeah, +that's probably  
 +Gazes onto the WS  
 + Gazes on ST1  
 +ST1 Lks around

11 TEA +Martina, do you agree?  
 +Gazes on ST1  
 +ST3 gazes on ST1

12 ST1 +Well I like learning new things, +so:: I- I: search:,  
 +Gazes at WS +ST3 gazes on WS

13 ST1 I look for interesting topics to read, but,

14 ST1 in a global point of view, the literacy is very

15 ST1 important and+ reami- reading really enables people  
 +ST2 gazes on WS

16 ST1 +to- to learn re- reading and to work with the  
 +ST2 gazes on ST1

17 ST1 la+nguage, with words, they can learn the grammar rules  
 +Gazes away

18 ST1 reading to, to fix them, well, +so.  
 +Lks at TEA  
 +TEA nods head

19 TEA +Thank+ you. Eliška?  
 +ST3 Makes EC with TEA  
 +ST2 Gazes at TEA

20 ST3 +Um:: +I think um: for education um, is +um: (.)



		+Lks at WS		+Lks at TEA
		+ST2 Gazes on ST3		
		+ST1 gazes at ST3		
21	ST3	really important, for normal life		
22	ST3	is- em it is+n't too much.		
		+Shakes head		
23	TEA	All right, thank you.		

Similarly, to previous extracts, TEA thanks students and begins by giving instructions in the lines 1 to 4. Line 1 consists of TEA thanking students for previous responses. During doing so, all students gaze at them. Then in line 2 TEA checks reciprocity of all the student's whilst presenting the task and during lines 3 and 4, when TEA asks what the best reason for people to spend more of their time reading books, everyone focuses on the worksheet.

Next, a lengthy 21.2 second pause follows in line 5, during which only two gaze changes appear. In one instance, ST2 glances at ST1, who later on looks towards ST3, however students spend most of this time gazing at the worksheet on the table, probably searching for the most suitable answer. Resulting in no eye contacts being made during this turn.

Following said pause, TEA decides to allocate ST2 as the next speaker by simply saying their name with an interrogative intonation in the line 6. ST2 immediately starts their speech in the lines 7 to 10 answering TEA's question. Except for not supporting their answer with many arguments, ST2 still manages to properly answer said question, eliminating the possibility of the previous pause occurring because of student's nonunderstanding of the task. ST2's turn conclusion in line 10 is accompanied by an eye contact with TEA, followed by a slower speech tempo and a glance towards the worksheet and gaze on ST1, who does look around but doesn't get to make eye contact before TEA allocates them as the second speaker in the line 11.

After being asked on their agreement by TEA in line 11, ST1 begins their speech in line 12 which lasts until line 18. During this turn, ST1 doesn't gaze or look towards any of the other students. Firstly, they focus on the worksheet in line 11, and this focus lasts until line 17, in which ST1 gazes away towards the end of their turn. Finally, at the end of line 18, ST1 looks at TEA together with using some turn-final particles such as "well" and "so". TEA nods and thanks ST2 for their answer in line 19.

ST3 makes eye contact with TEA at the beginning of line 19, which is followed by them taking their turn. This speech carries from lines 20 to 22 and not only doesn't

answer the question but is also accompanied by the same gazes as the previous one, that being towards the worksheet and TEA, without any interaction with other students. Finally in the line 23, TEA ends this part of the exam.

The analysis of the chosen extract brings a number of major findings about the dynamics and interaction among the students. The same problem of the students failing to engage in meaningful discussion and interaction is present as there are no explicit instructions for collaborative work, as seen in earlier extracts.

Particularly, the prolonged pause in line 5, which is denoted by minimal eye contact and gaze exchanges, shows there was little interaction during this turn. Additionally, because TEA chose to allocate the next speaker in line 11, when ST2 concluded their turn with a slower speech rate and a gaze toward the worksheet and ST1, the chance for a natural transition or allocation via gaze was lost, disrupting the potential for interaction and diminishing the collaborative nature of the task. Moreover, when a TRP comes with ST1's turn-final particles, ST3 still focuses on the worksheet, as they are probably waiting for TEA's prompt.

Finally, line 19 shows an immediate orientation of ST3 towards TEA after ST2 finishes their speech, which means that ST3 is oriented towards the interaction pattern that TEA has set in previous replicas. Among other things, this suggests that once the TEA gets around to explicitly eliciting students, the chances that they will still engage in the discussion themselves are quite small

Overall, as seen in various lines throughout the extract, the students' attention to the worksheet and student-examiner participation framework during their turns prevents them from engaging in meaningful interaction with their peers. These findings highlight the value of providing clear instructions for group discussion and encouraging student participation in order to facilitate productive conversation and decision-making.

Successive extract provides another case of students' strong concentration on the examiner and their scant attention to one another. Unlike the previous extract both students displayed a commendable level of interactional competence not only in this particular task but also throughout the entirety of the test. Therefore, it is especially interesting to note the contrast between their interactive competence and the lack of interaction in between each other.

**Extract 5** (22-04-11\_04\_full.mp4; 10:43; there is a worksheet (WS) with arguments in front of the students)

1 TEA +OK, +so thank you, and+ now+



25           (2.4)  
               +ST2 makes short EC with TEA  
 26    ST2    Or if it's like, +I don't know (.)  
                                   +ST1 gazes at ST2  
 27    ST2    you could learn things at like +work  
                                                   +ST2 Glances at TEA  
 28    ST2    +you are starting to work somewhere  
               +ST1 Lks at the WS  
 29    ST2    and if you have +like a teacher,  
                                   +Makes short EC with TEA  
 30    ST2    then you can learn stuff +really +quickly  
                                                   +ST1 Lks at ST2  
                                                           +Makes EC with TEA  
                                                           +TEA nods  
 31    ST2    if you try to figure them out on your +own,  
                                                           +Glances at TEA  
 32    ST2    then it's going to be harder and you are  
 33    ST2    going to make +mistakes, so:+  
                                                   +ST1 gazes at TEA  
                                                           +ST2 Lks at ST1, then TEA  
 34            (1.9)  
 35    TEA    Okay, thank you.

The task begins with TEA giving instructions over the lines 1 to 5, with an exception of line 2, in which ST1 already shows signs of interactive listening by saying yeah in a light-hearted tone as TEA thanks participants for the completion of previous task. It is important to note that whilst the task is meant to be resolved via discussion and a common agreement, there is no mention of the word “together” or “discuss” in the instructions.

Then an 8.7 second pause takes place in the line 6, as the students are confused on what they are supposed to do. After a showcase of said confusion by ST2 in line 7 is shown, a further specification of task instructions is requested by both ST1 in line 8 ST2 in line 9. TEA follows up by repeating the task instructions over the lines 10 and 11.

Both ST2 and ST1 affirm their understanding of the task in lines 12 and 13 which are followed by ST2 stating their answer over the lines 14 to 19. For the majority of their answer, ST2 focuses on the worksheet, except for a check for reciprocity towards TEA in line 16 which is met with a nod from TEA, and another glance in line 19, which together with falling intonation results in relinquishing the floor.

This orientation of speech and interaction towards TEA is then also noticeable in the line 20, in which ST1 becomes the current speaker after taking advantage of this TRP, showcasing their interactional competence, as ST1 makes eye contact with the examiner rather than ST2 to whom they should be speaking to. ST1 proceeds to give their answer over the lines 22 to 24, ending their turn with yet another eye contact with TEA.

After a 2.4 second long pause in line 25 in which ST2 makes eye contact with TEA, ST2 gives another argument over the lines 26 to 33. Over these lines, their gaze transfers from worksheet to TEA on multiple occasions. Whilst this is happening, ST1 gazes towards ST2 twice, possibly trying to spark interaction.

Finally, ST2 relinquishes the floor whilst gazing at TEA again in line 33. ST1 also proceeds to gaze at TEA, but unlike in previous occasions, they do not begin speaking. A last short pause appears in line 34. It is probable that this pause appeared thanks to said gaze from ST1, as TEA might have considered it to be a sign of them becoming the next speaker. TEA then thanks students in line 35.

The extract that is being presented sheds light on a significant area of our thesis research. The students' interactions with one another were significantly impacted by the task's inadequately provided instructions, as collaborative completion of the task was not verbally requested in this part. The limited peer interaction was all the more intriguing because it became clear throughout the exam that both students possessed commendable levels of interactional competence. This result was probably influenced by said unclear task instructions.

The task indicated that the students were uncertain of their roles and responsibilities. The need for more precise instructions is highlighted by their subsequent requests for additional details. Notably, a pattern that was repeatedly seen throughout the exam showed that both ST1 and ST2 relied on the examiner for confirmation and approval during their turns, leading into a student-examiner participation framework. This excessive emphasis on interacting with the examiner rather than with one another begs the question of how task design and instructional clarity can affect how interactional focus is distributed.

The subsequent extract shows yet another student-teacher oriented task solving. It also stands out for a number of compelling factors. First of all, it is the first time the word "Together" was used in the task instruction to denote a collaborative approach. Nevertheless, despite this clear instruction, the students found it difficult to complete the task's collaborative component, with only one student offering an answer in place of group problem-solving. Secondly, it is also compelling for further in-depth analysis due to the contrast between students' communication with the examiner and the lack of interaction among themselves.

**Extract 6** (22-05-9\_01\_full.mp4; 15:48; there is a worksheet (WS) with arguments in front of the students; there are 3 students in the room this time)

1 TEA +Now, +you have about a minute+ to decide,  
 +All students gaze at TEA  
 +ST1 and ST2 gaze at WS +ST2 gazes at TEA

2 TEA +TOGETHER, what you think is the+ biggest advantage of  
 +ST1 glances at TEA  
 +ST2 Lks at WS  
 +ST3 gazes at WS +ST3 lks at TEA

3 TEA keeping up to date with all the changes+ in the world.  
 +ST3 Lks at WS

4 (16.1)  
 +TEA tries to make EC with any student.

5 TEA +So+ what do you think are the bigges- is the biggest  
 +gazes on WS  
 +ST2 Lks at TEA

6 TEA advantage of keeping up to date with+ the changes  
 +ST2 Lks at WS

7 TEA In the world

8 (15.9)  
 +TEA tries to make EC with any student  
 +ST2 Glances at TEA

9 ST3 I +don't know+  
 +ST1 Gazes at ST3  
 +ST3 makes EC with ST1

10 ST1 +Um, +I think tha:t uh, you: +uhh, you didn't  
 +Gazes at WS +Gazes away  
 +ST2 glances at ST1

11 ST1 become a some some kind of +umm (.) uh em a-  
 +Gazes at WS

12 ST1 a- old+ people, +old person +(but that your  
 +ST2 Glances at ST1 (#15)+Makes EC with TEA  
 +TEA slightly nods  
 +ST2 Glances at TEA (#16)



Figure #15



Figure #16

13 ST1 taste), because when you know what's going +on,  
 +EC with TEA

14 ST1 when you know+ all the changes+, when you keep up umm,  
 +Lks at WS +ST2 Lks at ST1

15 ST1 keep up to date, with them+, uhh,  
 +ST2 Lks at WS

16 ST1 you are uhh, +in line if I would,  
 +Gazes at TEA and gestures with hand

17 ST1 +um if I can +say that, so you um you wouldn't be  
 +Lks at WS +Glances at TEA  
 18 ST1 +so different and you know what +happens  
 +Makes EC with TEA +TEA nods  
 +ST1 Glances at ST2  
 19 TEA Okay, thank you.

The task is opened by TEA as they give instructions from the lines 1 to 3. It is crucial to point out that the word “together” is not only used in the line 2, but also stressed by the examiner. Whilst TEA is finishing giving instructions, all the students are deeply gazing into the worksheet.

Line 4 consists of an unnaturally long 16.1 second pause, throughout which is TEA unsuccessfully trying to make eye contact with any student. After these attempts, TEA proceeds to repeat the question through the lines 5 to 7 with only ST2 lifting their gaze from the worksheet for a moment. This repetition of task question does not change much, as another long 15.9 second pause follows in line 8, during which students still gaze into the worksheet the whole time, with an exception of a short glance from ST2 towards TEA.

We finally begin to see some activity from students themselves, as ST3 expresses their inability to solve the task in line 9. During this short utterance, ST1 and ST3 form a very short eye contact which is the only interaction in between the students for the entirety of this task. It may very well be this eye contact, which prompts ST1 to state their opinion over the lines 10 to 18. Throughout their whole statement ST3 doesn't lift their gaze off of the worksheet and ST2 only makes few short glances not resulting in any interaction. The only interaction noticeable all over this turn is in between ST1 and TEA, as they make few eyes contact which TEA supports with nodding his head.

At last, as ST1 finishes their point, TEA tries to make eye contact with the remaining students. With them still gazing into the worksheet silently, TEA decides to end this part of the task and thanks ST1 for their answer in line 19.

The analyzed extract provides a distinctive and noteworthy window into how the students interacted during the exam. It is noteworthy that this is the first time the word "Together" has appeared in the task instructions, implying the necessity of a collaborative approach. Nevertheless, despite this explicit instruction, the students found it difficult to participate in the task's collaborative component, which resulted in no group problem-solving. The excerpt reveals a startling lack of interaction among the students, who were primarily absorbed in their worksheets and did not engage in conversation.

The primary interaction that was seen during the task was between ST1 and the examiner (TEA), as ST1 actively engaged with TEA, sharing their opinion and receiving acknowledgement through eye contact and nodding. The other students (ST2 and ST3), in contrast, showed little to none interest in both the examiner and current speaker and kept their eyes focused on the worksheet. The overabundance of interaction between ST1 and TEA also contributed to the environment in which student interaction was essentially nonexistent.

Opportunities for eye contact and potential interactions were also significantly hampered by the students' intense concentration on the worksheet. They were unable to have meaningful conversations with one another as a result of their extreme preoccupation, which prevented the collaborative problem-solving that the task had called for.

In conclusion, whilst this excerpt doesn't necessarily showcase the value of giving clear instructions and opportunities for student-student interaction during tasks, it highlights the potential drawbacks of using worksheets and relying solely on a student-examiner framework during tasks.

Following extract is used as the final piece for analysis in this thesis due to the distinctive behaviour displayed by the participants, as in contrast to the previous extracts, students' focus is primarily directed towards one another rather than TEA or the worksheet placed on the table, which renders it particularly appealing for in-depth analysis. Notably the students ask for additional clarification in addition to a repetition of the task instructions.

**Extract 7** (22-04-13\_02\_full.mp4; 10:19; there is a worksheet (WS) with arguments in front of the students)

1	TEA	+Now you have about a minute to de+cide +Makes eye contact with both students  +ST1 Gazes at TEA +ST2 Gazes at TEA  +Gazes at WS
2	TEA	what you think is the best reason for people to spend
3	TEA	more of+ their free time reading books.  +ST2 Lks at WS
4	(3.1)	+ST1 Gazes away
5	ST2	+Can you repeat, please? +Makes eye contact with TEA +ST1 Lks at TEA
6	TEA	+Sure (.)



+ST1 Glances at ST2  
 +ST2 Gazes at WS  
 7 TEA +What is the best reason for people  
 +ST2 Gazes at TEA  
 8 TEA to spend more of their free time reading books  
 9 (5.4)  
 +ST1 Glances at ST2, WS, TEA, and ST2 again  
 +ST2 Gazes at WS  
 10 ST1 +For me, it's discuss, is discussing also? Or+ (.)  
 +Makes eye contact with TEA  
 +ST2 Lks at ST1  
 +ST2 Gazes at TEA  
 11 TEA [Eh]  
 12 ST1 +=you have to answer it to you  
 +ST2 Leans back  
 13 TEA [you- y- you should]  
 14 TEA =decide, tog+ether, as that  
 +ST1 Lks at ST2  
 +Points at ST2  
 15 ST1 [Together]  
 16 ST2 Oh  
 +Gazes away  
 +ST1 Lks at WS  
 17 TEA [Yup]  
 18 ST2 +Em (.) Yeah, as- as you+ said before, the s- social  
 +ST1 Gazes at ST2  
 +Points and glances at ST1  
 19 ST2 media can serve you false in+formation, fake news, so, em  
 +Makes short EC with ST1  
 +ST1 nods (#17)



Figure #17

20 ST2 (.) +I think the reason to reading more books might be  
 +Gazes at WS  
 21 ST2 +The educational reason.  
 +Lks at ST1  
 22 ST2 (.) To just know the right information (.)  
 23 ST1 +Ye:s, +I agree, an+d (.) also it +could be for your  
 +Lks away +Lks at WS +Lks away+Glances at ST1  
 +Glances at WS  
 24 ST1 communication and having better skills in +emm:  
 +Smacks lips  
 +ST2 Nods

25 ST2 =Vocabulary?

26 ST1 =+Vocabulary, yes+, em::+ (1.8)  
 +Lks at ST1 +Gazes away  
 +Chuckles and shrugs shoulders

27 ST2 +So yea these+ two things  
 +Makes short eye contact with TEA  
 +Lks and points at ST1

28 ST2 Educational reason and +vocabulary  
 +Lks at TEA

29 ST1 +[Yes] [Vocab-]+  
 +Chuckles and Lks at TEA +Glances at ST2

30 ST1 +yes  
 +Makes eye contact with TEA and nods

31 TEA Thank you.

TEA begins by giving the instructions to the task in lines 1 to 3. Interestingly, the student's focus doesn't shift from TEA on the worksheet during this time as in many other occasions. Then a 3.1 second pause takes place in the line 4, which is immediately explained when ST2 asks for a repetition for instructions in the line 5. TEA, after agreeing to in line 6, proceeds to repeat the instructions over the lines 7 and 8. This is followed by a longer 5.4 second pause in line 9, during which ST1 looks around seemingly confused, probably searching for an eye contact.

After finally ST1 finally makes the eye contact with TEA in the line 10, they ask for further specification of the task, wondering if they shall discuss the topic or solve the task in a different way. TEA, already understanding what ST1's question is about, tries to answer overlapping student's speech in the line 11 and then 13 again, as ST1 is finishing their turn in line 12. TEA further specifies that the decision should be made together in the line 14, which ST1 overlaps acknowledging their answer by repeating the word "together" in the line 15.

ST2 also shows reciprocity and late understanding of the task goal saying "oh", a change of state token (Heritage, 1984), in line 16, which TEA overlaps in the line 17 with verbal agreement to ST1's repetition of the word. ST2 continues with their turn in the lines 18 to 22, beginning by using a turn-holding token, short pause and then stating both their chosen reason and argumentation behind it. During these turns, ST1 is focused on ST2 with ST2 making several glances and thus eye contacts with them. Shortly after ST2 concludes their turn in line 22 whilst looking at ST1, they begin theirs in line 23 by first agreeing with ST2 and then stating their answer over the lines 23 and 24.

A notable exchange can be found in lines 24 to 25, where ST1 briefly struggles to find the right word before being helped by ST2 in line 25. ST1 accepts this help in the line 26 and as they show signs of struggle by the end of this line, ST2 takes the initiative and offers a solution to the task, articulating both of the aforementioned reasons over the lines 27 and 28. ST1 overlaps ST2's speech twice in line 29, first to show agreement with ST1 and second to state their own reason as well. Finally, ST1 states their agreement once again in line 30 whilst making an eye contact with TEA, who decides to accept two reasons as an adequate answer by thanking students in line 31.

The analysis of this extract provides us with several distinctive features which set it apart from other extracts in this study. First of all, the students' attention is primarily focused on one another rather than the worksheet, demonstrating a strong inclination towards meaningful interaction and collaboration. This is already clear from the first

phase of instruction delivery, where even with insufficient instructions, the students stay focused on TEA and continue to ask questions to get more information. The students' prompt start of their responses following TEA's specification of instructions shows us the value of well-formed task directions.

In addition, student-student participation framework is deserving of special attention. By maintaining constant eye contact with ST2, ST1 demonstrates interactive listening (Lam, 2021), enabling efficient seeking of transition relevance place and seamless turn-taking. Moreover, ST2 reciprocates this interactional competence by offering assistance and smoothly transitioning to their own turn when ST1 shows signs of completing their speech. The idea that the students will interact meaningfully is supported by this exchange, which demonstrates their collaborative engagement.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the students reach a consensus on two reasons in response to the task. Even though this isn't the best answer to the problem, it shows that there was successful discussion and agreement in the decision-making process. The students' capacity for consensus on multiple points exemplifies their collaborative approach and demonstrates the efficacy of their interaction.

In summary, this extract stands out as an example of the students working together and interacting in a meaningful way. Their attentiveness to one another, prompt responses, effective turn-taking, and capacity for consensus-building all contribute to a dynamic dialogue. These findings underline the significance of minimalized worksheet focus and comprehensive instruction giving, providing evidence in support of the thesis.

## Discussion

This chapter provides a thorough summary of the analysis of the data, focusing on the recurrent phenomena observed in the student interactions within the examined transcripts. Said analysis explored the nuances of instruction delivery and student worksheet focus, looking at how they affected students' interaction with others and decision making in groups. By identifying and exploring these recurring phenomena, we obtained valuable insights into the patterns of interaction among students and the challenges faced in promoting and testing meaningful collaboration.

The primary research issues explored in this chapter revolved around the influence of instruction vagueness and student focus on the worksheet on interactional dynamics. In particular, we sought to comprehend how unclear instructions impede collaborative work and how students' excessive focus on the worksheet reduces chances for effective interaction. Furthermore, we explored the role of turn-taking among students and addressed the processes involved in reaching a consensus and how they related to productive interaction.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, a deeper insight into the analysed data is presented, exploring each recurring phenomenon in detail and seeking to provide a thorough understanding of the variables affecting student interaction and engagement by examining the interactions between instruction delivery, student focus on the worksheet, turn-taking dynamics, and collaborative decision-making.

Ultimately, the findings presented in this chapter should have noteworthy educational implications, emphasizing the value of giving clear instructions and the negative influence of worksheets.

### Instruction Clarity and Collaborative Work:

The data analysis identified a recurrent phenomenon centred on the problem of unclear collaborative work instructions. It was found that despite being encouraged to do so in earlier tasks, students were never given an explicit assignment to collaborate right away in any of the extracts. However, some extracts stood out as students asked for more details about the task.

In extract 1, the teacher provided additional instructions after one student demonstrated signs of independent task-solving. The inclusion of the other student and

the promotion of different forms of interaction both significantly improved as a result of this additional specification.

Additionally, extracts 2 and 7 showed a similar pattern where students requested more detailed instructions from the teacher, which was granted, leading to increased student collaboration.

In contrast, extracts 3,4 and 5 lacked this detail, and while extract 4 showed the teacher taking a particular approach which did not enable students to, extracts 3 and 5 ended with students giving their own answers as opposed to coming to an agreement.

Finally, extract 6 shows us a contrasting phenomenon, in which the examiner stresses the collaborative nature of the task by putting emphasis on the word "together" whilst giving instructions. The students still fail to collaborate together and almost no interaction is shown. This leads us to our second thesis question, as students in extract 6 are focusing on the worksheet much more than they are on each other.

Whilst most results showed that adding the words "together" or "discuss" to the task instructions had a significant impact on how well the task was completed, encouraging student collaboration and promoting meaningful interaction, extract 6 shows us how ineffective it might be when another interaction-hindering phenomenon appears. These findings highlighted the value of explicit instructions that encourage group work and motivate students to have fruitful discussions, however, it also showed that a slight change in instruction might not be enough to spark interaction amongst all speakers.

#### Student Focus on the Worksheet

Within the analysed data, another phenomenon became evident, specifically the intense focus of students on presented worksheets. The students' excessive concentration on provided worksheets at the expense of meaningful interaction was evident in several extracts. Excessive worksheet focus had a negative impact on the interactional dynamics and collaboration due to making it difficult to establish eye contact, gaze exchanges, and nonverbal cues essential to natural conversation flow and turn-taking.

The cooperative character of the task was compromised, over limited opportunities for discussions and joint decision-making. In contrast to this pattern, extract 7 showed an intriguing difference in which students showed a greater concentration on one another than on the worksheet. This change in focus led to increased active listening, quicker turn-taking, and smooth turn allocation. It demonstrated the students' interactional competence and their capacity for cooperative task-solving. The results of

Extract 7 highlight the significance of students shifting focus away from the worksheet, which encourages active engagement.

#### Decision-Making and Consensus

We explored the occurrence of group decision-making and consensus-building in the examined transcripts, as it is crucial to acknowledge that the decision-making process is extremely valuable for interaction testing. Instead of concentrating solely on the decision's outcome, we look more into the students' collaborative skills.

In different extracts, the analysis revealed variations in the presence of collaborative decision-making. Whilst Extracts 1 and 7 show clear examples of group decision-making where students show signs of discussion and work together to come to a consensus, in extracts 3, 4 and 6 students only provide individual responses rather than participating in collective discussion, demonstrating a lack of collaborative decision-making. An intriguing phenomenon is shown in Extracts 2 and 5, where there are some indications of group decision-making yet a final consensus is not reached.

Once again, the significance of clear instructions was a factor in successful group decision-making. Clear instructions provided a foundation for students to comprehend the task requirements, facilitating their participation in interactive discussions and decision-making processes.

#### Participation frameworks

Several distinct participation frameworks emerged during the analysis of the extracts. The two main frameworks were "Student-Student with examiner as a side recipient" and "Student-Examiner." Two subcategories were identified under the "Student-Student with Examiner as a side recipient" framework, each having a different effect on collaboration.

The majority of Extract 1 clearly demonstrated the first subcategory, "Supporting collaboration thanks to focus on each other," particularly after the examiner specifically told the students to collaborate. This structure encouraged more mutual focus while one student was speaking, facilitating active communication between the students. Similar results were seen in Extract 7, where the students engaged in active conversation and kept their attention on one another throughout their exchanges.

Contrarily, Extract 2 showed that the second subcategory, "Hindering collaboration due to focus on the worksheet," existed. Although the students were interacting with one another, their intense concentration on the worksheet made it difficult for them to take turns and work together effectively, which resulted in a disorganized interaction pattern.

"Student-Examiner" was the second significant participation framework that was found. Extracts 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 all fit within this framework. Before being instructed to work in groups, the student's interaction in Extract 1 was primarily with the examiner. This shifted in Extract 3, where the students gave the examiner their undivided attention during their turns, leading to the students giving three different answers rather than coming to a mutual agreement on one. The opportunity for student-student interaction was reduced in Extract 4 by the examiner acting more as a moderator by asking each student for their response separately. Extract 5 presented a situation in which the students showed interactional competence but remained preoccupied with either the worksheet or the examiner, preventing them from engaging in meaningful conversation. Finally, Extract 6 showed a scenario in which only one student actively engaged with the examiner, while the other two students mainly focused on their worksheets. Because of their limited reciprocity, it is difficult to even regard these students as genuine side recipients.

In conclusion, the analysis of various participation frameworks in the extracts highlighted the complex nature of student interactions during the tasks. The students' varying levels of attention to one another and the examiner significantly influenced the quality and effectiveness of their interaction.

These findings shed light on the significance of efficient task delivery and the detrimental effects of students concentrating too much on the worksheet. It has been demonstrated that giving students clear, detailed instructions that specifically encourage collaboration can motivate student involvement, spark meaningful debates, and enhance the likelihood that an agreement will be reached. These results are consistent with the literature's emphasis on the value of L2 interactional competence, which includes an individual's capacity for interaction and cooperation, the main focus of the presented task.

The influence of instruction clarity on collaborative work has been widely acknowledged in the literature. Studies have stressed the importance of providing students with concrete instructions that provide direction in order for them to collaborate meaningfully (Roever & Kasper, 2018). Our findings support this idea by showing that clear instructions which encourage group interaction greatly enhance students' involvement and decision-making processes compared to unclear instructions that limit collaborative work.



Another important result from your study is the impact of student focus on the provided worksheets on interactional dynamics. Overly intense worksheet focus reduces opportunities for eye contact, gaze exchanges, and nonverbal clues, which are crucial for a conversation's natural flow and turn-taking. The emphasis on the role of gaze behaviour in communication in the literature (Rossano, 2012) is reflected in this study. It emphasizes the significance of developing a supportive learning environment that encourages students to focus on one another and supports active listening. Students can improve their ability to engage with others and work together by turning their attention away from the assignment and toward their peers.

The research on turn-taking patterns highlights the need for clear instructions in promoting student cooperation. Students distribute turns to their classmates when the rules are explicit, promoting possibilities for discussion and decision-making. This result is consistent with earlier research that highlighted the significance of turn-taking in second language engagement (Fulcher, 2003). However, extract 4 shows the possible drawbacks of the teacher's inflexible turn allocation, which would limit student autonomy and reduce participation. In order to encourage meaningful connection, it is essential to strike a balance between instructor direction and student agency.

Furthermore, giving students at least one minute to prepare could be very helpful, as Wigglesworth (Wigglesworth 2010) suggests. Our research lends support to this notion as students frequently took their time to develop their arguments whilst gazing into the worksheets before beginning their responses, which led to a longer pause following task assignments. Students could ensure the selection of their best arguments if this preparation time was formally allotted and recorded. They might also be able to do without the worksheet after the preparation period, which would increase eye contact and engagement between students during the task."

Analysing the interactions through the lens of participation frameworks (Goffman, 1981), the most desirable framework for assessing interaction during speaking exams appears to be "Student-Student with the examiner as a side recipient." This framework exhibits more efficient collaboration, as seen in excerpts with increased student-student interaction and less concentration on the worksheet. Conversely, when the desired side recipient becomes the addressee, meaning the speaking students focus more on the teacher, the student's speech became more monologic and gave other candidates fewer opportunities to engage, resulting in reduced interactive listening, and overall poorer task fulfilment. This emphasizes how crucial it is to promote student-

student interaction and reduce reliance on the teacher during speaking exams in order to create a more lively and interesting assessment environment.

Lastly, our findings on how student gaze functions during turn-taking are consistent with the literature's claim that gaze cues are crucial for comprehending communication dynamics (Rossano, 2012). When students only pay attention to the worksheet or the teacher during their turn, they lose out on critical nonverbal cues from their peers, which makes interactions less natural and engaging. Promoting turn-taking dynamics and fostering active involvement among students can lead to more engaging and interesting discussions.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the significance of giving clear directions in order to promote effective collaboration and reduce undue worksheet attention. Teachers should support turn-taking dynamics, increase peer eye contact, and boost student participation. By taking care of these issues, educational settings can develop a setting that encourages meaningful student engagement, teamwork, and decision-making, ultimately facilitating the assessment of their interactional competence.

## Conclusion

This thesis researched the phenomenon of L2 interactional competence by exploring student's behaviour during oral exam through conversation analysis. We concentrated on examining the significance of clear instructions, student focus on worksheets and cooperative decision-making. In order to direct the study process, the literature review gave an overview of the pertinent theories and studies on the topic.

The important findings were reported in the results chapter, which also emphasized the value of clear instructions, reduced excessive worksheet focus, and encouraged student engagement and eye contact. The discussion chapter highlighted the importance of assessing interactional competence in educational contexts as it further investigated the implications of these findings.

Future studies should concentrate on implementing effective instructional strategies and developing assessment tools that evaluate interactional ability. This thesis has made a contribution by shedding light on the dynamics of student interaction and proposing suggestions for encouraging productive teamwork.

Finally, this thesis has offered a thorough analysis of interactional competence, adding to our knowledge of effective second language learning and emphasizing the significance of meaningful interaction in educational environments.

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