

**MOROCCAN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE  
AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE  
ANALYSIS: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL  
AND CULTURAL PRACTICE.**

**By**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to display the important contribution which a critical analysis makes to our understanding of students/teachers relationship through the analysis of their discursive practices. The work focuses specifically on interaction within Moroccan classrooms at the secondary school level, involving students aged between 12-14 years old. The data source consists of transcripts of audio-recordings of classroom lessons in which both teachers and students are engaged in the interaction, which is supplemented by interviews with teachers.

In order to examine power relations between teachers and students, this research presents a detailed analysis of the linguistic features used by teachers. Such discourse features are IRF patterns, modality, politeness, Q/A and interruption. Although the analysis of the discorsal features of such interactions is of interest, it alone does not explain the nature of the relationship between pupils/ teachers. For this to be achieved, one may go further to conduct a structured interview analysis to explain such relations and establish a dialectic relationship between institutional practice and social practice (Fairclough 1992b). The effects which are traceable in the discourse of participants are not only related to the teacher/student relationship but also reflect the social order of which the educational institution is a part. The social order has impact on the educational institution which in turn affects the student/teacher relationship. This relationship in turn confirms the social order (Candlin 1997).

The research provides a detailed analysis of the discursive practice and describes specific ways in which teachers dominate students' interaction. It traces teachers' control and dominance of the classroom practices to the overwhelming social beliefs of the participants. It concludes that specific social practices on the part of students and teachers produce particular discourse practices in the classroom. These discourse practices hinder the ongoing interaction. Both students' and teachers' assumptions and social beliefs of the classroom practices contribute to creating an atmosphere of control and dominance in the classroom. This research provides suggestions to overcome this crisis. It believes that a change in the classroom practice requires a change in the social practice and vice versa.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

A	Answer
Ack	Acknowledgement
Ai	Answer insertion (sequence)
CA	Conversation analysis
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
DA	Discourse analysis
IE	Interviewee
IRF	Initiation-Response-Feedback/follow-up

## CHAPTER ONE.

### *Introduction.*

#### *1.0. Background*

In recent years, many studies have been conducted using Critical Discourse Analysis as a method for the analysis of oral and written texts. These studies focus mainly on themes such as power, control and asymmetrical relations in different institutions. Over the last two decades, we have witnessed the emergence of many publications in this domain (e.g. Fairclough 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2001; Wodak & De Cillia 1989; van Dijk 1983, 1990, 1997). Of particular interest is the use of CDA in educational research (e.g. Apple 1995; Luke 1995; Gallagher 1998). Many studies have used CDA to explore and examine various educational issues. The present study seeks to examine the nature of discursive practices in the Moroccan classroom.

The importance of discourse is emphasised throughout this work. It is regarded as the mediator between social practice and classroom practice. This productive aspect of discourse is a matter that needs to be emphasised because the socially produced knowledge of discourse is never neutral; knowledge of discourses works in favour of some people over others, as power and knowledge are implicated in each other. The reason for choosing critical discourse analysis rather than another approach will be mentioned briefly in this chapter and discussed in detail in the next chapter. The focus on classroom practice is a focus on the student/teacher relationship within the classroom practice which is part of social practice. However, understanding the main criteria that underpin the teachers'/students' practices requires an understanding of the nature of the discourse practice of the participants. Moreover, the complexity of teacher/student

interaction is dependent not only upon the nature of students'/teachers' practices, but also on the impact of social and cultural factors on these practices.

This chapter presents the rationale for this study, the purpose of the research, the main research questions and the organisation of the thesis.

### **1.1 Research Rationale**

My primary motive for doing research on classroom discourse developed when I came to England to read for a master's degree. From the outset of the course, it was evident that my perception of classroom practice was totally different from that of my classmates. My classmates were very open and relaxed in their practices. They spoke and interrupted whenever they wished. They did not wait to be nominated or even to be pointed to by the teacher. I found it very strange: students speaking without restriction, and without explicit permission from the teacher was outside my experience, and alien to my social norm. The role of the teachers, however, unlike those in Morocco, seemed to be as mediators who provided guidance when it was needed. This type of practice clashed with my experience of Moroccan classroom practices. In class, I was silent most of the time. If I wanted to speak, I felt I had to raise my hand and wait for the teacher to assign me a turn. As time went on, I started to realise that my perception of teaching and learning was completely different from those of my classmates and my teachers. After a long silence, I decided to break the ice and talk to my tutor about my feelings and perception of classroom practice. This was the starting point for me to think about researching the nature of Moroccan classroom practices and also the effect on classroom practice of students' and teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning.

The second motive behind this study developed when I was introduced to Critical Discourse Analysis. Using critical theory to describe, interpret and explain classroom interactions seems to be an appropriate way to investigate classroom discourse and to reveal the nature of discourse practices used by both teachers and students. Whilst many researchers in this area prefer observation as a means of exploring ideas about the

classroom, I decided to marry linguistic and structured interview in order to examine all aspects of classroom practice (Chouliaraki 1996). With regard to linguistic approaches, critical discourse analysis was used to examine the discursive practices within Moroccan classrooms. This analysis of the recorded data helped in answering several questions related to the social context. However, this was not enough to know the secrets of classroom practice. Interviewing participants was seen to be an appropriate way to understand the classroom practice in greater depth (section 8.2). However, it is worth mentioning that only teachers were interviewed. This is because the focus of this study is mainly on the teachers' practices. This does not mean that students' practices are of no importance to this study, but the scope of this research does not permit detailed examination of students' practice as well.

The other main reason for this study is as a response to Chouliaraki's and Fairclough's call (1999) for transdisciplinary research, whereby different approaches belonging to different disciplines can be brought together. The present study marries CDA to a structured interview analysis in order to show the usefulness of transdisciplinary research in examining classroom practice. This will help to show how discourse practice shapes and is shaped by social practice.

## ***1.2 The purpose of the research***

This thesis is intended to describe and explain Moroccan classroom practice, with a particular focus on the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students. Critical discourse analysis will be used for this purpose. Additionally, this study will use a multi-layered approach for the analysis of the classroom discourse. Besides the immediate contribution to linguistic theory, this study aims to encourage research on Moroccan classroom practice. This will help to tackle the problems which Moroccan classrooms are experiencing. The thesis aims also to raise awareness among policy makers and textbook designers of the nature of classroom practice. It is also hoped to highlight the effect of social and cultural practices on classroom practice. The intention is to show how students and teachers' beliefs, which are derived from society, have an



impact on their classroom practice.

The data used consists of a number of recorded lessons and interviews with teachers. The collection was undertaken in two separate phases. In the first phase, the classroom data was recorded, while in the second phase the participants involved in the data were interviewed. The recorded data was collected over a period of four weeks from classrooms in the city of Beni-Mellel. The age of the students ranges between 12 and 14 years old.

The recorded data will be analysed in different chapters, each of which will have a different analytic framework (see section 4.5 for more detail). The interviews will be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively in chapter 8. The main aim of these interviews is to share the teachers' views and perceptions of the classroom practice. Also these interviews will be used to support our interpretation and explanation of the recorded lessons.

What remain are the research questions to be addressed and their implications for the study.

### ***1.3 Research questions***

The choice of research questions is not random. It is based on my experience as a student and also on my ongoing contact with friends who have teaching experience. Moroccan classrooms are chosen for three reasons. Firstly, to the best of my knowledge, this study will be among the firsts to apply a critical analysis to naturally occurring Moroccan classroom interaction. The second reason stems from my sincere belief that a genuine analysis of classroom interactions could indicate problem areas for pupil learning, and could also be used as a basis for formulating policies to improve Moroccan classroom practices. Moreover, this study, it is hoped, will contribute to raising awareness, at least among readers of this research, of the nature of Moroccan classroom practices. The third reason springs from the interest of using transdisciplinary

research and establishing a methodology to help investigate classroom practice in general.

The following are the research questions addressed in this study.

1. Does a transdisciplinary analysis contribute to our understanding of classroom practice?
2. What is the nature of discursive practices within Moroccan classrooms? Do these practices reflect power relations among participants?
3. Do Moroccan social and cultural practices have an impact on classroom practices?

To answer the above questions, it is first necessary to look at the linguistic features used, which are represented in question/ answer adjacency pairs, the structure of discourse, and interruption. The analysis of these linguistic features will help to answer the above questions.

#### ***1.4 Organisation of thesis***

This thesis consists of eight chapters. This first chapter presents an overview of the thesis. It introduces the aims of the study, the rationale behind the study and the main questions of the research. Reasons for choosing the critical model are presented but not discussed in detail. The second chapter reviews some of the approaches used in the study. Their underlying principles and theoretical backgrounds are set out, and their strengths and weaknesses evaluated. A detailed view is also presented of the critical model chosen for the study with a clear justification for its selection.

The third chapter is more theoretical than the other chapters. It tries to familiarise the reader with different definitions of the term 'power', a major theme of the thesis. It presents various definitions which stem from different schools. The definition adopted in this research is the covert use of power. It is shown that power is invested in language; it is usually invisible and most people are unaware of it.

The fourth chapter explains the methodology employed in this research. An indication is also given of the problems and difficulties faced while conducting the fieldwork.

The fifth chapter, by contrast, is more practical. The exchanges within the classroom are examined from structural and functional viewpoints. The Birmingham tradition is used as a framework for describing the type of exchanges, moves and actions and then an interpretation and explanation of their uses is offered. The structure of the classroom discourse is examined, focusing on the IRF pattern which, it is argued, reflects power and control within the classroom.

The sixth chapter deals with the function of the adjacency pair question/answer within the classroom. Questions, it will be argued, serve various functions; exerting control over interactions is one of them. The seventh chapter goes beyond the definition of the term 'interruption' to state its use and function within the classroom discourse. It will also be argued in this chapter that interruption reflects power and control because it stops others from finishing their turns. Chapter eight is devoted to the analysis of the Moroccan teachers' interviews. The last chapter summarises the research findings and suggests areas for further work.

In order to facilitate the understanding of Moroccan classroom practice and before embarking on the discussion of the main approaches to discourse, we have chosen to introduce a general view of Moroccan culture.

### ***1.5. Overview of Moroccan culture and beliefs***

Understanding Moroccan classroom practices necessitates establishing a background to social practice since the first is part of the second. Thus, the general patterns of interaction in the Moroccan classroom context indicate that, firstly, "Authority is external and imposed upon the individual" (Spindler and Spindler 1987:161). Secondly, obedience to authority is a part of the Moroccan culture. It is

viewed as a sign of “good” behaviour and is accepted positively by the society. Hence, a good student has to accept the decisions of his teacher or headmaster and a good child has to remain dependent on his parent’s guidance. He/she has to follow their thoughts and behaviour rather than developing his/her own. Third, the advice of superiors is valued positively and people are advised to make use of it (Wagner 1987).

In the wider Moroccan community, obedience and respect to superiors are praised by society. In the classroom situation, as in the Quranic context, the teacher is an authority figure because of his/her experience and knowledge. Pupils have to show their respect by remaining largely silent and speaking (minimally) only when they are told to do so by the teacher (Wagner 1993). Thus, the teacher controls classroom practices. He/she is considered responsible for classroom behaviour. Furthermore, in the traditional classroom, learners’ talk is indicative of disruptive behaviour and a lack of teacher control. Learning will take place, it is assumed, if learners keep quiet and listen carefully to the teacher. To ensure this, the teacher usually sets up fixed and rigid penalties for those who would disturb classroom practice. In addition, as we mentioned earlier, the teacher is considered superior in terms of knowledge, experience and judgements, whereas learners are ‘lesser’ partners in the interaction. These traditional beliefs of classroom behaviour, which are in accordance with the norms of behaviour in the wider community, are reflected in the classroom interaction/practice. Learners do not live in a vacuum. In fact, before taking up their turns in the classroom, “they are participants in a cultural milieu and their beliefs and assumptions about modes of behaviour and knowledge are structured by the culture of the community in which they operate” (Shamin 1993: 215). The fact is that the teachers and students’ cultural and social beliefs influence the way they perceive, classify and judge the discursive practices within the classroom. Both the students and the teachers’ practices reflect social and familial practices.

### **1.5.1 The home and the family**

In his article titled “Themes of Authority in the life histories of young Moroccans”, Gregg (1999) points out that authority and loyalty in Morocco are structured around three models, among them the authority within the family and the

household. Parents have the last say at homes. While conducting his fieldwork in Morocco, Gregg came across scenes which obviously demonstrate the authority of the father and show the secondary role held by sons. Gregg (1999: 229) narrated this story saying:

One morning early in the fieldwork among the Imeghrane confederation, I set out to conduct a census of a small Dades Valley village. At the first house on my list, I ran into a tall young man in his twenties making charcoal in a freshly harvested field. I introduced myself and chatted, and I began to ask him who lived in his household. After a few minutes his father arrived, berated his son for stupidly letting too much air get into the coals and sent him off...I assumed the real problem had been that he talked to me on his own initiative.

Gregg's story is a clear example of the power and authority that society endows to parents. Power and authority are two major things that are respected and valued by Moroccans. As people strive for power, they value power holders and respect them and their practice. It is something taken for granted and people are brought up to understand the parents' authority within and outside the house. Sons and daughters are meant to obey their parents' practice. According to the Islamic religion, obedience to parents is obligatory and children are not allowed to disobey their parents. So many verses in the Quran describe parents' roles and insist on the child's obedience.

Your Rabb (God) has decreed to you that: You shall worship none but Him, and you shall be kind to your parents; if one or both of them live to their old age in your lifetime, you shall not say to them any word of contempt nor repel them and you shall address them in kind words (Quran 17:23).

You shall lower to them your wings of humility and pray: "O Rabb! bestow on them your blessings just as they cherished me when I was a little child."(Quran 17:24)

In most Moroccan communities, disobedient people are rejected and mostly ignored by society.

If the father in Gregg's story did scold his son for taking the initiative to talk to a foreigner in his absence, then this is because the social norm does not allow the son to do so. The son here violates the Moroccan conventions by taking over his father's role. This shows the restricted role assigned to children within the family even when they are adults. Restricting the children's role within the family reinforces the father's leadership and his power as a family leader. He is the ruler and the king of his own family. So all family members have to obey rules and respect instructions put forward by the father. A small violation of these rules means a threat to the father's unlimited and unquestionable authority. Parents are often, as Gregg's interviewees put it, "stern, formal, principled fathers" Gregg (1999: 230).

Sons, however, consider their fathers to be the ideal model to follow. They wish to inherit their father's authority and leadership. This is clearly demonstrated in one of Gregg's (1999:231) interviewee's words:

a son always tries to resemble his father.... that's because he sees his father has authority (*saytara*) and has power (*quwa*), and therefore the child always tries to resemble the father and without conscious awareness.... So the child takes on the personality of his father.

The succession of one generation over the other is a succession of authority and power. If a son dreams of resembling his father, it is because he wants to have *a sulta abbawaya* (parents' authority).

In the family context, children are not encouraged to interrupt their elders. Children who often ask questions or interrupt others' conversations to express themselves, are considered to be impolite. The parents are the first to be blamed or criticised for their children's impolite behaviour. Parents, therefore, have to teach their children to remain silent and to listen if their elders are engaged in conversation.

Therefore, Moroccans, and particularly the older generation, always try to respect their (Moroccan) norms. A deviation from the basic conventions means a deviation from the shared Moroccan norms and customs. If parents solidly respect these principles, it is because they like to act according to the shared norms and customs set

out by their society or culture. If they are seen as losing their leadership or handing over their authority to their children, then fathers are often described as weak, soft and unable to hold family responsibilities. These views are still predominant among some young Moroccans.

Like the father, the teacher is supposed to hold the same power and authority. Children have to express their respect and show their fear to their teachers. In Moroccan culture, teachers are often described as tough, stern and unforgiving. As we mentioned earlier, and will be discussed later, these criteria have a great effect on Moroccan classroom practice.

When we talk about the family in the Moroccan context, we always talk about a leader - who is the father - a mother, and children. The father is the most responsible person in the family. He has to make decisions and plan for the family's future. The father has the right to look after and provide for his children till they earn for themselves, and even after that they are encouraged to be within the family. He is also held responsible for advising children about their social and personal life. A child or any member of the family does not make a decision without consulting their father. The final decision is his. He has to support or reject his children's suggestions and plans. This makes children more dependent on their fathers. Obedience and respect for the father is part of social and religious practice. In Arabic, the father is usually called *rab al beit* 'the master of the house'.

Hence, following the above description, children's practice reflects and is reflected by their family practice. If children have done wrong, the shame and the blame is for the family. If, on the other hand, children have done well (such as graduating from university, or being promoted in his/her workplace), it is the family who is rewarded and congratulated.

The above description of family practice suggests why the same practices are found in the classroom context. This means that the classroom practice reflects and is reflected by the family practice. Hence, one should not be surprised by the students and

teachers' practice, if the same practice exists within the family. The same story can be retold in other domains such as the work place.

If Gregg looked at the social structure within Moroccan families and described the patriarchal structure within it, Bourquia's (1999) concerns were with the language of power as it is spoken by Moroccan people. Her examination of the Moroccan language is meant to show the average Moroccan's perception of government's power. In one of her articles, Bourquia asks the following question: 'What kinds of imagery are found in the discourse of state of power at the level of popular culture?' To answer this question she examined the vernacular language and went on to say that it conveys images of power that are shared by the majority of Moroccan people. To support her claim, she narrates the following popular sayings:

“three things cannot be overcome: fire, flood, and the makhzan  
(government)”

“only God and the makhzan can defeat you”

“we can not match up to the makhzan” (Bourquia 1999: 244)

The above idioms and sayings are loaded with meaning about the state of power and its dimensions in society. If, for example, a person finds himself faced by an indomitable opponent, he will say, only God and the *makhzan* defeat you. What is remarkable about this saying is that the *makhzan* is given the same status of power as God. This shows, in one way or another, the weight of *makhzan* in the Moroccan imagination.

The legitimacy of power can be traced to medieval Morocco. This is why power is legitimised in Morocco. It should be also mentioned that the term *makhzan*, we discussed above, was first mentioned in two Almohads<sup>1</sup> texts. The term can be traced through history from that point (Kably 1999).

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<sup>1</sup> One of the dynasties that ruled Morocco in the middle of the twelfth century. On Almohad doctrine, see Brunschvig, R, “ Sur la doctrine du Mahdi Ibn Tumart,” 2 vols. (Paris, 1976), 1: 281-93.



While providing these examples, Bourquia stresses the fact that these sayings show a representation of power in Moroccan imagination that grants the state absolute authority. Bourquia's comments are revealing in many ways and are applicable to most, if not all, Moroccan institutions. In the educational context, for instance, and in the classrooms under our study, we have seen how students' cultural beliefs, or in Bourquia's word "imaginnaire" (consciousness) endows teachers with power and authority. Such a legitimacy of power, rising from Moroccan culture and historical background, has its effect on classroom practice. As a Moroccan, the term *makhzan* (the government) is associated with power. Most Moroccans believe that they are there to serve the makhzan in different ways. Questioning the authority of the makhzan means running the risk of prosecution. The legitimacy of their practice is widely accepted and deeply welcomed by Moroccan people. Teachers are considered to be members of makhzan, so students have to respect them and accept their power. Questioning the authority of the teacher, a servant of the makhzan, means disbelief in the makhzan's authority and legitimacy.

It follows from the above discussion that what is going on in the classroom is part of what is going in the wider Moroccan state. The concept of legitimacy of power, which students grow up with in their homes and in the wider society, makes students respect their teachers and endows them with authority. The same also seems to occur in the work place.

### **1.5.2 The workplace**

The workplace includes a wide range of different work domains. But, in the context of this research, I will refer to educational contexts only.

It is remarked from the interview analysis that decisions are made by those at the top of the hierarchy. People in the higher ranks, the interviewees said, have the final say about different educational matters. Teachers, however, are rarely consulted or asked for their opinions. The implementation of programs and policies has to be carried out without questioning the main advantages or disadvantages that these policies or

programs may have on either teachers and students' classroom practice. Teachers are neither allowed to criticise nor evaluate what they are given. Their main job is to implement the teaching methodology given and the curriculum designed for them.

### **1.5.3 Discussion**

The conclusion to be drawn from the discussion about the family and work situation is that the questioning of authority whether parental, political or educational is discouraged. It is often even prohibited. The implication of this for our classrooms is that students are uncomfortable when asked to participate or join discussions in order to create a shared meaning in the classroom. For some students, a teacher who welcomes students' discussions and contributions is often regarded as weak and incompetent in his/her field of work. Additionally, both family and workplace practice support our explanation of the classroom practice. They equip us with sufficient knowledge to explain the source of the classroom practice, which is embedded in the social and cultural practice. Before engaging in the analysis of Moroccan classrooms, let's first discuss the main approaches to discourse analysis.

## CHAPTER TWO.

### *Different approaches to discourse*

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the theoretical framework underlying the present work. Some of the main approaches to discourse analysis are reviewed, and a brief discussion of the main principles and theoretical backgrounds of each approach is presented. The main reasons for focusing on discourse analysis rather than conducting an analysis focusing on lower levels of language are indicated. An introduction is presented to the field of critical analysis, and the rationale for applying this type of analysis is explained. The chapter ends with a detailed consideration of Fairclough's (1992a) framework, which is chosen for the analysis.

#### **2.1 Linguistics or Discourse Analysis?**

When we talk about linguistic analysis, we often mean an analysis based on a phonological or syntactic approach - the segmentation of a sentence into its basic units without reference to the history or the context in which an utterance is framed. Until relatively recently, much linguistic analysis has been confined to the sentence level (Fairclough 2001). The main objective of this type of analysis is to sketch out the units that constitute a sentence, without any attempt to look at their functions in the sentence and the text (Mills 1997). Thus, meanings, contexts and interpersonal relationships between interlocutors are not crucial factors in the analysis (Candlin 1997:4).

It is within discourse that interpersonal relationships between interlocutors are established and developed. A discourse analyst may look at the context of interaction

and the interpersonal relations between participants. For Bakhtin, as with Foucault, there is a dialectic relationship between utterances (Candlin 1997, Fairclough 1995). Discourse analysis considers language as a social phenomenon. It opposes any attempt to examine language without taking account of the historical, cultural and social factors that “contribute to its dynamic nature” (Candlin 1997: 4). Language is considered as an effective tool for explaining the social and cultural aspects that affect its usage.

### 2.1.1. Definition of discourse

The question of what the term *discourse* means is a multi-dimensional and intricate one. Discourse does not simply express or reflect ideas and paradigms, but plays an active role in human interaction and understanding. Foucault (1972: 49) states that discourses are perhaps best understood “as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. In addition to this, the term discourse has a wide range of uses that differ from one discipline to another. Discourse has been explored by disciplines other than linguistics, such as psychology (Giles and St Clair, 1979) and sociology (Silverman, 1987 in Candlin 1997: 5). In the linguistic sphere it has been given various definitions, which stem from different schools and individual perspectives. Consequently, it is defined as follows.

- I. Language in its social context (Brown and Yule 1983)
- II. Cohesion and coherence (Halliday and Hasan 1976)
- III. Strategies for interpreting interactive signs and conventions (Gumperz 1982)
- IV. Linguistic unit beyond the level of sentence (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975)
- V. Language as a means for social, political and economic values (Foucault 1972)

(from Roberts et al. 1992:70)

The above-mentioned definitions would, based on the Faircloughian view, be categorised into non-critical (1-4) and critical (5) approaches. The critical approach

considers language as a means of investing power relations, which have an effect upon social identities, social relations and the system of knowledge and beliefs. Many post-modernist discourse analysts support this view. Marshall (1992:99), for instance, defines discourse as “a regulated system of statements which can be analysed not solely in terms of its internal rules of formation but also as a set of practices within a social milieu”. Marshall’s view seems to be consistent with that of Foucault, who showed a great interest in “how texts are constructed of social formations, communities and individuals’ social identities” (Marshall 1992 in Luke 1995:9). In addition to this constructive characteristic of discourse, Ball (1990: 2) goes further to consider the genre of discourse producers, the time and the place in which the discourse occurs: “Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also who can speak, when, and with what authority”, and “discourses embody meaning and social relationships that constitute both subjectivity and power relationships”. Mills (1997) regards the social context crucial to the production of discourse. She said:

Discourse is groupings of utterances or sentences, statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by that social context and which contribute to the way that social context continues to exist (Mills 1997: 11)

Thus, discourse, as indicated previously, is perceived as a social phenomenon that reflects the social and cultural variables in a context. This will be explained and elaborated on extensively in the coming chapters.

The non-critical approaches, on the other hand, look at language as a means of communication, without any reference to the system of control and dominance that exists in human interaction. Conversation analysis (CA) takes some account of power relations in the social aspects of talk and pragmatics, in particular, the study of politeness considers social factors, including power, which may affect speakers’ choices in discourse (Nwoye 1992). Nevertheless, these approaches neither explain nor refer to the source of these social relations.

In the remainder of this chapter a number of distinct approaches to discourse analysis will be considered in some detail. Among the non-critical approaches,

Halliday's functional model, Pragmatics, the Birmingham model and CA will be discussed, before the focus of attention is turned to the critical approach.

## **2.2 Discourse analysis within linguistics**

In this section Halliday's (1994) model of discourse analysis is introduced. This model, as will be discussed, combines social and linguistic views of language.

### **2.2.1 The Hallidayan model:**

The social view of language goes back to the Hallidayan tradition of considering the importance of an understanding of text. Looking at language as a social process, in Halliday's view, involves three meta-functions of the language, which are:

- 1- *The ideational function: meaning in the world.*
- 2- *The interpersonal function: meaning in roles and relationships.*
- 3- *The textual function: meaning in the message.*

(Fairclough 1992b)

These meta-functions constitute a part of our analysis of classroom practice. Since our study is about the nature of discursive practice in the Moroccan context, the focus will be on the second meta-function. This focus will help us to examine the relationship between teachers and pupils.

Using the above-mentioned meta-functions, Halliday describes and explains the sentence, referring to the social context in which this sentence is generated. He claims that "a text is a sociological event, a semiotic encounter through which these meanings that constitute the social system are exchanged" (1978: 140). In elaborating his view of language as a social semiotic, Halliday draws upon the work of Malinowski (1957) who considered the context of situation and cultural beliefs to be important in understanding and interpreting text (Al Sree 1997). According to Halliday, 'context of situation' means the immediate environment of the utterance or the text, and 'context of culture' refers to

the cultural background of the text. It is “the environment in which meanings are exchanged in texts” (Halliday and Hasan 1989: 12). The text here is socially determined. For a person to understand an utterance, he/she needs, firstly, to consider the situation in which it is generated and also the reason why it is uttered, before considering its cultural aspect. The cultural background is crucial to our understanding of texts. Texts are not free words, but part of the speaker’s social and cultural background. Hence, a good understanding of teacher/learner talk needs to take into account the genre of the interaction, the context of the interaction and the socio-cultural factors that govern the interaction. Here, we mean the social beliefs of interactants and their perception of each other, which, in one way or another, might affect the interaction. These factors are crucial to our understanding of classroom discourse. If we try to look at classroom discourse simply as an isolated text that conveys transactional meanings, as Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) did, then, we cannot reach an explanation of why certain linguistic features are used by one participant and are absent in the utterance of another. This highlights the importance of the context to our understanding of utterances, an importance, which leads Halliday and Hasan to consider the text as

an object in its own right (and)... an instance of social meaning in a particular context of situation. It is a product of its environment, a product of a continuous process of choices of meaning that we can represent as multiple paths.....through the networks that constitute the linguistic system (1989: 11).

In order to understand the social context of a text and the environment in which the content is generated, Halliday and Hasan (1989) utilise the concepts: *field, tenor and mode*.

- The Field of a discourse refers to the content of the text, or what the text is about.
- The Tenor of a discourse is the relationship between the participants as realised in interpersonal choices.
- The Mode of a discourse means the type and purpose of a discourse as seen in the textual choice.

These three variables are crucial to our analysis of texts, as they link the semantic and grammatical patterns to concrete speech situations. In our analysis of classroom discourse, for example, we do not only describe the semantic and grammatical aspects

of the speech generated by teachers and students, but also interpret it taking account of the situation of the interaction, e.g. formal or informal, academic or familial. We also have to think of the interpersonal relations between the interlocutors, taking into consideration the rank, role and status of speakers. In the present study, therefore, 'field' refers to the classroom setting, 'tenor' to the power and control in interaction between teachers and students, and 'mode' to the classroom discourse.

According to Halliday, the above-mentioned concepts are important simply because they help interlocutors predict linguistic features that signal meanings. *Field*, *tenor* and *mode* determine what Halliday and Hasan refer to as the "Generic Structure Potential (GSP)" (1978: 64) of a text. They are called so because, semantically and pragmatically speaking, they are useful in detecting meanings. The next section will be devoted to a further exploration of the significance of context, as reflected in pragmatic approaches to discourse analysis.

### 2.2.2 Pragmatics

In the previous section we have considered the importance of the context of situation in understanding the meaning of a text. Looking at meaning in a context is one of the core functions of pragmatics. Thomas (1995: 22) states that "making a meaning is a dynamic process involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance." In other words, meaning cannot be realised without looking at the processes of production and consumption of a text from social, cultural and cognitive perspectives. Speech act theory will be discussed in section 2.2.2.1. Politeness theory will be also discussed in order to understand the role of face in human interaction (section 2.2.2.2).

#### 2.2.2.1 *Speech act theory*

A social view of pragmatics focuses on the meaning of a speaker's utterance and



the force of this utterance. This view introduces us to speech act theory (SAT). Speech act theory is well known through its function of examining forms of interactions and their tacit meaning. Austin (1962) observed that utterances are used not just to say things, but also to do things. He refers to this process as a 'speech act' which we perform consciously or unconsciously while we are speaking. Austin decomposes 'speech act' into the following three kinds of acts:

- Locutionary act: the act of uttering a sentence that has a meaning.

E.g.: *It is very hot in here*

- Illocutionary act: the force of the utterance, or the implicit meaning that words convey. The hearer or recipient may need to go beyond the surface meaning of the text.

E.g.: *open the window*

- Perlocutionary act: the outcome or the effects that the utterance may have on the hearer:

E.g. *Someone goes to open the window* (From Austin, 1962: 120)

Austin's main focus was on the locutionary act and illocutionary force. The force of an utterance depends on the intention of the speaker, on the hearer or recipient and also on the linguistic form in which the utterance is formulated. Generally, the meaning of the speaker's utterance is located within both the locutionary and illocutionary forces of the utterance.

After his death, Austin's theory was developed by his student, John Searle (1962, 1969). Searle (1969) focuses on illocutionary force and considers it important in understanding the speaker's main utterance. The challenge facing him and speech act theory, in general, is that a single form of utterance may have a range of possible illocutionary forces or speakers' intentions. Let us consider, for instance, the example given earlier: *It is very hot in here*. Under appropriate conditions, it can be taken as a remark on the temperature, or as a request for the hearer to open the window. Furthermore, the speaker's intention may not be clear and may therefore be open to

misinterpretation by the hearer. Since speakers use language to achieve different targets, speech act theory introduced the concept of the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) and felicity conditions connected to particular speech acts (Searle 1969: 64) which facilitate the understanding of the speaker's intended message. Felicity conditions are the other conditions required for the successful performance of a speech act. These involve the context, participants and circumstances that would allow us to understand and recognise what is meant by the speech act. Linguistic cues alone are not always enough to convey the intended meaning of a speaker's utterance. They need to be supported by the context of the situation, that is to say, where the speech act occurred and also who produced it. The use of intonation, for example, cannot be fully understood without reference to the participant or the situation, to judge whether the participant is, for example, complaining or merely asserting a fact.

IFIDs are explicit devices, which indicate the type of the speech act performed. The speaker performs the act by making direct reference to it, for example, using performative verbs or using meta-linguistic cues such as word order, pitch and intonation.

Speech acts are categorised into direct and indirect. A direct speech act is one in which the grammatical form matches the illocutionary force, e.g. interrogative. The speaker's intended meaning is clear and the form of the speech indicates whether it is a question, an order or a statement. Here is an example.

*Open the door.*

The speech act is realised in the form of an order or command. The illocutionary force-indicating device is the use of the imperative. But if we say, *Could you open the door please?* the addition of the marker cues "*could*" and "*please*" turns the speech into a request. It is a question functioning as an order and is indirect. There is little ambiguity in interpretation of this example, unlike the following example in which the indirect speech act performed may have more than one intended meaning. If we say:

*It is very hot in here*

The hearer may consider it an assertion concerned with high temperature or an indirect request to open the window. So the utterance has two possible acts; a direct and an indirect one. Interpreting the indirect speech act necessitates a contextual knowledge or at least contextual markers to help us interpret the speaker's intention.

This example brings us to the conclusion that a speech act can be realised in different ways. At the level of structure, utterances come out in the form of an interrogative, an imperative or a declarative. These forms serve different communicative functions such as question, command or assertion. We will see (chapter 6) how imperatives are used by the teacher to give the students a direct order, which implies power and control. Thus, analysis of the use of direct speech acts by the teacher helps us to understand the nature of classroom discourse and also gives us an indication of the interpersonal relationship between the teacher and the students. The social meaning of the utterance is often indirect. In order to detect the social meaning of any utterance, we need contextual evidence or knowledge of the context in which the utterance is produced or generated.

#### *2.2.2.2 Politeness*

Politeness theory is an area of pragmatics which is relevant to this study. Studies of human interaction (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1972) consider politeness as a social phenomenon. For them, examining politeness conventions is one way of understanding social practices and also interpersonal relations. Politeness theory can help us to explain the forces that shape interaction, especially the role of 'face' in human interaction. Goffman (1972: 319) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". Based on Goffman's concept of face, Brown and Levinson (1987) developed their politeness theory. Central to their theory is the notion of positive and negative face. In any interaction, negative face refers to a person's wish to be unimpeded and free from any imposition. Positive face, on the other hand, refers to the desire to be appreciated and approved of. In Brown and Levinson's view, the notion of

face is universal:

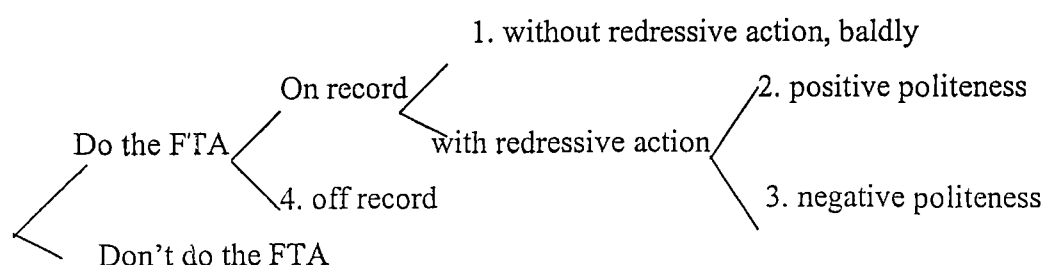
While the content of face will differ in different cultures, we are assuming that the mutual knowledge of members' public self image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61-62)

However, Brown and Levinson's claim about the universality of face has been subject to criticism. A number of studies of non-western cultures have suggested that "face is actually found to wear different cultural faces" (Nwoye, 1992: 328). This observation has been illustrated by Ide's (1989) and Matsumoto's (1988, 1989) work on Japanese culture. The arguments from these researchers can be reduced to the claim that politeness theory is deeply flawed because its central pillar (the notion of face) varies from culture to culture. Their complaint is based on the fact that in Brown and Levinson's theory, honorifics are placed under the negative politeness strategy of deference, and deference is claimed "to defuse the potential face threatening acts" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 183). However, in Japanese culture, honorifics are used even in non-face threatening situations. Matsumoto and other Japanese researchers seem to be uncomfortable with the cultural variability of the notion of face, even though Brown and Levinson (1987:13) asserted that their theory contains "the bare bones of the notion of face (which we argue) is universal, but which in any particular society we would expect to be the subject of much cultural elaboration". Although Brown and Levinson (1987) made it clear that the content of face may be subject to cultural differences, Ide and Matsumoto remain doubtful. They point out that cultural variations might have an impact on the way people see politeness and face. The notion of face in Japan has a collective and social value while in western societies self-image is an independent individual notion. They say:

Since a person's self-image in Japan is not as an independent individual but as a group member having certain relations to others, his 'concept' of face is understandably fundamentally different from that of, say, Europeans, who define themselves as individuals, with certain rights and a certain domain of independence (Matsumoto 1989: 423).

There are many examples of FTAs, such as orders, requests, apologies and criticisms. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, a request is an instance of a FTA because it "threatens a recipient's desire not to be imposed upon (negative face)" while making an apology "threatens a speaker's perception of his or her goodness and appropriateness (positive face)" (Tracy, 1990: 211). From this perspective, Brown and Levinson argue that politeness is concerned with mitigating, softening or downgrading an FTA.

Brown and Levinson proposed a framework in which they emphasise the importance of five different strategies in doing FTA



Strategies for doing 'face threatening acts' (Brown and Levinson 1987: 60)

### Doing the FTA Bald on record

This is the case when the FTA is carried out without softening or mitigation. The speaker does the FTA without any indirectness or ambiguity. The speaker's message is clear and unambiguous. The question is why do the speakers choose to do the FTA without redress? I think the context of the utterance is of utmost importance here. There are situations in which a FTA can be performed without any redress, for example, in an emergency. In war situations for instance, doing FTA bald on record is normal. If the enemy is approaching, it is unlikely that the commanding officer will address his troops saying 'could you please open fire'. The expected utterance would be "open fire" (Kamwendo 1993). Generally, FTAs are done bald on record either when the social distance between interlocutors is small or when the speaker has more power than hearer

does. We will see from our data analysis, in later stages, that most of the teacher's FTAs are bald on record (see chapter 5).

### **Positive politeness:**

This refers to the speaker's desire to be liked by the hearer. This includes the speaker's interest, approval and sympathy with the hearer. It also shows the speaker's desire to agree and establish a common background with the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987:102) cite many tactics that can be employed by the speaker to orient towards the hearer's face. These are a few tactics:

- Notice, attend to hearer (his/her wants, needs, interest)
- Intensify interest to hearer
- Offer promise
- Be optimistic
- Give or ask for reasons
- Give gifts to the hearer.

It will be commented on in the analysis of the data that these tactics are absent in the teachers' utterances.

### **Negative Politeness:**

This strategy assumes that the speaker does not want to infringe on his/her hearer's wants or freedom to act. Strategies used here include:

- Be conventionally indirect
- Question, hedge
- Be pessimistic
- Minimise the imposition
- Impersonalize speaker or hearer

(Brown and Levinson 1987:131)

### Off record strategies

The message or the utterance here is indirect, open to many interpretations. For example, the speaker could say: ‘I’ve lost my money, and there is no bank around here’. The hearer may interpret that the speaker needs a help to find a bank or that the speaker wants to borrow some money. Off record strategies include:

- Give hints
- Presuppose
- Use metaphor
- Be ironic
- Be ambiguous
- Be vague

(Brown and Levinson 1987:211)

It is not particularly controversial to say that face strategies underlie interpretation of social interaction. Politeness strategies can be seen in contexts or situations where power relations exist between participants. One strategy is the use of indirectness to underline these power relations. Leech and Thomas (1990) give a number of reasons in order to explain how indirectness can sometimes bring about negative results. Firstly, they say that some people speak indirectly because they lack the ability to express themselves directly, although the reverse would seem more likely to me because it is probably technically more demanding to develop an appropriate indirect utterance. Secondly, indirectness may be caused by a clash of goals in a speaker’s mind; for example, a doctor may want to make clear the gravity of a patient’s illness without appearing inhumane or uncaring. Thirdly, indirectness is sometimes used as a security device. That is, the speaker can say one thing and imply another, thereby giving him/herself an “out” should his/her statement attract reprisals. S/he can always say: “that is not what I meant”. Thomas (1995), however, considers indirectness as a sign of lack of power and control. She argues that powerless people are always indirect in their speeches, and that this is due to the social distance and power relations that exist between the powerless and powerful people. We shall elaborate in detail on this in the following section.

### 2.2.2.3 *Power, Distance and Rank*

Power, distance and rank are three variables used by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their theory of politeness. They are also used to assess the extent of an imposition or face-threatening act (FTA). Power is the relative power of the speaker over the hearer (see chapter 4 for more details). Distance is the social distance between the speaker and the hearer. Rank is, in a particular culture, the ranking of the weight of the imposition involved in carrying out the act or the task. Hence these terms (distance, power and rank) help us to explain the nature of politeness strategies and the type of communication used.

Halliday and Hasan demonstrate that social distance, which can fluctuate between maximal and minimal distance, affects the system of communication (1989: 7). In order to illustrate Halliday and Hasan's claim, we refer to Arfah's work (1981), carried out in Malaysian classrooms. Arfah (1981) looked at interaction inside and outside the classroom. His findings indicated that the same group of students can show a lack of interaction within the classroom, yet they can be very interactive with their friends and family outside the classroom. He attributed his results to the social distance between the interlocutors. The more social distance is maximised, the less interaction occurs. This suggests, to some extent, why students may not be interactive within the classroom.

Distance is a significant concomitant of power because power relations are essentially built on asymmetrical relationships. Distance tends to correlate with position, especially in a culture where great deference is shown to or expected by a superior from a subordinate, giving rise to a relationship characterised by a large social distance. Such a situation could often lead to social distance which involves less social interaction vertically or across the hierarchy (Al Sree, 1997). From this comes the interpretation that the social role and status of people creates a different atmosphere and social distance between these people. A good example to illustrate this would be the classroom, the context of our research. The social role, the age and the rank given to the teacher make him/her powerful both educationally and socially. This obviously creates a distance between the teacher and the pupil. Our Moroccan classroom case study

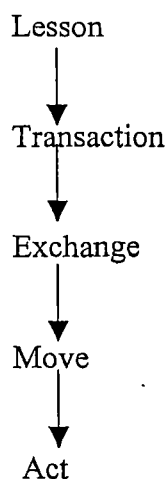


strongly supports this claim. As we will see from the analysis provided later in chapter 8, social distance affects classroom practice. Generally, in this section we have shown that politeness theory is of utmost importance to our explanation of the forces that shape human interaction.

It is also believed that discourse patterns are good instruments for investigating the interpersonal relationship between participants. The only model that offers sophisticated tools for the analysis of the discourse patterns is Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model discussed below.

### 2.2.3 The Birmingham School

The Birmingham model (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975), in the researcher's view, is one of the most effective approaches to the study of spoken discourse within the classroom. Their approach was developed through the collection of data from the classroom. Based on Halliday's (1967) syntactic rank scale model, Sinclair and Coulthard adopted a rank scale hierarchy to describe discourse structure. In their analysis, they isolate and identify the units that occur at discourse level and then examine their functions. They describe discourse by its main units, just as we do when describing grammar and phonology. Observing the traditional classroom interaction, they developed the following five level hierarchies.



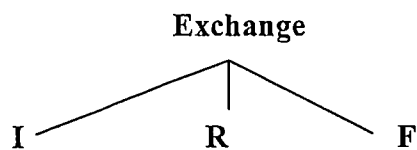
According to Sinclair and Coulthard's model, classroom discourse can be subdivided into a number of transactions between teachers and pupils. A "*transaction is a series of sequences or exchanges concerned with a single topic*" (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975: 86). Each exchange is either a boundary or a teaching exchange. A boundary exchange usually consists of the following two parts: framing moves and focusing moves. Framing moves are signals used by the teacher to indicate his/her movement from a stage of the lesson to another. They are features of both formal and informal spoken discourse. Shop assistants, for instance, usually use them to indicate that they are ready to serve the next customer (e.g. right, who is next). Framing moves are also often marked by features like 'ok', 'well', 'right', 'now', 'good'. Focusing moves indicate the focus of the speaker on the subject matter. They are usually marked by features like 'today we are going to discuss'; 'we will focus on...'. These markers are one of the linguistic features that help us to detect the different phases of the classroom lesson, but they also have their most significant function in the lesson at the end of the discourse (see section 5.2). The following examples from Sinclair's and Coulthard's (1975: 38-39) data illustrate clearly the notion of boundary exchange: Note that these two examples belong to two different parts of discourse.

Boundary exchange 1: Well	Framing
Today I thought we'd do three quizzes	focusing
Boundary exchange 2: Yes good	Framing
So those are all caution signs	Focusing

As the examples show, the function of boundary exchanges is to divide up the interaction into manageable units so that to help hearers or addressees to understand the interaction (Coulthard and Brazil 1981: 17).

Teaching exchanges on the other hand consist of up to three different moves. The initiation move (I) opens the exchange; as Coulthard and Ashby (1975: 75) state, "it links forward and places constraints on what can happen next and sometimes on what person can speak". The responding (R) move "links forward but makes no requirements on what the next move will be or who will make it" (Coulthard and Ashby, 1975: 74).

The last move is the follow-up move (F). This can refer back to an earlier move. It usually contains comments on what has gone before in the exchange (Coulthard and Ashby, 1975: 75). It should be noted in this context that Coulthard & Brazil (1992) replaced the label 'feedback' by the label 'follow-up', because the label 'feedback', in Coulthard and Brazil's words, "turns out, in retrospect, to have been an unfortunate choice" (Ibid 70). This is because the label 'feedback' is a semantic rather than a structural label. It is also tied to the genre of the teacher talk. The following is a clear example of IRF pattern.



The most common form of exchange in the classroom of this study consists of the moves mentioned above. Here is an example from the data.

- |   |           |   |       |
|---|-----------|---|-------|
| 1 | <i>T:</i> | Mada fahimtum mina al qiraa' assamita?<br><i>What have you understood from the silent reading?</i>  | (I)   |
| 2 | <i>P:</i> | Al qiraa' sadikatu Al inssan<br><i>Reading is a friend of mankind.</i>  | (R)   |
| 3 | <i>T:</i> | Tayib(..).al inssan yumkino an ya j'ala sadaqa ma'a al kitab<br>Mada fahimtum. mina al kirra assamita...Hind?<br><i>Good(...).people can establish friendship with the book. What have you understood, Hind, from the silent reading?</i> | (F+I) |
| 5 | <i>P:</i> | Al qiraa' mumtia'a wa<br><i>Reading is exciting and....</i>   | (R)   |
| 6 | <i>T:</i> | Wa mada ...Yala?<br><i>And what else Yala?</i>  | (I)   |
| 7 | <i>P:</i> | Wa mufida<br><i>And interesting</i>   | (R)   |
| 9 | <i>T:</i> | Tayib Kaifa yumkinu lilqiraa' an takuna mofida, jamila,<br>wa nukawino ma'aha sadaqua. Kaifa yumkinu an takula li   | (F+I) |

Kamal?

*Good, how can reading be exciting/ interesting, nice and constitute a friendship to us, can you tell me Kamal?*

The first thing to point out in the example above is that the teacher's participation falls within the structural pattern frame (IRF) we described before. First, there is an initiation conducted by an elicitation act (L1 *mada fahimtum mina al kiraa assamita?*); second, a response filled by an answering move (*Al kiraa sadikatu al inssan* L3); third, a Follow-up filled by an acceptance and evaluation act (L3 *Tayib al inssan yumkinu an yajrala sadaqua ma al kitab*). After this, the teacher moves on to a new exchange of initiation-elicitation (L4). Clearly, the teacher-student exchanges in the extract above follow the IRF sequence, which allows the teacher to maintain control over the structure of the classroom communication.

The act is the smallest unit in Sinclair and Coulthard's model. Acts are assigned discourse functions. By examining the distribution of these functions, we can get to the bulk of the classroom ideas. It should be also made clear that

the category act is very different in kind from Austin's illocutionary acts and Searle's speech acts. Acts are defined principally by their function in the discourse, by the way they serve to initiate succeeding discourse activity or respond to earlier discourse activity. The definition of acts is very general; elicitation for instance has its function 'to request a linguistic response', directive 'to request a non-linguistic response' (Coulthard, 1977: 104)

Sinclair and Coulthard identify three major acts that are often noticed to occur in spoken discourse: elicitation, directive and informative. These are all classified as lead acts in initiate moves.

Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model is built on the exchange pattern (IRF), whereby the teacher makes the initiation and the follow-up move, and pupils make the responding move. Apparently, Sinclair and Coulthard's model offers teachers the right to make more than one move (Initiation and follow-up moves), it specifies that pupils can only use the responding move. Related to this, McCarthy (1991) raises the point that

powerful participants dominate turns by initiating more than one turn. Coulthard and Brazil (1981) consider the presence of the boundary exchanges (see the next section) as an index of an asymmetrical discourse type:

One of the interesting questions to be answered by the new data, we hope, was how far the existence of the units of transaction, or perhaps the realisation of its boundaries by frame and focus, depended on an asymmetrical organisation of the speaking roles as in the classroom and on the particular purpose of the interaction. (Coulthard & Brazil, 1981: 17).

Coulthard and Brazil tended to explain exchange boundaries and moves not as structural units governing interactions at the surface level, but as indicators of asymmetrical control that are associated with the speaker's role. It should be noted, however, that Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) original model is non-critical. It only presents the descriptive units that constitute a discourse. It is only later that Coulthard and Brazil (1981) realised that discourse structure is a marker of socially significant facts. In this connection, Buckingham (1986: 199) states as follows:

...by analysing the characteristic exchange structures of discourse event, we can perceive a correlation between the relative distribution of speaker contributions and centres of discourse and organisational control. (Buckingham, 1986: 199).

It follows from Buckingham's words that the exchange structure of discourse is entirely salient to our understanding of the genre of practice in any context. It helps us to detect the genre of the organisational control conveyed in the discourse. It also helps to establish a link between discourse structure and social structure. Then, the distribution of discourse patterns IRF in communicative exchanges reflects the asymmetricality in discourse. In the classroom, the IRF pattern highlights the unequal distribution of roles. Teachers are noted to hold many turns. Their contributions usually occur in the I and F moves, whereas those of the students are restricted to the R moves. Similarly, Harris (1980: 59) conducted a study in the courtroom and found that magistrates dominate the initiation and follow up moves, while defendants are restricted to the responding moves. Buckingham (1986) also concludes, from a British courtroom

study, that witnesses' contributions occupy the R moves while judges' contributions account for the I-moves.

These studies, although they differ in the field of research, share the main point that the IRF structure is indicative of asymmetricality. It is so because it enables powerful participants to control the flow of the interaction while it restricts the powerless participants' contributions.

Nevertheless, as more time has elapsed since its introduction, defects have started to appear in the model, and much criticism has been directed at it; these criticisms will be considered next.

#### *2.2.3.1 Evaluation of the Birmingham model*

Like so many pioneering works, the Birmingham model has its own strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths lie in the way it helps us to examine the discourse units that exist in teachers and students' classroom discourse. Additionally, it has equipped us with tools and mechanisms to examine the structure of Moroccan classroom talk (see chapter 5). Nonetheless, this model has been criticised for not referring to the power relations between the teachers and students and also to the social and cultural aspects conveyed through discourse (Fairclough 1992a).

Buckingham (1986:188), for instance, refers to the process of interpretation within the model stating that it does not consider the significance of interpretation and its importance in building "coherent sequences". Discussing the function of acts in this model, Buckingham (1986:244) also notes that:

acts are conceived of in terms of discourse internal function and not in terms of what functions they serve in the real world. This distinction between situational value and discursive value is considered critical in the Birmingham model and it is exactly this artificial extraction of one type of functionality which makes this model inadequate in my view...I believe the major weakness of the model lies in this limited conception and definition of functionality.

Buckingham touches upon the notion of function within the Birmingham model. The functionality of the discourse within the Birmingham model is limited only to the context in which that genre of discourse is generated. The function of discourse, as far as Buckingham is concerned, should make sense not only of the internal discourse (the function of words within the sentence or between sentences) but of the wider social one as well. This means that the external factors of discourse should be dealt with (e.g. functional relationship between the utterance and the wider situation which includes the rest of discourse and the participants in that discourse). Generally speaking, the Birmingham discourse is part of the 'microcosmic' notion of functionality, where the focus is on the meaning of the utterance in relation to the discourse it contributes to (Burton, 1981:120). Mills (1997) makes this point very clear when she points out that Sinclair and Coulthard's main concern is not with the meaning of interaction but with the function of individual items within the ongoing text, "rather than their meaning or interpretation in isolation from one another" (Ibid: 139).

Sinclair and Coulthard's model has been criticised by conversation analysts (e.g. Levinson 1983) for employing traditional linguistic concepts based on the decomposition of the sentence into small units, rather than a more data driven approach. Another limitation of this model is that it does not consider the fact that conversations are interactively achieved by interactants' collaborative actions. Sinclair and Coulthard deeply focus exclusively on a single function of the interaction, ignoring therein the multifunctionality of the interaction or discourse (Stubbs 1983, Silverman, 1993: 213). They do not consider the analysis of conversations useful for understanding talk in institutional settings, a matter that conversational analysts regard to be crucial for CA (Silverman 1993).

It should be noted that Sinclair and Coulthard have themselves suggested that their model is useful only in classroom situations (Buckingham 1986). Although, as indicated above, the courtroom, like the classroom, is a formal context where patterns of discourse are governed by rules reflecting the power relations among the participants. If Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) have proposed rigid descriptive discourse patterns manifested in the (IRF) pattern and which regulate the genre of interaction within

classrooms, conversation analysis (henceforth CA) (see section 2.2.4), on the other hand, values the floor, with much emphasis on speaking rights and conversation turns. It emphasises the need to view all interactions as a result of joint efforts and contributions from different participants. However, the distinctive character of classroom interaction is not the simple result of the participants being assigned roles, but rather a result of the teachers who are doing most of the activities, explaining, evaluating and questioning (Buckingham 1986).

Unlike the IRF model which restricts itself to the description of the patterns of discourse, conversation analysis, as we will be seen in section 2.2.4, gives more attention to the interpretation as well as the production of interactions (Fairclough 1995). Whereas, the IRF model considers the data homogeneous and a “discourse product” which alienates any possibility of interpretation, conversation analysis insists on the heterogeneity of the data and considers it open to different interpretations (Fairclough 1995:14). As will be discussed shortly, conversation analysis provides tools and mechanisms for such an analysis. What is conversation analysis? And what function does it play in this research? The following section will provide an answer to these questions.

#### **2.2.4 Conversational analysis:**

In discussing the appropriateness of conversational analysis in the context of this thesis, it is essential to refer to the work of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). Their main focus is on the way language shapes and is shaped in different informal conversation contexts. In developing a taxonomy of conversation, they propose structure composed of two or three parts and rules for each type of conversation (e.g. telephone conversations, where participants are not visible to each other).

Turn-taking, adjacency pairs and topic distribution are three crucial aspects in the analysis of conversations. Turn-taking is controlled by a set of rules that enable interactants to start or stop talking in a structured way. The advantages of these rules are that they secure the ongoing interaction between participants, and that they help prevent



- though not entirely - misunderstandings between them. After a long observation of natural conversations, Sacks et al (1974: 70) found that conversations could happen only when one speaker speaks at a time; though as will be seen later, this claim is open to challenge. Regarding the organisation of conversations, Sacks et al emphasise the fact that speakers have full responsibility to organise their conversational turns. It is up to them to decide when to end the speaker's turn role and for the conversation to move on to the next speaker. Sacks et al proposed the concept of '*turn-constructive units*' (TCU). In their theory, turns consist of four units: sentence, clause, phrase and lexical items. The completion of any of these units signals that the speaker may be going to end his/her turn and the next speaker will take the floor. Sometimes, the end of the speaker's turn is indicated by linguistic markers such as "finally", "my last idea is...", etc. Falling intonation can be also identified as a signal and indicator of the completion of the speaker's turn (Cazden 1988).

In addition to the turn-construction units, Sacks et al (1974) identified two main rules for the organisation of turn-taking. Firstly, the current speaker can select the next speaker either by making a nomination or asking a question as follows:

- T:       Mada fahimti, hind?  
          *What have you understood, Hind?*
- H:       Al qiraa' jamila  
          *Reading is interesting*

The teacher ends her turn with a question directed to Hind. Then, Hind takes the floor and answers the teacher's question. The second way to take turns is more open. One of the speakers may select her/ himself as a next speaker. In other words, he/she does not have to wait for turn allocation by the current speaker. The idea of self-selection challenges the 'one speaker at a time' theory noted earlier, since it encourages simultaneous speech. This is because, in the self-select rule, there is nothing to guarantee that only one speaker can self-select.

According to Sacks et al, these changes in speakers' turns occur spontaneously. There is no possibility that turns can be pre-allocated or discussed before the

conversation takes place. This is because conversation occurs in a closely contextualised situation or is 'locally managed'<sup>2</sup> (Sacks et al, 1974). Sacks et al consider turn-taking rules as a basis for the organisation of conversations. However, they observe that "turn order is not fixed, but varies" (ibid 700-1). This means that turns depend on the genre of conversation. They also assert that "turn size is not fixed, but varies". This is because the length of "the conversation is not specified in advance".

*Sequential organisation* is another aspect central to the interactional organisation developed by Schegloff & Sacks (1973: 296). This means that "turns are logically linked in sequence". The *adjacency pair*, the act that one turn sequentially generates the other (question/answer), is an example of *sequential organisation*.

Nick: (turns to David) Where are the cigarettes David?

David: Sorry, Nick, I've cut you off. (from Eggins & Slade, 1997: 27)

Examining the example above, we notice that the two utterances complete each other. The second turn can only be explained in the light of the first. The first turn is a question asked by Nick with a nomination of David. The second turn is an answer to Nick's question by David. Hence, there is a kind of logical sequence between the first question and the second answer. Generally speaking, the question generates the answer. Such adjacent utterances are called 'adjacency pairs'.

However, it should be noted that adjacency pairs (question/answer (Q/A) can be interrupted with what Schegloff (1972) called *insertion sequences*, which usually come as a result of the hearer's need for a clarification or explanation of something mentioned by the speaker. This is an example.

1 A:	Are you coming tonight?	Q
2 B:	Can I bring a guest?	Qi

---

<sup>2</sup> Sacks et al. (1974) distinguish between 'locally managed' and 'interactionally managed' turn-taking. By 'locally managed', it is meant that the participants have to manage the interaction themselves. By 'interactionally managed', it is meant that the speaker's turn may affect the turns and attitudes of the other participants.

- 3 A: Male or female? Qii  
 4 B: What difference does it make? Qiii  
 5 A: An issue of balance. Aiii  
 6 B: Female. Aii  
 7 A: Sure. Ai  
 8 B: I will be there. A

(from Schegloff, 1972:79)

The above example shows clearly the embedded sequences that occur between the first question and the last answer. These ‘multiple insertion sequences’, which occur in the above example, are a result of the second interlocutor’s request to bring a friend with him. His request triggers off other clarifications from speaker A. These clarifications delay the answer to the question. Hence, adjacency pairs are not always performed in sequence. In chapter 6, we will make this concept clearer by explaining how teachers’ questions generate students’ answers and how students’ answers would not be generated without the teachers’ questions. However, sometimes the expected answer to a question does not occur immediately. It is often interrupted by what we refer to earlier as insertion sequences. Following the property of conditional relevance, the first part of the adjacency pair can only be interrupted by an insertion sequence, which is conditionally relevant to the provision of the second part. In the first line, speaker A invites speaker B. However, speaker B does not answer the speaker’s A question, but inserts another relevant question, asking if he can bring a friend. In line 3, speaker A inserts another question, wondering if the guest is male or female. Speaker A replies a female, then speaker A agrees (L7) and finally, Speaker B confirms that he will attend the event (L8).

Note that between the first question and the last answer there are ‘multiple insertion sequences’ which are relevant to the first question. So the first part of the adjacency pair (L1) is interrupted by insertion sequences which are relevant to the second part (L8).

However, questions/answers are not the only type of adjacency pair although it will be the category focused on in this thesis. Taylor and Cameron (1987: 108-109) list the following types of adjacency pair:

Assessment-agreement/disagreement

Accusation-denial/admission

Request- acceptance/refusal

The concept of the adjacency pair is crucial to this research. This is because, as a mechanism of conversation analysis, it allows us to describe the type of discourse practice accurately and help us to trace the power and control in teachers and students' practices. We will see from chapter 6, for instance, that the question/answer pair enables us not only to understand the nature of the classroom practice in which both the teachers and students are engaged, but helps the interpersonal relationship between the participants.

### **Topic control**

Topic control is another example of conversation conventions that we are going to elaborate on in the coming chapters. Sacks (1968) points out that "talking topically" does not mean preventing others from talking (cf Fairclough 1992b:154). Topics are introduced by one participant, accepted or rejected by another and then discussed by the first participant. This shows that the participants have to agree on the genre of topic to be introduced and discussed. This interest raises the shared ground of the participants and their willingness to elaborate or discuss the chosen topic. In classrooms, however, topics are chosen by teachers, and students are obliged to discuss them even if they are not interested. There is a kind of topic control here. Students are not allowed to negotiate the genre of topic they want to discuss or study (see chapter 5, 6, and 7).

## Interruption

Interruption<sup>3</sup> is another concept that should be discussed in this chapter. In this research, we will argue that most interruptive behaviours signal control on the part of the teacher. The notion ‘interruption’ is dealt with differently from one scholar to another; writers have different orientations and viewpoints. Harrigan (1980) defines interruption as a turn that is interrupted by another speaker’s turn. Similarly, Watts considers it as a threat to the speaker’s face. The reason for this is that it restricts the speaker’s freedom of action in order to achieve his or her traced objectives or goals (Watts 1991: 107). In this way, interruptive behaviour can be regarded as an important variable in interpreting the distribution of power amongst group members during the interaction, because it can be seen as a means of ending or preventing people from finishing their turns; the interrupter here is considered to have something more interesting or important to say. Here is an example for illustration.

### Example 1

(from Itakura 2001:1868)

- A: Ah so y-, you er-camping?  
 B: camping  
 A: [camping  
 B: Yes but er we are  
 → A: [Are you going to swim?  
 B: Yes  
 A: Of course in Okinawa

---

<sup>3</sup> See chapter 7 for more details on the different definitions of interruption and also the function it plays in revealing the relationship between the teachers and the students and hence the classroom discursive practice.

A interrupts B's turn. A completes the turn while B withdraws. Itakura considers B's contribution to the conversation to be restricted. He, therefore, concludes that this interruption is a successful exercise of control by speaker A.

Conversation analysts have been aware of the complexity of dealing with interruption. This complexity rises from the unclear distinction between interruption and overlap (see section 7.4 for more clarification on the distinction between overlap and interruption). Overlap occurs when "two speakers speak simultaneously at a turn transition relevance point where both speakers have the right to complete their respective utterance" (Itakura 2001:1869). The following example explains this definition.

### Example 2

(From Itakura 2001:1869)

B has asked A if she is doing any study to get the certificate in use of a word processor, which will raise her salary for her part-time job.

A:	1	Don't ask
B:	2	<span style="border-left: 1px solid black; border-right: 1px solid black; border-top: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">4 You don't want to talk</span>
A:	3	Don't ask it
B:	4	O.K.

Note that both A and B's utterances overlap in turns 1 and 2, both speakers self-select and both finished their turns. The speech occurs simultaneously.

However, Itakura has gone further to consider overlap as an aspect of control. He provides this example to make his point.

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<sup>4</sup> [ ]Beginning and ending of overlapping utterance.

**Example 3**

(From Itakura 2001: 1869)

- 1       A:     Fortunately this college has, an Italian course, a course  
                   er- second and third st-, for second and third student-er second  
                   language yeah.
- 4       B:     Ooooo(=right, right)
- 5       A:     Why don't you....
- 6       B:     [ French, German?, Italy? ]
- 7       A:     Ita-, Italy also ((pause)) nn (=mm) yes nn (=mm)

According to Itakura, 'turns 3 & 4' are instances of overlap as "the simultaneous speech commences very close to the beginning of both utterances" (2001: 1869). A abandons the turn until B's turn 4 is completed. B insists on holding on to his turn, leading A to withdraw her utterance, restricting her chance to complete her turn. In this example, turns 3 and 4 are considered by Itakura to be instances of successful control for B.

It should be noted that this research focuses on interruption not as a normal fact that occurs in our daily interaction, but as a symbol of power and control, especially in interactions where the social distance is greater. By social distance, we mean the status, rank and social role of interlocutors. This research does not look at interruption as an incident that might happen in every conversation, but examines interruption as a social and cultural phenomenon taking account of the socio-cultural backgrounds of participants. Thus, interruption occurs mostly when speakers violate the turn-taking rules discussed previously. Overlaps, on the other hand, do not violate the turn-taking

system as they “display orderliness” (Jefferson 1984: 11). Jefferson identifies three main types of overlaps: transitional, recognitional and progressional.

Transitional overlap occurs when there is a transition in turns from one speaker to another.

- A: Sala[m  
Hell[o  
B: Sala[m keef halak alyum?  
Hell[o how are you today?

Recognitional overlap occurs when an utterance is clear but has not been terminated yet (see Itakura’s example 3).

Progressional overlap occurs when the current speaker’s utterance shows ‘disfluency’ or ‘hitches’ such as repetition of words, silence fillers.etc.:

(from Jefferson, 1984:35)

- Doreen: No well they fidget. Theh-: they[y  
Helen: [Yes they do

Generally speaking, interruption is a double-sided coin. On one hand, it has been defined as a supportive device which can help to increase the efficiency of conversations (Tannen 1994, Lycan 1977). On the other hand, it is considered as an act of silencing others and forcing them to abandon their turns. In her examination of interruption within the courtroom, Eades (1997), for instance, considers interruption as a strategy for silencing witnesses. She refers to interruption as a violation of the interrupted party’s speaking rights (Eades 1997). This violation is apparent from the party’s incompleting rights of speech, as evidenced by syntactic or intonational incompleteness. Eades (1997) goes further to associate the strategy of meta-linguistic comment with interruption and with question forms which aim to limit the witness’s contribution and to silence him/her.



On the institutional level, Hutchby (1996b) highlights the relationship between the use of interruption and the participants' power and status. Professionals (e.g. radio presenters) tend to make use of interruption in order to control the topic of discussion. Our analysis supports Hutchby's claim, which associates interruption with the participants' power and control. Powerful participants always tend to control conversations, regardless of the consequences that this might have upon the other participants. Hutchby (1996b: 92) considers this type of interruption as a "form of control strategy, mainly by hosts".

Not all interruptions and overlaps occur when there are two speakers speaking at a time, but often occur when a participant produces minimal responses such as 'mmmhm', 'right', 'ok'. Here is an example for clarification:

(From Clayman & Whalen, 1988: 255) .

DR: Let's talk about thuh record. If (we've)>misrepresented=

GB: (Yeah)

DR: =your record in any way,<here's uh\_chance tuh set it straight

'Mm' 'yeah', 'right' are called minimal responses or back-channel utterances (Jefferson 1981; Schegloff, 1982). In the course of this chapter, we will refer to them as minimal responses. Edelsky (1981: 404) insisted that minimal responses should not be viewed as an attempt to take the floor. They are there only "to provide feedback but not a referential message". Similarly, Mullany (1999) points out that uttering minimal responses should not be seen as an attempt to hold the floor.

Minimal responses are usually used to signal to the speaker that the listener agrees with what he/she is saying. They are taken to be supportive. However, an increase in the rate of the minimal listener's response may correlate with turn-taking: the responder wishes to become the next speaker (Watts 1991). Giving minimal responses may, thus, be one way of claiming the floor space without running the risk of being interpreted as an interrupter.

Despite its wide contribution to the analysis of conversations, CA has been criticised for its focus on turn-taking organisation. The self-select turn creates confusion among participants in a conversation about the next speaker. Participants do not know who is going to hold the floor next and for how long. As a result of the self-select turn, many speakers speak simultaneously and this leads to overlaps (see section 7.4 for more discussion). Moreover, CA has been criticised for its ignoring of power as a factor in conversation. In many conversations, as will be seen in chapters 5, 6 and 7, turn-taking roles are not equally distributed (Fairclough 1992a). Although CA has been criticised for having little to say about power in social interaction, there has been an attempt especially by Hutchby (1996b) to bring the concept of power into the analytic frame of CA.

So far, we have described and discussed some concepts that we think are useful for our analysis. We have introduced Sinclair and Coulthard's model and discussed its strength in bringing the new discourse patterns into the classroom world. We have also introduced conversation analysis and shown its strength in establishing specific rules for the organisation of dialogues and conversations. We also mentioned its limitations and explained that this model is not sufficient to determine what discourse (e.g. the discourse between teacher and pupil) is accomplishing, although it provides some useful insight into the nature of their interaction. This will be our starting point for arguing why we have chosen critical discourse analysis as a model for our analysis.

### ***2.3. Critical discourse analysis***

This section will present a definition of critical theory (2.3.1), and a brief outline of a number of CDA approaches (2.3.2). The remainder of the section focuses in detail on the particular approach selected for this study, Fairclough's framework. The framework is introduced in 2.3.3 and illustrated in 2.3.4. A justification of the choice of this framework for the analysis of this research is presented in 2.3.5.

Before some of the principles of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) are introduced, it should be emphasised that the approaches, reviewed so far, are an important part of this critical analysis. Without them, the critical theory (CDA) developed by Fairclough would be impossible to conceive. Thus the previous approaches can be considered to be a part of the critical model we will introduce shortly. The only difference between the non-critical and critical approaches is that CDA deals with socio-cultural variables and their impact on language use, as well as with structural issues. In other words, CDA refers to social structure in its analysis of discourse. Before the usefulness of CDA in this research is explained, it is necessary first to define what is meant by a critical theory.

### **2.3.1 What is a critical theory?**

Critical analysis derives its basis from theories of power and ideology developed by Foucault (1970, 1977), Habermas (1979, 1984) and Bourdieu (1977), who focused on the sociological and political agendas of discourse and society. The method of critical analysis is increasingly applied in the description and interpretation of language in use. This critical analysis is known by various names such as critical linguistics, critical language studies, critical discourse analysis and critical language awareness.

The origin of the critical approach can be traced back to Firth (1957) and Malinowski (1923), and those studies were expanded into the Hallidayan view of the language as a social semiotic (see section 2.2.1). Halliday's (1973, 1978) emphasis was on the ideational view of language. That is to say, language reflects the world. He said "Language is as it is because of its function in social structure, and the organisation of the behavioural meanings should give some insights into its social foundations" (1973: 65). The function of language is not restricted to the description of the world but rather to the construction of the reality (identity, social relations....) of its users, reflecting the ideology of its society. This functional role of language is at the core of many critical studies, as found in the works of Fowler et al (1979), Kress and Hodge (1979, 1988, 1993) and Fairclough (1989, 1992a, 1992c). Critical linguistics of text was first

developed by the East Anglian research group, including Fowler, Kress, Hodge and Trew. Their main focus was on the function of language in social life. They showed how language embodies ideology.

These efforts were the starting point for Fairclough, who has published extensively in this domain. Fairclough provided a methodological framework for the analysis of CDA (see section 2.6.2). Over a decade, his significant contribution (1989, 1992a, 1992c, 1995) to this area has provided direction and explanation. He describes his approach as “an orientation towards language (which) highlights how language conventions and language practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of” (1992c: 7). Furthermore, Fairclough has repeatedly expressed the invisibility of power relations, whereby people exercise power over others in a very covert way. The exertion of this power can only be revealed by examining language practice. Kress and Hodge consider the following concerns crucial to understanding language practices:

the definition of the social participants, relation structures, processes, in terms of solidarity or in terms of power. Hence questions of power are always at issue, whether in the affirmation of solidarity or in the assertion of power (1988: 122).

Fairclough, however, goes further to declare that power is practised tacitly. He states that it “is implicit within everyday social practices which are pervasively distributed at every level in all domains of social life” (1992a: 50). It is accepted that critical discourse analysis explores the connection between daily talk and the production of, maintenance of, and resistance to systems of power, inequality and injustice (Fairclough 2001). Van Dijk (1998) makes clear the position of critical discourse analysts, by saying that “critical discourse analysts take an explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose and ultimately to resist social inequality”. He also makes the point that CDA is critical:

Indeed, the last thing critical discourse analysis scholar should do is to uncritically adopt philosophical, or sociological ideas about language and discourse that are obviously uninformed by the

advances in contemporary linguistics and discourse analysis (van Dijk 1998: 2).

Similarly, in his definition of CDA, Fairclough shows the same emphasis on social equality.

By critical discourse analysis I mean analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (1993: 135).

This quotation states that talk is created through power relations, and also maintains them, and that the aim of CDA is to clarify and highlight this relationship. This type of relation is often unclear to people and the aim of CDA is to make it visible through the analysis of discourses. According to van Dijk (1998: 2-4), several requirements need to be observed if CDA is to fulfil its ultimate aim. He summarises these requirements as follows:

1. CDA must be better than other research in order to be welcomed or accepted.
2. CDA has to tackle 'social problems' and political issues.
3. Empirically adequate critical analysis of social problems should usually be multi-disciplinary.
4. Besides describing discourse structures, CDA should try to explain them in accordance to the social structure.
5. The main intention of CDA is to reveal how discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society (van Dijk, 1998: 2-4).

The main point to be concluded from van Dijk's requirements of critical analysis is that CDA has to go beyond the surface structure of discourse to show how discourse hides deep relations of power and inequality and how discourse is being ideologically shaped.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271- 280) summarise the main tenets of CDA as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems:

Critical discourse analysis studies the way power abuse, dominance and control are enacted and produced. It deals with social inequality and cultural differences between groups and members. In this research, for instance, the focus will be on the power relations within the classroom and the way the teachers dominate the classroom practice (chapters 5,6,7). We consider the classroom practice part of the social practice and therefore, the classroom problem is a social problem (see chapter 8 for more details).

2. Power relations are discursive:

CDA's main concern is how power relations are exerted in discourse. Take, for instance, political interviews. The interviewers control the way the interview starts, ends and the nature of questions to be asked (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). In this research, the focus will be on the discourse patterns and on how the teachers control the moves, interrupt the students and control the questioning process.

3. Discourse constitutes society and culture:

CDA's emphasis is here on the dialectical relationship between the discourse and the society. Discourse shapes and is shaped by the society. We can only understand the process of power relations by recognising this dialectical relationship. It will be argued in chapter 8 of this research that discourse constitutes society. We will see how the teachers and students' beliefs about the classroom practice affect their practice in the classroom.

4. Discourse does ideological work:

It is through discourse that people express their beliefs, identities and ideologies. Mumby and Clair (1996: 183) make this clear by pointing out that:

discourse analysts are using the notion of ideology in a particular fashion. The term refers not to ideas, beliefs that individuals take on, but rather to the process by which social actors, as part of larger social collectives, develop particular identities and experience the world in a particular way

5. Discourse is historical:

Crucial to this is the notion of context. For a discourse to be fully understood, the context in which this discourse is uttered needs to be considered. Discourse should not be interpreted as isolated from other discourses but connected to previous discourses. It is generally believed that one discourse leads to another. This is what Fairclough and others refer to as intertextuality of texts (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). Foucault (1972) considers it to be a crucial element in the analysis of discourse. For him every text or discourse 'reactualises others' (Fairclough 1995: 101). There are different genres of intertextuality that can be mentioned here. Firstly, manifest intertextuality where the text under examination contains other texts. These texts can be easily detected by the surface markers such as quotation marks. Embedded intertextuality, on the other hand, is different. There are no surface indicators of the presence of other texts in the text under analysis. The relation of the text to others is implied in the text. It depends on the reader or analyst's background (Fairclough 1995). Since this research deals with intertextuality within Moroccan classroom discourse, this tenet is of utmost importance to this research. It is regarded central to our study which links Moroccan culture and classroom talk together. Intertextuality in our data lies in teachers' switching from SA to MA. Also intertextuality is concrete in our interpretation that the classroom practice (text) is part of the social practice (text). Thus, understanding classroom practice requires understanding the social units within the classroom text.

6. The link between the text and the society is mediated:

Fairclough & Wodak (1997) express the complexity of the link between the text and the society. The text and society are indirectly mediated by the 'order of discourse'. Certain social and cultural events, for instance, may create new practices. These practices leave their traces in the text (see section 2.3.2 for more details).

#### 7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory:

Discourse is open to many interpretations, depending on the context, the producer and the time in which this discourse is generated. Since people have different thoughts and viewpoints, it is unlikely that discourse can have one single interpretation. In our study, the classroom discourse is interpreted and explained in relation to the social and cultural practice (chapter 8).

#### 8. Discourse is a form of social action

One of the implications of CDA is that it bears the responsibility of raising awareness among people of their social practices. It should also suggest solutions for the phenomenon examined. Van Dijk (1993a), for instance, looked at the racist implications in Dutch schoolbooks. His analysis and findings led to the production of new 'school materials' (Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

It is remarked from the discussion of the main tenets of CDA that the main goal of such analysis is to uncover power relationships. To do so, CDA regards text, context and society central to its interpretation and explanation of these power relations. CDA also argues that power is exercised through consent rather than coercion. Powerful people are capable of getting powerless people to interpret the world from their point of view. Looking at the above-mentioned principles, we would notice that CDA is politically oriented. The question that might come to mind is why CDA is appropriate to the classroom. Before answering this question, let us first consider CDA in educational research.

CDA has appeared relatively recently on the educational research scene and has been described as a new wave of research (Apple 1995, Hicks 1995). It has been noted that "educational researchers would have been hard pressed to turn up many theses, research papers, and monographs that used discourse-analytic theories and methods prior to the 1980s" (Luke, 1995: 7). However, the fact that CDA is gaining legitimacy is evidenced in the first chapter of the Review of Research in Education 1995-96 edition (Apple, 1995). Apple states that the purpose of this publication is to "give a greater voice to 'newer' forms of research methodologies and theories" (1995: XI). He also says



that “educational institutions do not stand alone, somehow distanced from the cultural, and economic and political relations and tensions of the larger society” (p: XII).

Some of these studies go beyond the description of discourse of the classroom into understanding how the community-based discourse practice that children experience at home positively or negatively affects the students’ participation in the classroom. If community-based practices are compatible with formal classroom practices, then children are observed to participate or learn at ease. If not, children may find it difficult to integrate and participate in classroom practice (Hicks 1995).

### **Discourse as social activity in the preschool years**

Researchers have argued that discourse mediates learning (e.g. Hicks 1995, Moll et al. 1993). It was also concluded that the more the children participate and contribute to the ongoing discursive activities, the more they gain control over their activity. It is through these activities that children learn the discourse practice associated with their daily activities (Hicks 1995). Hence, children in pre-school years develop a repertoire of discourse which reflects these daily social activities. Also studies of children belonging to different communities and cultures have found that children use different discourses which reflect their community background. These discourses shape and are shaped by the students’ community social practice (Heath 1983). Hicks (1995) emphasises the relation between community practice and social practice. This means that classrooms are not regarded as isolated institutions with respect to other practices. This brings us to what Fairclough (1995) refers to as the dialectical relationship between classroom practice and social practice.

Over the last decade or so an entire body of research on classroom discourse has gone further to establish the relationship between the community and classroom (Hicks 1995). Moll et al’s (1993) work is representative of this genre of research. They studied how Latino children’s sociocultural knowledge at home is related to their classroom learning and found that when children go to school they find differences in how knowledge is distributed. The distribution of the knowledge depends on the background

of the children and the genre of the community they come from. It is often regarded as individually possessed rather than socially shared. Moll et al. (1993) combined ethnographic studies with classroom studies and community studies (Hicks 1995). The main objective of this combination is to see how knowledge is socially distributed within Latino children. To Hicks (1995), this kind of research illustrates the importance of looking outside the classroom in order to understand the practice within it. Moll et al's research explains in one way or another the main difficulties the Latino children seem to have within the U.S.A school system.

### **Classroom and power relations**

The main concern of this section is to review some of the research which deals with classroom discourse and power relations. Thornborrow's, McHoul's, Jones's and Manke's research will be discussed in this section. Also a brief comparison of their findings will be presented.

In her analysis of the distribution of roles and turns within British primary school year six classroom of 10-11 years olds, Thornborrow (2002) found that pupils take quite long turns in which they express their opinions or comment on certain topics. Turns are distributed by the teacher who often nominates or signal for the next speaker. Here is an example taken from Thornborrow (2002: 118).

- Teacher: got into (xxx). What a relief (.) Emma
- Emma: well um I was happy that I got into (xxx) cos um (.) lots of people applied to that school but um (.) I'm going to be sad when I leave primary school cos I'm gonna (.) leave (.) most of my friends (.) which are here and quite a (lot'v) people gonna go like that if they're not going to the same school  
[ ( as their friends)]
- Teacher: [ yeah I think you're right]  
(.) Ben

In her comment on the above extract, Thornborrow (2002) noted that the teacher is seen here as a floor allocator. He/she acknowledges Emma's contribution and then selects Ben for the next turn. She describes the above extract as an example of ordinary talk in which only one speaks at a time. Although the teacher in the above extracts seeks to agree with the student, her role of distributing turns resembles that of many teachers in this research. As will be seen in chapter 5, 6, and 7, Moroccan teachers seem to have the same role as those teachers described by Thornborrow.

Like many other researchers (Fairclough 1992), Thornborrow (2002) commented on IRF model and regards it a model that restricts students' contributions and allows teachers to hold many turns. Thornborrow (2002: 116) suggested that one way of reducing teachers-directed talk in the classroom is to "redistribute powerful resources to children, and this redistribution can result in a potential loss of control for teachers". Following this description, Thornborrow (2002) asserts that the organisation of the classroom interaction is based on an unequal distribution of turns and rights to speak. For her Sinclair and Coulthard's model reflects teachers' control and dominance. She quotes them saying:

Inside the classroom the single speaker is in control of the many- he [sic] decides who will talk, what they will talk about and also acts as residual speaker, the person who is seen as responsible for dealing with silence (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975: 115).

Like Thornborrow, in her early research, McHoul (1979) looked at the power relations within US classrooms. He examined the turn-taking distribution in classrooms and concluded that in classroom talk, unlike informal conversations, teachers violate the turn-taking rules set by Sacks et al. (1974). In the classrooms he examined, the teachers do not only initiate topics and maintain them, but also control the classroom practice. He also suggests that this dominance over classroom practice reflects the identity difference between students and teachers. The social difference between teachers and students gives the teacher more power to initiate the utterance rules: "the teacher has rights as first starter, which he here exercises. The peculiar conclusion we must draw from this data is that to move away from a conversation like exchange system the teacher is obliged to actually do a violational utterance" McHoul (1979: 205). The

teacher has not only the right as first starter, but has the right to pick and choose the next speaker and how long the speaker's turn will last.

McHoul (1979) concludes that his classroom data shows asymmetricality in the distribution of turns, which are pre-located by teachers. He said: "the locally managed component is largely the domain of teachers, student participation rights being limited to the choice between continuing or selecting the teacher as next speaker" (McHoul 1979: 211). Thornborrow (2002: 111) comments that McHoul's classroom data "produces an institutional formality because there is a high degree of pre-allocation of turn types", and unequal distribution of turns.

McHoul's analysis underpins Chouliaraki's (1996) claim that teachers' pedagogic practices control the students' practice. She criticises the way pupils are trained to adopt good behaviour. Training students to adopt good behaviour, as far as Chouliaraki and McHoul are concerned, is designed to maintain the educational 'institutional order'. They go on to say that students are taught how to do things and not why things should be done. This according to Chouliaraki reflects the teachers' rights to control the classroom practice. Fisher (1993), similarly, argues that power is part of educational institutions. Teachers' pedagogy clearly reflects this authority; they control the classroom practice.

Jones (1989), however, found that the students' practice shapes the action of the teacher. She argues that power should not be looked at as something owned solely by teachers, but as an outcome of the teachers and students' continuing relationship. In her analysis of classroom practice in a New Zealand secondary school, she found that the students' conception of the classroom practice shapes the teacher's practice. Examining working-class girls' classroom practice, Jones concluded that the teacher's dominance of the classroom practice was due to the lack of co-operation from the students. This is because the working-class girls consider discussion and involvement in the classroom practice a 'waste of time'. Jones suggests that the girls' conception of doing school work can be attributed to their cultural backgrounds. For these girls, Jones reiterated, "gaining school knowledge is best done through obedient attention in a teacher-directed process" (Jones 1989: 27). The same results are emphasised by Fairbairn-Dunlop

(1981:232) who says that parents liked formal teaching “where children were quiet and working hard, listening and talking in everything the teacher said”. He goes on to say that such a concept of learning reflects the structure of the society, where elders and people with authority are respected and their opinions and viewpoints are unquestionable. My research results support Fairbairn Dunlop’s suggestion (see section 8.2).

In her analysis of power relations in three elementary school classrooms, Manke (1997) draws on Foucault’s concept that power is not only a property of a single individual, but something which is practised, experienced and resisted by all social actors. Manke (1997) regards power within the classroom as a joint practice between teachers and students. To support her view, she looked at issues such as how ‘discursive strategies of indirectness and politeness are used in teacher/student interaction and how students resist teachers’ agendas’ (Thornborrow 2002: 114). She found that teachers often use the inclusive ‘we’ to refer to the whole class and avoid individual reprimands. This is in order to establish collusion with their pupils so as the teaching agenda works successfully.

Manke (1997) concludes from her study of these three elementary school classes that students often make connections between the knowledge learned in the class and what they already know from their experience. They are also noted to make connections between the task learned and their own particular agendas. As an example of this, Manke cites how a student expresses his complete refusal to carry out his teacher’s instructions and follows his own agenda by saying: ‘ I already know a lot about Robin Hood in my head’ (Manke 1997: 104 cited in Thornborrow 2002: 114). The student’s saying here is a clear indicator of the student’s challenge of his teacher’s role as instructor. Instead of complying with the teacher’s agenda, the student sticks to his own agenda. Students also resist their teacher’s agenda by pretending to misunderstand their teachers’ instructions (Manke 1997 cited in Thornborrow 2002). Here is an example taken from Manke:

Marlon:	what unit?
Ms Bridgestone:	Stadium

Marlon: No what unit  
 Ms Bridgestone: Twenty-five  
 Latoya: You can see it on the board.

(Manke 1997: 108)

In this extract, Marlon pretends not to understand the question by asking the teacher for clarification. Her persistence on clarification has triggered off Latoya's turn, in which he points out that the answer is clear to him.

Manke (1997) suggests that in order to understand power relations in the classroom, we need to examine the interactional features and discursive resources that all participants utilise.

In this section different views of power in the classroom have been highlighted and discussed. Whereas McHoul (1979) argues that teachers dominate classroom practice and exert power over students by holding so many turns, Jones (1989) considers power to be an outcome of both teachers and students' practices. Manke (1997) concludes that teachers' power can be challenged and resisted by students who may consider themselves as 'collaborative contributors to a jointly discussion'.

In keeping with the critical tradition, no discussion will be complete without taking a closer look at its major components, i.e. social reality and power relations. The latter of these will be outlined briefly here, and discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

### **2.3.2 Language and social reality**

Fairclough has developed a social theory which combines different traditions in a coherent framework. It serves as a matchmaker to make social, political, cultural and linguistic thought marry to discourse by creating a framework for the analysis of language in social life (Fairclough, 1992a). It combines aspects of the Foucaultian view of discourse with a Bakhtinian emphasis on intertextuality. The former includes the vital emphasis upon the social variables of discourse. The latter emphasises the linguistic

features of texts and their relation to other texts (Fairclough, 1992a). Textual analysis (i.e. analysis of linguistic features) is very important in determining the nature of discourse practice, which in turn is crucial for our understanding of social practice. Based on this principle, Fairclough (1992a) proposed the following three dimensions for the analysis of discourse: text, discourse practice and social practice. These dimensions are useful mainly when we try to discuss the relationship between classroom practice, and social and cultural practice. Fairclough views discourse as a form of social practice, rather than as a purely individual activity. His view of discourse has two implications. Firstly discourse reflects actions. It describes or represents the way people act upon themselves and upon others. In brief, it reflects people's ideational and interpersonal relations. Secondly, there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure. According to Fairclough, discourse contributes to

the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain it: its own norms and conventions, as well as the relations, identities and institutions which lie behind them (Fairclough, 1992b: 64).

The idea to be grasped from this quotation is that discourse is a practice that constitutes and constructs the world by meaning. Discursive practice is constitutive in two ways. It describes and represents the reality of societies by displaying social identities, social relationships and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough 1992a). Yet, it also contributes to transforming them, in the sense that discourse represents changes and transformations that occur at the social structure level. Usually, these innovations leave their traces in discourse practice. Thus, Fairclough says:

[The] discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people's heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material and social structure (Fairclough, 1992b: 64).

Concisely, the above ideas can be summed up in four theoretical propositions. Firstly, discourse reflects and is reflected by society (Fairclough, 1992b: 17). It is through discourse that we understand social practices, and it is through social practice that we can make sense of discourse. There is a dialectical relationship between these

two. As Fairclough says, discursive practices are a result of social practice. We shall elaborate on this in the last chapter by discussing the relationship between the Moroccan classroom interaction and the social practice of that culture. Secondly, discourse constitutes the social. This means that discourse represents social relations between people, their identities, beliefs, ideologies and knowledge. Thirdly, discourse is shaped by relations of power and invested with ideologies. People exploit their discourse to express their ideologies, beliefs and power. Usually, these practices are hidden in discourse. Textual analysis is considered to be very helpful in revealing these invisible practices and is also useful in determining the nature of power relations and ideologies that might cover discourse. Fourth, critical language studies are used to show how discourse and society shape each other. Critical discourse is used to raise awareness among people who are dominated linguistically (Fairclough 1992b). It tries to empower powerless people and dis-empower powerful ones.

The propositions mentioned above are vital to our study. However, a special focus will be put on the first and second propositions. We will see how language or discourse reflects the social and cultural backgrounds of both teachers and pupils and how language expresses power relations within Moroccan classrooms. The main objective behind the revelation of these practices is to raise awareness among the participants and also, as Fairclough points out, to establish 'new conventions and norms', which are free from control and dominance. In brief, the main target of CDA is to establish what Fairclough (1995: 96, 98) refers to as 'conversationalisation of discourse' and 'democratisation of discourse'. Both terms mean equal and unrestricted contributions. As indicated in chapter 1, this study is concerned with analysis of classroom practice with a special emphasis on teacher/ pupil's discursive practices. In other words, it tries to focus on textual analysis as a means of understanding discourse practice using Fairclough's current methodology of analysis.

Fairclough's approach to discourse is a reaction to the general isolation of language studies from other social sciences, when linguistics was dominated by "formalistic and cognitive paradigms" (Fairclough, 1992a: 1). Fairclough recognises that these positions and attitudes about language are changing. He attributes these changes to the 'linguistic turn' in social theory. But, before going on to discuss



Fairclough's framework of analysis, let us reflect upon other types of CDA.

It should be mentioned that there are many types of CDA. Each type has a different theoretical and analytical framework. However, all these types have a common and shared aim, which is to analyse and expose social inequality and asymmetrical relations in social life. They share ideas about how discourses are structured and produced. Van Dijk (1998) refers to the common goals of many types of CDA by mentioning the common vocabulary used 'power', 'dominance', 'hegemony', 'ideology', 'gender', 'race', 'discrimination', 'inequality'.

We will consider from among the many types of CDA, van Dijk's socio-cognitive<sup>5</sup> studies and Wodak's discourse-historical method.

### *Socio-cognitive studies*

Van Dijk's critical work dates back to the 1980s. Before that, his main concern was on how text grammars enable him to provide explicit description of the grammatical structure of texts, for example the consideration of the semantic coherence between sentences and clauses (van Dijk 1972). A decade later, he switched to discourse and communication with a particular focus on racism. His visit to Mexico was a motivating factor to start this kind of research. During his stay in Mexico, he decided to change his research in order to address social and political issues. Text grammar and psychological theories offer little to tackle these daily social problems. van Dijk's new focus was on how racism is expressed, and reproduced through text and talk. As a starting point, he looked at how white majorities think, speak and write about ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers. As an example, he examines the ways the white Dutch and Californians talk about minorities (van Dijk 1991 cited in Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 265). He found that their conversations contain negative elements with respect to minorities. The other studies on the ethnic prejudices and the production of racism in discourse focused on the press. As an example of this, he analysed

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<sup>5</sup> By cognition van Dijk refers to mental resources such as knowledge, evaluative beliefs, opinions about social and communicative events, expertise, attitudes and motivation (van Dijk 1996).

thousands of news reports from the British and Dutch press to conclude that certain topics in the press reveal ethnic prejudices (van Dijk 1988). He also concludes that the press has a big influence on the public. Therefore, according to van Dijk, the press in Europe plays a central role in maintaining and sometimes aggravating the ‘ethnic status quo’. Additionally, van Dijk focuses on the abuse of power and the reproduction of inequality through ideologies. Cognition is the indirect link between discourse structure and social structure. It is considered to be crucial to van Dijk’s approach (van Dijk 1998). Without ‘cognitive properties’, it would be difficult to understand how and why discourse is produced, expressed and delivered (van Dijk 1998). Cognitive study deals with mental representations and processes of discourse producers. This includes the aims, beliefs and objectives of the production of discourse. Van Dijk’s conception of cognition lies in his emphasis on establishing a relationship between society, cognition and discourse. To him, social interactions are presented in forms of written texts or discourse, following a cognitive process or system. This system consists of short and long-term memory, which includes socio-cultural knowledge which consists of knowledge, discourse and communication. Since this research deals with the social and cultural aspects of discourse, van Dijk’s cognitive analysis is not of particular interest here.

The main difference between van Dijk’s model and Fairclough’s is that the former focuses on discourse practice which involves text production and consumption. The latter, however, considers discourse practice a mediator between text and sociocultural practice: “sociocultural practice indirectly shapes text by way of shaping the discourse practice” (Fairclough 1995b:96). This suggests that Fairclough’s framework is much wider than van Dijk’s. Since this research focuses on all three dimensions: text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice, Fairclough’s approach is the most appropriate (see section 2.3.4).

#### *Discourse-historical Method*

Although she shares the same objective as van Dijk, Wodak uses her own methodology to highlight power and asymmetry in various Austrian institutions. It is worth mentioning, however, that Wodak was one of those who were influenced by the Frankfurt school, especially by Habermas’s critique of formal linguistics. Her concern is

with institutional discourse: courts, schools and hospitals. In 1980, she analysed tape recordings of traffic offence hearings obtained from Viennese courts. Wodak started by establishing the link existing between speech variations and the socio-economic characteristics of the speaker. Her main concern was

Whether and how linguistic barriers and communicative difficulties appear in such important situations as courts of law, and thus whether individuals who do not know rules and values favoured there are discriminated because of their discourse. (Wodak, 1980: 369)

Wodak's main focus was to see if middle class and working class defendants received an equal, positive hearing. She concludes that "inequality before the law is documented in discourse interaction" (1980: 378). She went on to say that working class defendants were observed not to use the same communicative strategies as those of the middle class and judges. This, according to Wodak, caused working class defendants to be treated less favourably. However, Buckingham (1986: 62) regards Wodak's claims as "not systematically substantiated by data analysis and there is no linguistic validation of terms such as interactional strategies, norms and role projection"

In 1990, Wodak and her Vienna team founded what is called now the "Discourse-historical method". This approach focuses on any information that might help to interpret and explain the discourse (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Later on, Wodak and her team elaborated upon van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach. They provided historical and social explanations, which are believed to be important to the text production and comprehension (for more detail see Wodak 1992). This makes Wodak's approach, like van Dijk's, limited to discourse practice (see figure 1, section 2.3.3). It does not consider social and cultural practices - Fairclough's main focus - in its explanation of discourse practices.

Having introduced briefly these two types of CDA, let us turn now to Fairclough's framework. It should be stressed from the very beginning that this framework is chosen for the analysis because it has a social and cultural orientation (see section 2.3.5 for more details), which are salient to this study. A comparison of van

Dijk's, Wodak's and Fairclough's approaches will be made in section 2.3.5.

### 2.3.3 Framework of discourse analysis

Fairclough's discourse analytic framework will be used for the analysis of the data in the present study. The reasons for choosing Fairclough and not van Dijk or Wodak will be discussed in section 2.3.6. Fairclough's framework has been chosen because it is useful for describing and explaining discursive practices within and outside the classroom. In particular, it takes into account the social and cultural elements that influence the meaning and intent of the interaction. It also enables us to locate the classroom within its wider and larger context (i.e. the societal context). The model also combines social, cognitive and cultural variables in its analysis.

Fairclough's language analysis and social theory centre upon a combination of texts, interactions and social actions. The concept of discourse and discourse analysis has three dimensions. These are represented clearly in the following diagram

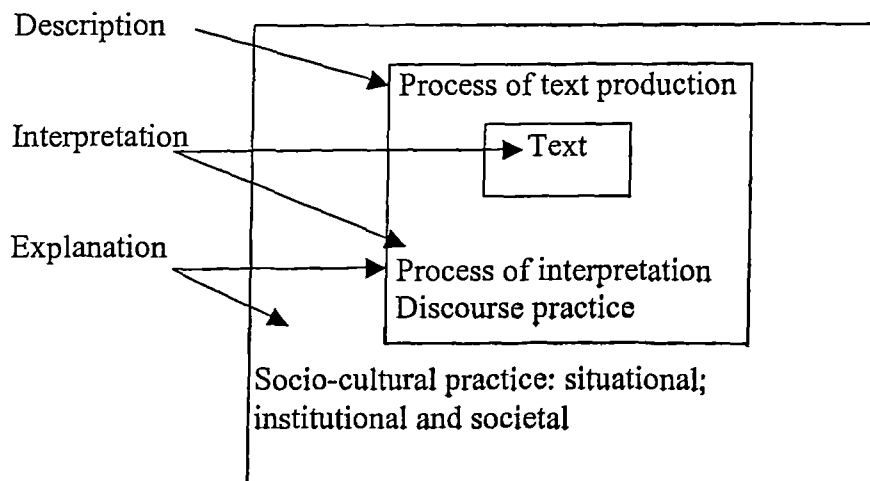


Figure 1: Dimensions of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995: 98)

The diagram shown above highlights the fact that every discourse has the

following three dimensions: a text, which may be composed of a spoken or written language; an interaction between people, which involves processes of producing and interpreting the text; and a social action. Interaction plays the role of the mediator between the text and the social action. This implies that text production and interpretation depend upon the social action in which they are embedded. The nature of the text and its linguistic features constitute cues for its interpretation (Fairclough 2001).

The above diagram shows also that CDA analysis has three means of analysis: description of the text; interpretation of the interaction processes and their relationship with the text; and explanation of how the interaction process is related to the social action. The interpretive phase aims at specifying what conventions are in the text. As for the explanation phase of the analysis, its major aim is to explain the properties of the interaction by referring to the social context in which the interaction occurs. In the analysis of classroom interaction, this research will follow the same steps described above. We will describe the linguistic features chosen for the analysis (chapter 5, 6, 7) and try to explain their occurrence by referring to the classroom context and also to the interpersonal relationship between the teachers and the students. Then, we will explain the classroom practice in relation to the social and cultural practice (chapter 8). By doing this, we can see how the classroom practice shapes and is shaped by the wider social practice.

#### **2.3.4 An example of CDA analysis**

This section presents, especially for those who are not familiar with critical discourse analysis, an example (from Fairclough 2001) of a critical discourse analysis approach to the examination of power in a face-to-face discourse where the participants are unequal.

The extract is taken from a visit to a baby unit by a doctor (D) and a group of medical students (S), as part of the students' training programme. Fairclough examines different ways in which the doctor controls the discourse and restrains the students' contributions.

(from Fairclough 2001: 37)

- 1     **D:**     and let's gather round. the first of the infants-now what I want  
                   you to do is to make a basic. Neo-natal examination just as Dr  
                   Mathews has to do as soon as a baby arrives in the ward. All right  
                   you are actually going to get your hands on the infant. And look  
                   at the key points and demonstrate them to the group as you are  
                   doing it will you do that for me please. off you go
- 2     **S:**     well first of all I am going to ( )
- 3     **D:**                     first. Before you do that is do you wash  
                   your hands isn't it. Cos you've just been examining another baby  
                   (long silence) are you still in are you in a position to start the  
                   examination yet ( )
- 4     **S:**     just going to remove this
- 5     **D:**     very good. It's putting it back that is the problem isn't it eh
- 8     **S:**     well here's a young baby boy. Who we've decided is. Thirty.  
                   Thirty-seven weeks old now. was born. two weeks ago. um is  
                   fairly active. his er eyes are open. He's got hair on . his head his  
                   eyes are open
- 7     **S:**     um he is crying or making
- 8     **D:**                     yes     yes you' ve told me
- 9     **D:**                     yeah we we we' ve heard that now what other  
                   examinations are you going to make I mean-

Note that Fairclough used the square brackets to mark the number of times the doctor interrupted the student in the above unequal encounter conversation.

Examining the ways in which the doctor exercises control over the student's contribution, Fairclough notes that in the opening, as a first step, the doctor announces the nature of the interaction. Secondly, students are told when 'to start talking and examining, at the end of turn 1' (*off you go*). Thirdly, in turn 3, Fairclough comments on the way the student is told to sequence his actions. Fourthly, Fairclough considers

the way the teacher evaluates the student's contribution (*very good*) as a "technique of control which would be regarded as presumptuous or arrogant if they are addressed to an equal or someone more powerful" (Ibid : 45).

In addition to this, he considers the interruptive behaviour performed in this extract as an act of controlling the student's contribution.

My impression is that the doctor does not interrupt simply because he wants to do all the talking, as people sometimes do. I think he interrupts in order to control the contributions of the students (Ibid: 45).

Finally, Fairclough traces the power in discourse to the powerful participants who limit and constrain the contribution of non-powerful participants.

The above example reflects the genre of power in a 'face-to-face' discourse where participants' roles are unequally distributed. The main point to be grasped from the above example is that language reflects power and dominance. We have outlined how the discourse or turns are distributed and how students are interrupted. Here the discourse mediates the relationship between the doctor and the students. The doctor's discourse practice here shapes the interpersonal relation between him and his students. The doctor in this extract constrains the students' participation by telling them what to do and how to do it. Interrupting the students is another way that can reflect the teacher's control over the classroom.

### **2.3 5 Why Fairclough's approach?**

Before introducing the main reasons for choosing Fairclough's framework for this study, let us provide a brief comparison between van Dijk's, Wodak's and Fairclough's approaches. The main difference methodologically between van Dijk's approach and Wodak's lies in the fact that discourse-historical Method focuses on the intertextuality

of the discourse. Wodak's methodology involves any relevant historical information in their analysis and interpretation. Analysts use historical context to make sense of what is going on in the text. Although they elaborate on van Dijk's cognitive approach and although they share the same theme – racism – Wodak's group has gone further to consider different types of schemata which are crucial to the comprehension and production of texts. Because Wodak's focus is on the historical background to discourse, it does not fit the approach of this research, which has its main focus on social and cultural practices. For van Dijk, the cognitive properties of discourse are crucial to our understanding of the text production and consumption. He mainly focuses on the mental representation of discourse. Although van Dijk considers the context to be salient in our understanding of discourse, he considers cognition to be part of the context i.e. the participants' opinions, beliefs, knowledge. Unlike Wodak and van Dijk, Fairclough regards the wider social context important in our understanding of the discourse. The interpretation of discourse practice would not only include the context of situation in which the discourse is produced but the whole wider social context. Since this study deals with the social and cultural aspects behind the classroom practice, Fairclough's approach is more appropriate to the analysis of Moroccan classroom practice. Despite their focus on power and inequality, van Dijk's and Wodak's approaches are not relevant to this research. This is because this research does not focus on cognition, van Dijk's main tool of analysis, nor does it focus on historical analysis, Wodak's main focus. However, it should be mentioned that van Dijk's notion of context has made Fairclough's analysis of discourse practice more clear and analytic. What makes Fairclough's approach complete and challenging is, in the researcher's view, its combination of various methods of analysis within a single framework. This method is used for multi-dimensional analysis. This enables the analyst to establish a relationship between the discourse and social practice. In this analysis, the text is not seen as an isolated entity, but it is taken as a result of a social practice. This method is also used for a multi-functional analysis. It looks at the language from a functional perspective. It does not confine itself to what is in the text but rather interprets and explains why things are as they are. To achieve this aim, this method combines different approaches in its analysis. Third, it is a method of historical analysis. This dimension gives the analysts an opportunity to consider the historical facts that may play a role in the construction of the text. Especially, it enables the analyst to look at processes of the construction of the



text through history. This is what is referred to as ‘intertextuality’ in Kristeva’s terminology (Fairclough 1992a). Fourth, it is a critical method. ‘Critical’, using Fairclough’s definition, means revealing the reality by showing causes and consequences of certain practices. It also implies intervention by providing solutions, ‘support or resources for those who may be disadvantaged from the situation’ (Fairclough, 1992a: 9).

However, Fairclough’s ideas have been met with criticism from some quarters. In his review of Fairclough’s *Discourse and Social Change* (1992a), Widdowson (1998) points out that critical discourse analysis still suffers confusion in its theoretical framework that derives from the combination of two different traditions: the sociological and the linguistic. He describes Fairclough’s approach as “interpretive rather than analytic, descriptive rather than theoretical” (1998: 515). Similarly, Gotlieb (1987: 276 in Gallagher 1998: 85) claims that CDA lacks a unified methodology of research. There are no explicit rules to be followed during the analysis. He also criticises the critical analysts for viewing their work as “an art achieved through practice” (Gotlieb 1987:276). Widdowson and Gotlieb are not alone in their criticism of CDA. Gallagher (1998), who works within CDA, considers CDA methodology inadequate. She shows her discomfort about the lack of rules and mechanisms of analysis within CDA (Gallagher 1998: 85). However, her dream of establishing a single methodology within CDA is very unlikely to succeed, especially as two of the key players, as we will see shortly, assert that they do not support the claim of establishing a unified methodology (Fairclough & Chouliaraki 1999). It is remarked from the above critics that CDA lacks an empirical analysis. These critics push critical discourse analysts to find ways to overcome these criticisms

In their book, *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*, Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) emphasise the importance of transdisciplinary analysis. They claim that researchers can use more than one discipline to achieve their purposes. They are not in favour of any single methodology within CDA. This is because, they argue, different research questions require different research methodologies. Since CDA encompasses a wide range of enterprises, it is unlikely that

one methodology will serve the purposes of each of these researchers. In this regard, Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999: 7) say

Given our emphasis on the mutual development of theory and method, we do not support calls for establishing a method for CDA.

Although Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) are not in favour of establishing a method for CDA, for the reason just outlined, they emphasise the importance of transdisciplinary<sup>6</sup> analysis.

What is distinctive about CDA within this tradition however is that it brings critical social science and linguistics together within a single theoretical and analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them (Fairclough & Chouliaraki 1999: 6).

By introducing this single theoretical and analytic framework, Fairclough & Chouliaraki (1999) seem to grant researchers the freedom to use their own methodologies for their own research. Drawing on Fairclough and Chouliaraki's framework (1999), this research adopts a transdisciplinary approach by combining CDA with structured interview analysis.

The question to be asked here is why do Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) not support the call for a unified methodology? The answer to this question seems straightforward when we consider the different approaches within CDA. Although the CDA approaches, we discussed in section 2.3.2, have a common and shared aim, which is tackling social inequality and asymmetry, these approaches have different theoretical and analytic frameworks. These differences in frameworks make it very difficult to establish a common methodology among CDA practitioners. If Fairclough and Chouliaraki regard social and cultural factors important to the interpretation and explanation of any practice, Wodak, on the other hand, regards intertextuality crucial to the analysis of discourse. Van Dijk, however, emphasises the importance of cognition in mediating discourse and social practice. This makes it clear that, although there are

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<sup>6</sup> By transdisciplinary, Fairclough (2000:164) means “ (...) relationship wherein the logic of one theory is put to work with another”

shared goals, the ways to reach these goals are different. Therefore, critical discourse practitioners are required to find their own ways to answer their research questions.

It can be said from this discussion that CDA is still developing and evolving. The vast number of publications in this area, which have emerged in the recent decade, is a sign of its validity and wide recognition.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter presents an overview of the main approaches to discourse analysis. These approaches were categorised as either critical or non-critical. Each approach was described and its strengths and weaknesses are discussed.

This chapter emphasises also the importance and usefulness of the reviewed approaches to this research. It starts with a definition of discourse analysis, and concludes that discourse has various definitions, which stem from various schools. Halliday's functional model is presented and considered useful in its focus on the interpersonal function and in its need to view discourse in context. Pragmatics highlights the social function served by conventions such as politeness and relates it to issues of power and rank. These concepts are relevant to understanding classroom practice which is characterised by interpersonal exchanges between participants of disparate power.

In order to understand these exchanges, a clear framework of analysis is needed. Among those considered here are the Birmingham model, and conversation analysis. These provide useful insights into the structure of discourse, but do not cover the dimension of social context. For this purpose, a critical approach is needed.

Critical discourse analysis provides several frameworks for analysis of interpersonal relations, in particular for exposing issues of power and control. Within the critical approach, Fairclough and Chouliaraki's framework is selected for this

research because it provides sufficient tools and mechanisms for the analysis of discourse. It also encourages the researcher to employ a transdisciplinary analysis. Van Dijk's and Wodak's frameworks were discussed in the bulk of this chapter. Van Dijk's main emphasis was on the validity of cognition in understanding discourse and social practice. His work deals with racism and ethnic prejudices in discourse focused on the press. Although Wodak has the main objective as van Dijk, she does not consider cognition to be the mediating element between the discourse and social practice. She, however, uses her own methodology to focus on power and asymmetry in Austrian institutions. Unlike van Dijk, she considers intertextuality salient to the analysis of discourse.

## CHAPTER THREE.

### ***Power relations and classroom discourse.***

#### ***3.0 Introduction***

It has been mentioned (section 2.3.2) that one of the requirements of CDA is to enact, reproduce and challenge relations of power and dominance. Also it has been highlighted that one of the main tenets of CDA is that power relations are discursive (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). This chapter is designed to provide a further discussion of the notion *power* in order to acquaint the reader with the different definitions of this term and its use amongst various scholars who belong to different disciplines. The chapter also argues that power resides in human relations. It is manifested in their 'discursive practices'. Several types of power are presented and discussed in this chapter. Among these is power in the classroom, which is the main focus of this thesis. Generally, this chapter argues that power has different forms and shapes, and that people are not usually aware of the various forms of power.

Firstly, Foucault's definition of power will be presented and discussed. The focus here will be on the power of social relations (section 3.1.1) and the power of the norm (section 3.1.2). In section 3.2, Fairclough's definition of power will be introduced. The concept of power *in* and *behind* discourse will be discussed in section 3.2.1, followed by the issue of the covert use of power in section 3.2.2. Fairclough's definition of power will be followed by a discussion of van Dijk's social view of power in section 3.3. Next, Thomas's definition of power is examined in section 3.4; Finally, section 3.5 will consider how classroom talk reflects power and control within the classroom.

### **3.1 Foucault's definitions of power**

This section considers Foucault's definitions of power. Foucault (1980:18) states, power is "a characteristic of both individuals and groups, a force, implicated and implemented by means of discursive practices."

#### **3.1.1 Power of social relations**

Before going on to discuss how human relations are invested with power, we would like to introduce some of the ideas from Foucault's work on discursive practices and power relations and consider their applicability to the classroom. Foucault (1972) states that power exists in human practices. This kind of power can only be detected through the analysis of people's actions and discursive practices. What is notable about Foucault's above definition is that it brings together relations between individuals and between groups. These power relations are covert. Also, relationships of power are defined as a mode of action, which act tacitly and implicitly upon others (Gordon 1980, Dryfus and Rabinow 1983, McBride 1989). The power relations reside in individuals and groups' actions and practices. Power is seen here as a possession of both individuals and groups. People are aware of how they participate in power relationships. Individuals like inmates in prison, Foucault states, are aware that their behaviour is subject to control and surveillance. However, they are not sure when this control and surveillance will occur. Foucault (1972) regards discourse to be a mode of social action. It is through discursive practices and social actions that power relations are revealed and enacted. He describes discursive practice as an action determined in a specific period of time and in a specific setting. Discursive practices are constituted by the actions of members and their interactions with each other. Mills (1997: 39) makes this point clear, stating that "power is more a form of action or reflection between people which is negotiated in each interaction and is never fixed and stable". Power relations are rooted in social network systems. Power is not given but exercised. It is 'a way in which certain actions modify other actions' (McBride 1989: 40).

The above-mentioned ideas of Foucault motivate us to look at the classroom as a context of discursive practice, which shapes and is shaped by social practice. They also lead us to consider how both teachers and students' attitudes within the lesson are reflected in their practice.

McBride (1989) applies Foucault's concepts to her Mathematics classroom and concludes that power is made and exists in every social and classroom interaction, and that it resides within individual students and teachers. She concludes that the structure of discourse of mathematics has wide implications for its teaching. Students, according to McBride, become submissive to the way mathematics is taught. They are regarded as passive recipients of facts that they have to memorise in order to pass their exams. McBride considers this to be a 'controlling discursive system'. She criticises the traditional teaching method which puts the teacher in the front of the classroom with little interaction with the students. To her, this teaching method 'does not foster creativity or co-operative problem-solving strategies' (McBride 1989: 43). On the contrary, she emphasises the importance of group and co-operative work in learning mathematics. She associates successful learning with group work. Group work encourages students to participate and reduces the teacher's dominance over the classroom practice. In addition to this, McBride touches upon the roles assigned to both the teachers and students in the traditional classroom. These roles are displayed in the discursive formation of the participants. Teachers, for instance, are seen as experts, knower of facts, and controller, while students are passive recipients. It is due to this division of roles that 'the asymmetry of power relations is maintained between teachers and students (McBride 1989: 44). The same idea has been reiterated by Manke and Thornborrow (see section 2.3.1).

### **3.1.2 Power of the norm**

In addition to the power of social relations, Foucault refers to another genre of power which he calls the power of the norm. This means that practices involving power relations are viewed as a part of the norm. They are legitimised and generally accepted by the society involved. Therefore, exerting power over others is interpreted as part of

norms and conventions. These norms are a reflection of the preference of the dominant groups and are adopted as universal norms by social institutions, such as schools. Moreover, Watts (1991) describes this power of the norm as “the force that induces the participants to accept certain norms, conventions, rules and other principles which clash with their attitudes and beliefs.” Lewontin et al. (1984/ 1996: 149) reinforce the same point, stating that:

The power of the norm, once established, is that it is used to judge individuals who have been located along its linear scale. Deviations from the norm are regarded with alarm. Parents who are told that their child is two standard deviation from the norm on some behavioural scale are led to believe that he or she is abnormal and should be adjusted in some way to psychometry’s procrustean bed.

This quotation asserts that power relations are regarded as part of the social norm. These power relations are legitimised by the wider society. Resisting power means, to some people, deviating from the norms of the society. Hence, those people who resist power are perceived as abnormal. Consequently, people resist these abnormal people more than they resist power-holders.

From this perspective, what is going on in the classroom has more to do with norms than with teachers or students’ practices. This is because such practices shape and are shaped by the norms. As the analysis in this study will indicate, the classroom practice constitutes part of the social practice, whereby both teachers and students’ practices are results of their social norms and beliefs about classroom practice. These norms serve as a filter through which teachers and students express themselves and reflect their self-image and status.



### 3.2 Fairclough's definitions of power

Like Foucault, Fairclough associates language use with power and control. This section considers Fairclough's definitions of power. He points out that people make use of language to express their ideologies, self-images and status either explicitly or implicitly (Fairclough 2001). It is owing to social interaction that we construct our own self-images and identities. The way we construct these self-images depends on who we are in relation to others. To Watts, "power is the potentiality the individual possesses in a social activity and social setting for relative freedom of thought and action (1991: 54).

#### 3.2.1 Power *in* and *behind* discourse

Fairclough further differentiates two types of power in terms of discourse. These are power **in** discourse and power **behind** discourse. The first type of power is enacted and exercised in face-to-face interaction (i.e. spoken discourse), while the second one is found in the discourse of mass media and is also a part of the discourse of institutions. Although the discussion of the media discourse is not directly relevant to the present research, it will be discussed here in order to make the distinction between the power **in** discourse and **behind** discourse clearer.

The main difference between face-to-face discourse and mass media discourse is as follows. In the former, participants are both producers and interpreters of texts. In the latter, on the other hand, there is a division between the role of the producer and interpreter. As Fairclough (2001: 49) points out, the producers are writers, whereas the interpreters are readers. Discursive practices in mass media are said to be hidden. That is to say, power is exercised in implicit ways. To put it concretely, producers have to deliver only what they are told to do. There is a kind of control on the producers' freedom of publication.

According to Fairclough (2001), power is exercised at three levels of social organisations: situational, institutional and societal. Any pieces of discourse should be

interpreted as a part of a situational struggle, an institutional struggle or a societal struggle. To Fairclough (2001) power relations are relations of struggle. He means that individual and groups have different interests which make them engage with each other. He categorises struggle at the situational level into 'power in discourse' and the other levels into 'power behind discourse'. To support his categorization, Fairclough (2001) refers to conversations between women and men, in which women use minimal responses such as *mmm, really, yeah* etc. He interpreted these features as indicating the supportive position of the participants in a natural conversation; but from the institutional and societal terms, they can be seen as markers which show "a tendency for women to be cast as supporting players in interaction" Fairclough 2001: 137). Fairclough's above distinction is relevant to our discussion of how the classroom practice, as an example of the institutional practice, shapes and is shaped by the social one. Take for instance, face-to-face interaction between a doctor and a patient. The relation of power lies at the moment of the medical examination. It is usually reflected in the type of discourse employed by both the doctor and the patient. This type of situational practice between doctors and patients is part of the social practice. Hence there is a dialectical relation between the institutional and social practice.

### 3.2.2 Hidden power

Hidden power happens not only in mass media; the nature of power relations is invisible in general. It is often hidden in discourse. Powerful participants often restrict and control the contributions of those who are non-powerful (Fairclough 2001: 46-49). According to Fairclough, there are three types of such constraints: those on content, interpersonal relations and subject (2001: 46). At the level of content, powerful people have the upper hand in what is said or done. The second constraint is concerned with interpersonal relations. Participants exploit or make use of their social roles and status to dominate practices and to prevent powerless people from taking part in them. The third constraint concerns the participants' roles in discourse. Powerful people tend to be at the centre of discourse and play a main role in discourse, whereas powerless people tend to serve a marginal role. In Moroccan classroom discourse, as will be discussed in detail in later chapters, the teachers have a choice of actions, from asking questions to

interrupting their students. The latter, however, serve only a secondary role in the classroom. Their roles are restricted to responding to the teachers' demands.

### **3.3 Van Dijk's definitions of power**

Unlike Fairclough and Foucault, van Dijk (1996) views power as a cognitive property of relations between social groups, institutions or organisations. He focuses on social power more than on individual power, although he sometimes refers to the latter.

#### **3.3.1 Social power**

Van Dijk's view of power is associated with social justice. His research deals with the social power of groups and institutions, such as power relations between ethnic groups, natives and immigrants. Throughout his extensive publications, van Dijk defines social power in terms of the control exercised by one group or organisation over the action and minds of other groups. This, to van Dijk, limits the freedom of action of others, and influences their knowledge, attitudes and ideologies in different institutions and domains.

Social power is exercised in different ways and in different settings. Van Dijk (1998) outlines four different types of social power. The first one is coercive power, which is exercised by the military and violent people by force. This means that those with coercive power use physical means to force those without to do whatever those with power want, regardless of whether the powerless like it or not. The second one is the power of the rich, which is associated with money. Rich people can use their money and wealth to change other people's minds. In elections for instance, rich people may use their money to buy the minds of the electorates. The third type of power is persuasive power, emerging from knowledge use. Here powerful people used their knowledge to change people's minds on a topic. Finally, the fourth type of power is mental power, which involves knowledge production and consumption. Like Foucault,

van Dijk (1993b) distinguishes between two groups of people. They are those who speak (i.e. produce knowledge) because they are authorised to speak and those who are obliged to listen to what is said (i.e. consume knowledge). The former group, according to van Dijk (1993b), are those who have a special access to discourse. He calls them the 'elite of the discourse' who have social power. This group of people dominate other people by their knowledge. They are often considered to be producer of knowledge or discourse while the second group of people are seen as consumers of that knowledge. The efficacy of their power lies in the fact that they can master others' minds and thoughts.

In relation to the systematic analysis of implicitness, van Dijk views texts as 'iceberg of information', and it is only the tip which is expressed in words and sentences. The rest is seen to be implied and usually left unsaid. He concludes that the analysis of the implicit is very useful in understanding hidden ideologies. As an example, he gives media texts. What we read on the surface of media texts is only the tip of the 'iceberg'. The majority of the message communicated through the text is often implicit (van Dijk 1991).

### **3.3.2 Complexity of power relations**

In one of his works, van Dijk points out that power relations are quite complex. They are not usually realised in a top-down manner. They are shared and distributed. In other words, they, using van Dijk's (1997: 23) words, exist in a 'supply-demand balance'. Van Dijk provides a good example to illustrate this idea. Academics, he says, may control the resource of knowledge and expertise, but for their funding they have to depend on politicians who, in turn, need knowledge from academics.

Moreover, van Dijk attracts our attention to the fact that power should not be always conceived as being necessarily bad. He draws in this regard on Foucault, who states that power can oppress people but can also motivate them.

If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the

fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasures, forms, knowledge; it produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repressive (Foucault 1980: 119).

Furthermore, Foucault refers to the productive aspects of power, saying:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it excludes, it represses, it censors, it abstracts, it masks, and it conceals. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge gained of him belong to this production (Foucault 1980:119).

Attention should therefore be directed not at the power itself but to the illegitimate use of power, such as power abuse and domination, which are exercised illegitimately over others to gain one's interest. Van Dijk uses the term 'violation' to distinguish between good and bad power. Power abuse, for him, means the violation of human and social rights of individuals and groups. It also means the violation of shared and accepted conventions and norms.

Moreover, van Dijk goes further to consider that discourse can be a type of power abuse when it is used by a powerful elite to control less powerful groups or when powerful groups benefit from this control more than less powerful groups do. He finally asserts that those who control discourse have the means to control peoples' minds, beliefs and attitudes.

### **3.3.3 Control of texts and talk**

Van Dijk extends his view of power into how groups gain the ability to control texts and talk. He goes on to say that powerful people have the right to determine and select the appropriate discourse genres and speech acts for any occasion. As an example, he refers to topic selection and the discussion decision as a way of controlling discourse. For instance, he mentions the example of newspaper editors, who select

which topics are to be covered. However, van Dijk does not suggest any criteria on which we can judge certain discourse as dominant. Like many critical discourse analysts, he considers the participants and the context in which the discourse occurs to be crucial for interpreting power abuse in the discourse.

Not only the content of discourse, van Dijk points out, but also the way people speak, is often controlled. He gives loudness of speech as an example and says that it is controlled in some contexts. For instance, speakers are sometimes ordered to 'keep their voice low' or to 'speak quietly'. In other contexts, the use of certain lexical items is controlled because of their ideological functions within the discourse. Interrupting the speaker and also asking yes/no questions are viewed as genres of control (see chapter 6 and 7). Thus, texts and talk may embody linguistic features that indicate power relations. This will be extensively elaborated upon in chapter 5 in which we try to show how certain linguistic features used by the teachers express their power and control of the classroom discourse.

### ***3.4 Thomas's definition of power***

Like Foucault, who stresses that power and knowledge are interrelated, and like Fairclough, who emphasises the covert use of power in discourse, Thomas (1995) appears to be highlighting similar issues. She distinguishes three different types of power and shows how individuals exploit their self-image and status to practise them indirectly (i.e. covertly). These are: legitimate power, referent power and expert power. First of all, legitimate power is a power granted to its holders either because of their social 'roles' or their 'age' and 'status'. For more clarification, Thomas has provided the following example, whereby she conveys the message that mothers sometimes use their role to enforce their children to carry out their orders or requests.

(From Thomas 1995: 127)

Katie has been living with her lover for seven years; now she intends to move out and take Joss, her daughter, with her:

'I don't want to' Joss said.

'Right? You can do whatever bloody stupid thing you want, but you are not making me do it too.

I'm not coming.'

You have to,' Katie said. 'you're under sixteen and you're my daughter, and you have to come and live with me'

The mother here has exploited her status and role to oblige her daughter to move out with her: 'you have to...you are my daughter'.

Similarly, we shall see from the coming chapters that teachers' power is legitimised because of their social role in educational institutions. Secondly, referent power is unconsciously exerted. It is the act of being admired by others because of one's status or role in the public. Thomas refers to the power of pop stars and sport idols over the young. The third type of power is expert power, which has to do with knowledge and expertise. For example, knowledgeable people may have a kind of power over someone who would like to draw on their knowledge and expertise. For example, a computer expert who may have power over a learner who desperately needs to know about computing. The learner may accept such power in order to satisfy his/her need. Take, for instance, the example of a plumber and a lawyer. Traditionally, the lawyer is seen as having legitimate power, because that profession is accorded higher status in society than plumbing, but in the context of plumbing problem in the lawyer's home or workplace, the plumber has power, even though he is being employed to do the job by the lawyer. Foucault (1972) repeatedly stresses the fact that power and knowledge are interrelated. This correlation between the two is stated as follows:

Power and knowledge directly imply one other...there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault 1980: 52).

Besides the above-mentioned types of power, Thomas also refers to 'reward' and 'coercive' power. Employers, Thomas states, can influence their employees either in a

positive way (reward power) like promoting them; or in a negative way (coercive power), like demoting, warning or even dismissing employees. It should be pointed out that these terms were first used by van Dijk (1991), who puts his main emphasis on mental power (see section 3.3.1). Thomas has drawn these terminologies from van Dijk. Also, coercive and consent power have been reiterated in Fairclough's writings.

### ***3.5 Power in the classroom***

This section considers how classroom talk reflects power and control within the classroom. We will introduce Fontana's (1994) definition of control in the classroom. Then we will move on to discuss the term 'control' with reference to the Moroccan classroom, the subject of the present study. The discussion of control of Moroccan classrooms is intended to prepare the reader for the detailed analysis in the following chapters.

#### **3.5.1 Fontana's definition of control in the classroom**

Examining the way classroom interaction is managed and the relationship between teachers and students in U.K schools, Fontana (1994) often refers to the way teachers control classroom interactions.

Fontana (1994: 3) defines control as:

simply the process of running an organised and effective classroom, a classroom in which the abilities of individual children are given due opportunity for development, in which teachers can fulfil their proper function as facilitators of learning, and in which children can acquire sensibly and enjoyably the techniques for monitoring and guiding their own behaviour.



Control generally means giving chances to students to acquire the way to monitor and develop their own behaviour and express themselves (Fontana 1994). Fontana seems to restrict the teacher's role to that of facilitator of learning, rather than a controller of discourse and interaction. Fontana's comment, quoted above, disempowers teachers and empowers students, so that students can take the initiative and develop their own learning skills. That students should be encouraged to take part in the classroom activities is the main message that Fontana tries to deliver. Consider the following quotation.

The kind of classroom of which I am speaking, therefore, is a control based upon an enlightened understanding of child behaviour, and upon a genuine interest in the children and in the fostering of their psychological and academic development (Fontana 1994: 4).

Like Fontana, Tansy (1998) has applied Foucault's notion of power to discourse of a mathematics classroom. Tansy's intention is to develop an account of how power relations are structured and enacted in the classroom interaction. He focuses on the concept of 'right' and 'wrong' answers, as an example to highlight the notion of power and control in the classroom. To Tansy, restricting the students' responses to being either right or wrong answers is a way of controlling the classroom practice. Although he does not suggest a preferred alternative practice, he argues that the teacher could have used other possibilities. Students in Tansy's context are examples of van Dijk's second category of people who are obliged to consume the knowledge of the elites (see section 3.3.1).

Like Tansy, Simich-Dudgeon (1998) is against controlling classroom discourse, and emphasises the need for collaborative talk in the classroom. This need, encouraging the students to interact and share their thoughts with each other, has been emphasised by many researchers (Barnes, 1976; Edward and Westgate 1994). Simich-Dudgeon seems to distance herself from the approaches which regard the teacher as the master of knowledge and the information giver. This reinforces van Dijk's claim that knowledgeable people or the elite group, using van Dijk's terminology, produce the knowledge because they are authorised to speak.

Simich-Dudgeon also refers to the forms of teachers' dominance of classroom practice, saying: "teachers' dominance of the classroom verbal interaction is most apparent in the types of questions they ask, the types of the answers they accept, and the general direction that their inquiries take" (Simich-Dudgeon 1998: 2). This reinforces van Dijk's view that knowledgeable people control and dominate non-knowledgeable ones.

Also, Simich-Dudgeon considers student-organized face-to-face discussion as the favoured methodology. This is because it enables the students to share each other's ideas and thoughts in a classroom environment created by themselves. She also highlights the importance of giving more chances to the students to contribute to the classroom talk. Like Fontana, Simich-Dudgeon also argues that collaborative talk can only take place when the teachers' role is switched from a controller to a mediator and team coordinator. She also emphasises the fact that this will help teachers to learn a great deal about their students' perspectives on topics and themes discussed collaboratively or individually. Teachers can use this information to improve teaching and learning. Simich-Dudgeon points out that collaborative discussions about texts provide students with ways to improve their readings and develop positive attitudes towards participation in general. Other researchers criticise the passive role of students and consider the traditional classroom practice to have grave effects on the students' literacy (Gillard 1996: 8). Simich-Dudgeon refers to empowering students by allowing them to integrate in the academic life of the classroom and also express themselves and display their learning qualities.

Similarly, other researchers suggest empowering students by raising political consciousness as a way of transforming the unequal power relations in the classroom. They consider the traditional classroom practice as a political act because it gives the teachers so much power to act within the classroom. They also view the empowerment of the students as an effective way of teaching and learning. Empowering students means also encouraging them to ask questions, form conclusions and develop their own opinions (Kissock & Lyortsuun 1998).

Tansy and Simich-Dudgeon follows Foucault's line of argument that power exists in human relations. It is exercised and enacted by means of discursive practices. Tansy (1998) examined the Mathematics classroom discursive practices. His main focus is on the right and wrong answers as a way to explain power and control in the classroom. He concludes that limiting students' interaction to right and wrong answers is an example of power and control within the classrooms. Simich-Dudgeon's focus, however, is on the level of interaction. She promotes the collaborative talk in the classroom and considers it the only means to encourage students to take part in the classroom activities and also to restrict teachers' dominance and control over the classroom practice.

### **3.6 Power in the Moroccan context**

Having discussed power and control in the classrooms in general, now let us turn to the Moroccan classroom in particular. This section considers what 'power' means in the Moroccan context. The Arabic term for 'power' is *kuwa* or *sulta*. Both terms, *kuwa* and *sulta*, are associated with politics and *Maghzan* 'government'. People are supposed to respect the government because it has this *sulta*, which is unquestionable. It is absolute and taken for granted by Moroccans. Even within the family, we can talk about *sulta abawayya*, 'the power of parents'. Just as the government is responsible for the country, parents are responsible for the management of the house, and children are never allowed to interfere in their parents' practices under any circumstances. Questioning the *sulta* of parents means, in one way or another, questioning the power of the norm. These norms, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, grant power holders full respect and allow them to practise their *sulta* freely.

#### **3.6.1 Power in the Moroccan classroom**

To begin with, the discussion of power relations within any context requires that account is taken of the social and cultural aspects of these contexts. This is because power may be resisted in some contexts but tolerated or legitimised in others. This

depends on the social values and beliefs of the participants in each context. Therefore, we will argue that Moroccan teachers exert power over their students because their context allows them to do so. The participants (i.e. students) also show no objection to their teachers' *sulta*. The students consider power to be part of their social and cultural beliefs. Even though some teachers might not like to exercise power, they find themselves obliged to do so because of their students' beliefs and expectations of teachers' dominant practices (see section 1.5 for more detail on Moroccan society).

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have reviewed the notion of 'power'. Different definitions, which stem from different schools and perspectives, are presented. Foucault, for instance, considers power as a characteristic of both individuals and groups. It exists in human relations and is practised by means of discursive practices. To Foucault, this kind of power can only be revealed through the analysis of people's actions and discursive practices. Foucault also refers to the power of the norm, stating that power relations are considered to be part of norms or conventions. Fairclough's definition of power is also discussed in this chapter. He associates language use with power and control. He differentiates between two types of power: 'power in discourse' and 'power behind discourse'. Van Dijk (1996) considers power as a cognitive property of relations between social groups, institutions and organisations. Thomas's view of power is also discussed in this chapter. Thomas distinguishes between three types of power: legitimate power which is a power given to its holders because of their social roles and status in the society. People legitimately respect the power holders. Referent power is unconsciously exerted. People are admired by and admire others because of the role and status in the public. Expert power is a type of power in which people with knowledge and expertise have power on those who draw on their knowledge.

It is concluded from the discussion of this chapter that power is not restricted to social classes and structures but also operates in individual actions or what Fairclough calls 'discursive practices'. One of the main characteristics of power is that it is

invisible. So the main task of this study is to try to reveal the hidden power which exists in the classroom. In our account of power in this thesis, we will go beyond the text to demonstrate that power is part of Moroccan social norms and conventions. We will also try to show how control and power in the classroom have a tremendous effect on the learning and the teaching in the classroom. Furthermore, we will, like Fontana and others, suggest ways of encouraging the learning and teaching process by creating collaborative learning and reducing the teachers' roles in the classroom. The main objective of the next chapters is to try to investigate how language reflects power relations and how participants exercise it without being aware of its consequences. Power is realised through the use of different linguistic features such as questions/ answers, interruptions, structuring and the use of lexical items. Before embarking on the analysis of these linguistic features, the methodology used in this research will be presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### *Methodology.*

#### *4.0 Introduction*

Chapter two has introduced discourse analysis by reviewing the main approaches, with a focus on the CDA approach. This chapter makes explicit the methodology applied in implementing CDA in this research. It will introduce us to the nature of the data, the characteristics of participants and the problems and difficulties faced during the process of data collection and transcription.

#### *4.1 Marrying CDA to a structured interview method*

The recent criticisms of CDA have often been based on the fact that there is no unique or specified method for the analysis of data within CDA (Widdowson 1998, Gallagher 1998). Many researchers use their own methodologies, which they regard as appropriate to their particular studies. In their comments on the above-mentioned critics, Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999:17) said “given our emphasis on the mutually development of theory and method, we do not support calls for establishing a method for CDA”.

In this research, and based on the above claim, an attempt has been made to establish a coherent method that enables classroom practice to be examined in detail. The analysis combines quantitative and qualitative elements, based on the belief that a single method is not sufficient to examine the discursive practices within Moroccan classrooms. This is one of the reasons why a transdisciplinary approach has been chosen. The combination of different methods in one study emerges from the

requirement and needs of drawing objective results. The methodology used in this study is, therefore, a contribution to the different modes of analysis used in CDA. It is designed to answer the research questions in a more objective way.

Fairclough's framework is applied together with a structured interview analysis. As a framework, Fairclough's work provides guidelines to direct the researcher - to some extent - to the basis of critical research. It provides hints, but never full instructions about how to reach the goal. Since targets can be achieved in different ways, researchers have to find their own methods to answer their own questions. This reveals, on the one hand, the strength of CDA as a critical approach: its strength resides in its capacity to accommodate different methods under its umbrella. On the other hand, it reveals a potential weakness in that the lack of a single methodology has led to a degree of vagueness in the employment of CDA. This criticism of vagueness is the price paid for the flexibility to tailor CDA to different contexts. Also, the combination of different disciplines in its analysis, ranging from linguistics to social studies, makes it difficult to reduce the whole to a single method. A linguist, for instance, may choose to focus on a linguistic analysis, referring to social aspects for more explanations or elaboration. A social analyst, however, might prefer to focus on the social dimensions of the phenomenon investigated with little reference to the linguistic analysis. This study focuses mainly on linguistic analysis with reference when necessary to social analysis. A linguistic and a social analysis are interrelated. As a result of this analysis, a framework for the analysis of classroom discourse will be proposed in the last chapter. This framework provides tools and ways of conducting research of this type. It is hoped that this framework will not only be used by critical discourse practitioners but also by discourse analysts whose aim is to examine the social and cultural backgrounds of discourse.

#### ***4.2 Research setting, target population and sample***

The database of this study is a collection of tape recordings from Moroccan Secondary School Classrooms in the city of Beni-Mellel (B.M). It should be noted that

the classes recorded are not single sex. They are evenly split between boys and girls. Students aged from approximately 12-14 in one room. The data was not recorded by the researcher but by a friend who himself has experience in this domain. Although the researcher did not record the data himself, he has not found any difficulty in transcribing it, as the recording was clear. However, the researcher himself conducted the interviews, which provided the second set of data.

The data collection was undertaken in two phases. In the first phase, the classroom data was recorded, while in the second phase, the participants involved in the classroom data were interviewed. Other teachers, whose lessons were not recorded, were also interviewed. The main aim of doing so was to gather as many opinions as possible. The diversity of views is important to this research as it helps the researcher to investigate the issues involved in more depth.

The recorded data was collected over a period of four weeks in March 1999. It is authentic and represents real classroom conversations in B.M classrooms. It consists of roughly fifteen hours of audio-recordings which comprises 17 lessons, each one varying in length from 45 to 60 minutes. Most of the recordings are of surprisingly high quality, considering the fact that a small walkman recorder was used. Students knew that they were being recorded, but in order to minimize any self-consciousness or anxiety, they were not asked to get near or to speak deliberately in the direction of the tape recorder. It was hoped that the recordings would thereby capture the students' normal interaction in three subject areas: Language, Mathematics and Islamic studies. These subject areas are chosen because, as I mentioned earlier, they are the core of the curriculum.

### ***4.3 Procedures for recordings and Transcription***

This section reports the data transcription procedures, explaining how key decisions were taken concerning layout and transcription conventions. The transcription is one of the most difficult processes faced in this research. In representing the talk in written form, an attempt was made to describe the conversations in a way that is faithful



to the formality of the talk. Transcription is followed by a translation for those who do not speak Arabic.

#### 4.3.1. Selection of the data

The rest of this section focuses on the collection and transcription of the specific data set, which was subsequently analysed. The data selected for analysis came from a larger pool of data. The larger pool was a sequence of 15 hours of recordings, of which 10 hours were used. The pool was reduced due to constraints on the scope of the project, and the belief that a smaller data set could be adequate to address the current research questions.

Transcription conventions were chosen on the basis of two principles - accessibility and relevance. Firstly, to make the transcripts accessible to the researcher/reader, the number of symbols was kept to a minimum. Secondly, since the research investigates interpersonal relations within Moroccan classrooms, it was relevant to record pauses and overlaps. On the other hand, intonation was excluded. The following extract illustrates the transcription conventions used in this research.

1. *T:* Mada fahimtum mina al qiraa' assamita?  
*What have you understood from the silent reading?*
2. *P1:* Al qiraa' sadiqatu al inssan  
*Reading is a friend of mankind.*
3. *T:* Tayib(..)al inssan yumkino an yaj'ala sadaqa ma'a al kitaab  
Mada fahimtum mina al qiraa' assaamita...Hind?  
*Good(..).people can establish friendship with the book. What have you ..understood Hind from the silent reading?*
5. *P2:* Al qiraa' mufida wa  
*Reading is exciting and....*
6. *T:* Wa mada (...)Yala?  
*And what else Yala?*
7. *P3:* Wa mufida

*And interesting*

8. *P4*: Wa jamila

*And nice*

9. *T*: Tayib . Kaifa yumkinu lilqiraa' an takuna, jamila, mufida wa nukawino ma'aha sadaaqa. Kaifa Kamal?

*Good, how can reading be exciting/ interesting, nice and constitute a friendship to us, how can you tell me Kamal?*

The following conventions, illustrated above, were chosen:

(...)	Pause of more than three seconds
(.)	Pause of two seconds
(.)	Pause of one second
[	Interruption between speakers
[]	Overlap between speakers
()	Data summarised or commented on.
...	Unfinished speech.

Most of these transcription conventions have been taken from Jefferson (1984).

#### 4.3.2. Selection of subject areas

The design also involves selecting subject areas to trace across a series of interactions. The aim of selecting different subjects was to ensure that the data gave a representative view of Moroccan classroom discourse, and was not biased by using only one subject area. Language, Mathematics and Islamic studies, were chosen because they are compulsory for all students, and also represent different parts of the curriculum.

It should be mentioned here that both Standard Arabic (SA) (termed fus-ha) and Moroccan Arabic (MA) are code mixed in most of the recorded lessons. The former is the official language of the country and therefore it is used as the language of instruction in schools and the language of mass media and formal settings. It is also the language of literacy and commonly used written communication (Wagner 1993). It has

a high prestige because it is derived from the language of the Quran. It is also regarded as the unifying element and symbol of unity in Arabic-speaking countries (Wagner 1987). SA has two forms, classical and standard. The classical form is that of the Quran. Standard Arabic is the modern language taught in schools. MA, however, is the colloquial variety used by native Moroccans (Ferguson 1959, Bentahila & Davis 1992). It is widely spoken among families and communities. MA is a mixture of Arabic, Berber, French and Spanish (Wagner 1993). Although SA is the language of instruction within Moroccan schools, MA is often used by both teachers and students in classrooms. To show where code switching occurs in our Moroccan classroom interactions, MA is underlined in our data.

#### ***4.4 Procedures for doing interviews***

The interview phase of the data collection was conducted later over a period of four weeks. Twenty-two teachers, six of them females, the rest males, were interviewed about their classroom practices. Their views and perspectives about certain social and cultural issues are considered crucial to this study. It was noticed that their views about classroom practice differed, which may in part be due to the variation in age, which ranged from 28 to 45 years. Also, it was difficult to categorise the interviewees into social classes, as there are no explicit criteria on which this can be done. The teachers avoid talking about their social backgrounds as well as their political orientations. This is a result of their beliefs that there is no room for politics in educational institutions. Others, I understand from the interviews, avoid talking about their political leanings for fear this could cause them trouble with respect to the government. Hence, their political and social backgrounds remain unknown, as most of them refused to answer questions which were designed to elicit the interviewees' political commitments.

##### **4.4.1 The initial meeting with teachers**

In the first meeting, the majority of the teachers were present. The research plan

was discussed with the teachers in the introductory meeting. It should be noted that some of these teachers' data had been recorded earlier in March 1999. Their recorded data is transcribed and analysed (see chapter 5, 6, and 7).

It was apparent from the initial meeting that some teachers found it difficult to talk about interaction and the way teachers could manage an equal classroom interaction/conversation. On the other hand, they were concerned to hear words such as *control* and *power* relationships within classrooms. These teachers found it strange to relate these terms to classroom practice. This made them wary of speaking to the researcher. Some of them kept silent and others expressed the fear that a word out of place might cost a teacher his/her job and could send him/her to jail. 'To talk about politics is to put oneself at risk', one teacher said. This feeling of fear and caution is generally prevalent amongst Moroccans and is expressed in the phrase "never trust politicians or anybody talking about politics". A researcher who talks about power and control is perceived as a politician. The following section discusses further the problematic position of the researcher.

#### **4.4.2 Teachers' perception of the role of the researcher**

The teachers' perception of the role of a researcher was that such people are either evaluators or 'experts' and that is why they are allowed access to the private domain of their classrooms. Thus the researcher was seen as someone who was there in order to evaluate teachers' performance and their political commitments - which most teachers are not allowed to exercise in classrooms or schools - and report this to the higher authorities. This was manifested in their endless questions:

- Who sent you here?
- Are you doing this research for the Ministry of Education?
- What will happen if a teacher has not performed well?

Although some teachers were polite and friendly on the surface, it was evident that they had deeper concerns about the research, as they were not sure of the

researcher's purpose in being there. Over the period of interviewing, the interviewees repeatedly asked about the main objective of the interview. Although the research objectives were stated clearly at the outset, some of the teachers remained unconvinced and some even spread the word that they were spied on. This view, however, did not prevent the interviewees from answering most of the key questions.

Other teachers, on the other hand, especially the older teachers, opposed the presence of the researcher, perceiving him as someone who was 'after their jobs' (Shamin 1993). They challenged his analysis and viewpoint throughout the interviewing period. Both these types of attitudes and reactions enriched the research and widened the researcher's view about the Moroccan teachers' perception of the researcher's role. Also the researcher understood that the distance maintained by teachers stemmed from their fear of losing their jobs as a result of information being provided on their teaching practice.

Although the initial stages of the interviews were difficult because of the teachers' suspicions, in the end they went according to expectations. Teachers answered the questions openly. Some of them found the interviews gave them an opportunity, for the first time, to complain about their students' behaviour and attitudes. Others asked for assistance with some of their daily problems. This suggests that these teachers have much to say but never dare to do so, as they are so fearful of losing their jobs. It was a good experience, however, to get close to people and listen to them. Also it was good to notice the impact of power on teachers' attitudes towards others. Teachers were struggling between telling the truth and remaining silent. Criticisms of their practices are the last thing Moroccan teachers can think about. This is not because they dislike the truth but because they fear dismissal. A word, as we mentioned above, might cost a teacher his/her job.

It was only when the researcher presented himself as a teacher and started talking about his teaching practices that teachers felt free to talk about their dominant practice within the classroom. Teachers were encouraged to take part and share their own ideas and teaching experience. The researcher was then approached as a colleague and not a researcher who had come to assess their practice and report it to the higher authorities.

The idea of being part of the group successfully worked in this context. Being part of a group does not necessitate living with them, but it means sharing their ideas.

Because of the above-mentioned attitudes, much effort had to be put into building trust with the interviewees.

#### **4.4.3 Ways of building trust with participating teachers**

In her research about Pakistani teachers, Shamin (1993) discussed different ways of building trust between teachers and researchers. Some of these ways were employed in this research.

Like Shamin (1993), the researcher used a number of ways to build a relationship of trust with participating teachers. He shared his notes with them and displayed his comments, in order to encourage them to express their views more openly. He tried first to convince them that he was not an evaluator, as they might think, and secondly to encourage them to suggest their own ideas on his comments. Sometimes, informal meetings were held in public places such as public coffee bars. However, teachers often asked such questions as *what do you think of our teaching methodologies? What is your opinion about our standards?* Although these questions were irrelevant to the research subject, the researcher tried hard to answer them in order to show solidarity with the teachers. However, the questioning appeared to be “more of a ploy to test my trustworthiness than a genuine interest in finding out the state of their practice” (Shamin, 1993: 107). Hence, it became necessary to use evasive strategies and/or give stereotyped ‘diplomatic’ answers when it was not possible to avoid the issue altogether.

The teachers’ views changed gradually and by the end of the interviewing, the researcher was generally viewed as a non-threatening presence.

#### ***4.5 Process of analysis***

Critical discourse analysis was chosen as a method for the analysis of the nature of discursive practices within Moroccan classrooms. Using discourse analysis, as a method of analysis, together with interviewing, enables the researcher to provide a very detailed analysis of the data in a more objective way. This methodology is used first to bridge the gap which exists between the micro and macro analysis and also to contribute to the new call of using transdisciplinary analysis. Basically, this methodology will help us to answer the research question we set at the beginning of this research “does transdisciplinary analysis contribute to our understanding of classroom discourse?” Additionally, different frameworks are employed in different chapters. Each chapter aims to answer one of the questions proposed in the first chapter. All chapters contribute to the whole theme of the study, the nature of the discursive practices within Moroccan classrooms. The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters contain a linguistic analysis of the data. The reader will notice that the analysis is interwoven. The three ways of analysis - description, interpretation and explanation - are combined together to produce a coherent analysis. This is due to the nature of the topic and also to the methodology employed, which necessitates this type of analysis. Chapter 8 deals with the analysis of the interviews. The aim of this analysis, as mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, is to give the teachers an opportunity to express their views about their practices.

The interviews were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, as it was believed that a numerical analysis would help us to categorise teachers into groups according to their beliefs of the nature of classroom practice. It would also enable different views held by teachers to be examined. Teachers’ different views do not only highlight the type of practice, but also help us to explain classroom practice clearly. Generally, the overall intent of the formal and informal interviews with the teachers was to obtain the participants’ perspectives on what was observed and to support the interpretation formed about the classroom practice, environment and the participants. The interviewees are categorised into two groups based on their answers to the designed questions. In chapter eight we will refer to the group to which the quoted interviewees belong.

Note that in each chapter, a different analytic framework, or at least a different analytic technique is employed. Chapter 5, for instance, borrows its mechanisms of analysis from Sinclair and Coulthard's exchange structure model (see chapter 2 for more details). Since the chapter is dealing with the exchanges within the Moroccan classrooms, Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) mechanisms of analysis are found useful to our understanding of classroom practice. The focus on IRF patterns was crucial to our understanding of power relations within Moroccan classrooms. In addition, a quantitative approach was adopted, in timing the teachers' and students' exchanges.

Chapter 6 deals with questions and answers within Moroccan classrooms. This chapter adopts a quantitative analysis to see the frequency of questions used by both teachers and students. Also the chapter draws upon Young's (1993) method of analysis, which refers to the pedagogy of teaching and learning through the process of questioning. Young examines the role of questions in fostering and hindering interaction.

In chapter 7, the focus turns to interruptions. The insights of conversation analysis are used to examine the nature of discourse. The work of Schegloff (1996) and Hutchby (1996) in particular is used here. Different frameworks, for and against interruption, are discussed and evaluated. Frameworks, which associate interruption with power are chosen for this study.

Chapter 8 deals with the interview analysis. This chapter combines both analysis structured interview and critical discourse analysis. A quantitative element is contained in the analysis of the interviewees' responses. Also this chapter contains discussion of the social and cultural factors and their impact on Moroccan classrooms practice.

#### **4.5.1 Terminology used**

This section presents a brief definition of the main distinctive terms used in the body of this research. Basic terminology is discussed in detail in chapter 2 and further



explanation is also given in chapter 5.

Interaction	Scope
1. Teacher questioning	Questioning in this research means interrogating. However, questions serve different functions in this piece of research. It can be used to initiate a turn and check a student's response e.g.: Have you finished your silent reading?
2. Teacher checking	The teacher's efforts to gain feedback from students on lessons they have previously taught. It also refers to the teacher's attempts to verify the students' understanding and comprehension (see example 7, section 5.1.4.2, line 17; example 3, section 6.4).
3. Teacher seeking	The teacher's efforts to stimulate the students to participate in the lesson. The teacher usually pursues ideas, examples and suggestions from the students (see example 2, line 26, section 5.1.2).
4. Teacher building	The teacher's efforts to develop the lesson based on the students' previous ideas (see example 3, line 11, section 5.1.2).
5. Teacher evaluating	This happens across a wide range of activities. It occurs when the teacher is giving feedback or commenting on the students' answers (see example 1, section 5.1.2).
6. Teacher initiating	This happens when the teacher introduces a new topic, or simply moves from a phase of interaction to another.
7. Teacher explaining	Simplifying issues and clarifying them to the students (see example 3, line 14, section 5.1.2).
8. Teacher intervening	Teachers' intervention in the lesson to direct and guide students. The term <i>intervening</i> in this research means the teacher's quick response to direct students (see example 3, line 18, section 5.1.2).
9. Students questioning	Students ask questions for clarification e.g.: see section 5.1.2, line 38 example 4; example 7, line 10, section 6.5).
10. Students responding	Here students respond to the teacher's questions (see example 7, line 2, 4, 6, 12, section 6.5).
11. Students intervening	Students' intervention in the lesson is to feed into their colleagues' turns e.g. S1: Sanaa min massr <i>Sanaa from Egypt</i> S2: wa sharit alhudud <i>And the belt of Alhudud</i>

12.Students participating <sup>7</sup>	Students participate in the ongoing discussion by seeking clarification, checking and generally, getting involved in the interaction (see example 4, line 37, section 5.1.2; example 7, line 10, section 6.5.
13.Students listening	Students attentively listen to the teacher's explanation. There is no interaction on the part of students.

**Table 1:** Defining the terminology.

**Asymmetry:** This means the social distance and the social hierarchy between the participants.

**Discourse structure:** macro-structure: the way in which topics and other propositions are linked together to form a unit.

**Discourse order:** set of rules, norms and conventions associated with particular institutions (Fairclough 2001).

**Control:** This is used with the meaning of dominance

**Culture:** the total set of norms, beliefs, conventions and behaviour habit of a particular member of a society.

**Classroom practice:** involves both the teachers and the students' written and oral activities.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the main methodology employed in this research. It has argued that CDA and structured interview analysis complement each other, and this combination of methodologies has made our analysis more flexible. It was concluded that this transdisciplinary analysis is chosen because it provides sufficient tools and mechanisms to examine the discursive practices within the Moroccan classrooms. The chapter also presents a general view of the data collection and transcription together with the main difficulties and problems encountered during this process. The data is

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<sup>7</sup> The term participating is used here in a broader sense. It includes other categories which are not categorized in table 2 in chapter 5.

obtained from lessons in 3 subjects, in secondary schools in a single Moroccan city. Additionally, interviews are conducted to complement the lesson recordings with rich quantitative and qualitative data on the teachers' perceptions and interpretations of their practice. During the interview process, the teachers were initially suspicious of the researcher's motives, but he eventually gained their confidence and cooperation. The results of CDA and structured interview research are presented in chapters 5-8.

## CHAPTER FIVE.<sup>8</sup>

### *Discourse Structure and Interaction Control.*

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Section 3.4 has briefly indicated how people exploit their power to control text and context by holding turns and controlling the distribution of topics and roles. This chapter will elaborate on this, but this time the focus will be on the structural aspects of discourse and their implicit links to power relations in the classroom. We make a start by looking at the nature of exchanges between teachers and students. In our analysis, we will draw on Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) model.

This study differs from earlier works on classroom talk in its attempt to describe the nature of the discursive practice within the Moroccan classroom and the interpersonal relations between teachers and students. It tries to explain how the analysis of linguistic features and discourse structures contributes to our understanding of power relations and ideological processes in discourse (Fairclough 2001). The main contribution of this chapter to the whole study resides in its attempt to explain the nature of language use and the relationship established between students and teachers through a series of exchanges, moves and acts. Besides the IRF pattern, we will also talk about politeness devices such as modality and lexical choice. The objective is to see how these politeness features express power relations within Moroccan classrooms.

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<sup>8</sup> Part of this chapter has been presented at the 28<sup>th</sup> International Systemic Functional Congress at Carleton University, Canada (21<sup>st</sup>–27<sup>th</sup> July, 2001)

## **5.1 The structure of classroom discourse.**

This section presents a time-based (both students' and teachers' activities within the classroom are timed) analysis of the interaction between teachers and students. The aim of this analysis is to show the level of involvement of both the teachers and the students in the interaction. This in turn will help us to explain the nature of the discursive practices within the classroom.

### **5.1.1. Analysis of the classroom interaction**

In this section, we try to present a time-based analysis of teachers' and students' involvement in the interaction. The aim of doing so is to see the amount of time that the different participants hold the floor<sup>9</sup> while engaged in the interaction. We also try to distribute the time according to the genre of activities that take place in the interaction. For example, we try to see the variation in time devoted to questions, evaluations, checking and explanations. This analysis will help us to examine the level of involvement of both students and teachers in classroom interaction. The division of time over the classroom activities gives us indications of how the classroom discourse is structured and how the interactions are managed. It also helps us to understand the genre of discursive practices employed by both teachers and students. In addition, this quantitative analysis of timing can be considered as the basis for our qualitative analysis. Consequently, timing is seen to be crucial in examining the nature of discourse practices within the classroom.

Table 2 presents the distribution of time in various activities over the three subject areas.

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<sup>9</sup> By hold the floor, we mean take a turn in a conversation or interaction.

Category	Activities	Subject 1 240 mins	Subject2 180 mins	Subject3 180 mins
Focus of classroom activities	a-Administration	10mins (4.2)	12mins (6.7%)	8mins (4.4%)
	b-Preparation	11mins (4.6)	8mins (4.4%)	10min (5.6%)
	c-Telling	10mins (4.2)	10mins (5.6%)	14mins (7.8%)
	d-Reminding	15mins (6.3)	10mins (5.6%)	6mins (3.3%)
Classroom interaction	1. Teacher questioning	20mins (8.3%)	17mins (9.4%)	15mins (8.3%)
	2. Teacher checking	25mins (10.4 %)	10mins (5.6%)	12mins (6.7%)
	3. Teacher seeking	20mins (8.3 %)	14mins (7.8%)	10mins (5.6%)
	4. Teacher building	20mins (8.3 %)	16mins (8.8%)	20mins (11.1%)
	5. Teacher intervening	20mins (8.3 %)	15mins (8.3%)	17mins (9.4%)
	6. Teacher evaluating	30mins (12.5 %)	15mins (8.3%)	13mins (7.2%)
	7. Teacher explaining	28mins (11.6 %)	25mins(13.9%)	26mins (14.4%)
	8. Teacher initiating	15mins (6.3 %)	14mins (7.8%)	13mins (7.2%)
Students' involvement	1. Student questioning	3mins (1.3 %)	0	3mins (1.7%)
	2. Student responding	4mins (1.7 %)	2mins (1.1%)	5mins (2.8%)
	3. Student intervening	2mins (0.83%)	2mins (1.1%)	0
	4. Student participating	7mins (2.9 %)	10mins (5.6%)	8mins (4.4%)
	5. Student listening	224mins (93.3%)	166mins (92%)	164mins (91.1%)
Teachers' general activities		224 mins (93.3%)	166 mins (92%)	164 mins (91.1%)
Students' involvement by mins		16 mins (6.6%)	14 mins (8%)	16 mins (8.88%)

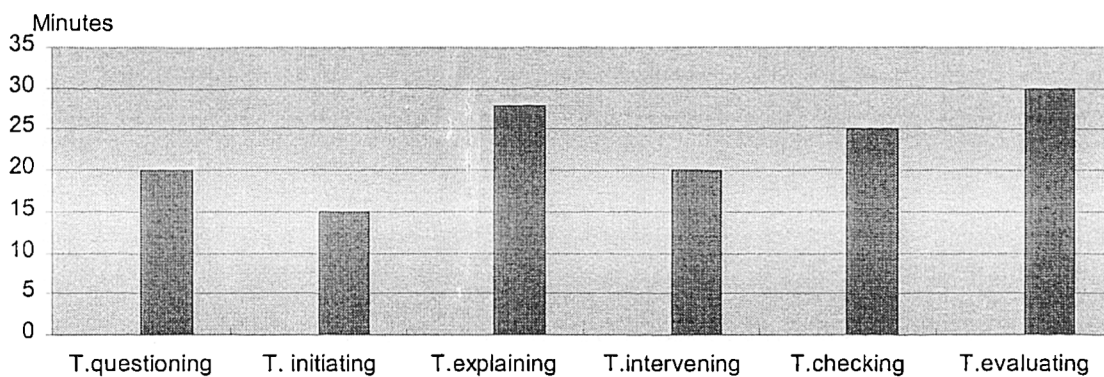
**Table 2:** Summary of the time used by teachers and students in 3 subject areas

Each set of discipline data consists of three or four recording sessions. The duration of each session is 60 minutes. From the above table, it is evident that a similar pattern of interaction occurs over each of the subjects. Therefore, we have chosen to undertake a more in-depth analysis on just one of these areas, as it should be representative of the data as a whole. Subject 1 is chosen because it has the most data available, and should thus maximise the differences.

In addition to analysing the teachers and students' level and type of involvement in the classroom interaction, the table presented above is also used to keep a record of classroom organisation, lesson, focus and interaction (more discussion about this will be presented later in this section). In order to make the teachers' and students' level of involvement in the interaction more visible, we have chosen to present the timing of their activities in the form of charts.

### 5.1.1.1. Teachers' level of involvement in the interaction

The following chart presents the analysis of four sessions' interaction for subject 1. It describes the teacher's<sup>10</sup> main activities during a classroom interaction over a period of four hours. It should be noted, however, that our focus in this section is on classroom interaction only. Therefore, the other activities, administration, preparation, telling and reminding, will be mentioned only when it is necessary to do so (this will be discussed further in section 5.1.1.2).



**Figure 2:** Timing teachers' activities within the classroom

Before embarking on an explanation of figure 2, we would like to give a brief account of the opening of the lesson. The teacher starts the lesson with a reminder about what was covered in the last session. This takes nearly 15 minutes. After that, the teacher introduces the outline of her lesson. She then asks the students to do a silent reading of a chosen text. When the silent reading is over, the teacher asks questions about the content of the text. The teacher's main intention is to test the students' comprehension and ability to understand the texts. The questioning time, which accounts for 20 minutes in this subject, is longer than expected (see section 6.2).

<sup>10</sup> In order to avoid confusion of swapping between he and she, we choose to refer to the as 'she' throughout the body of this research.

Moreover, the time devoted to explanation is long in comparison to the other activities. 28 minutes were recorded as spent on the explanation of the lesson. During the teacher's explanation, some students intervene to ask questions and clarify certain points. However, the students' total involvement in all the sessions takes no more than 16 minutes. This amount of time is very short in comparison to the 224 minutes held by the teachers.

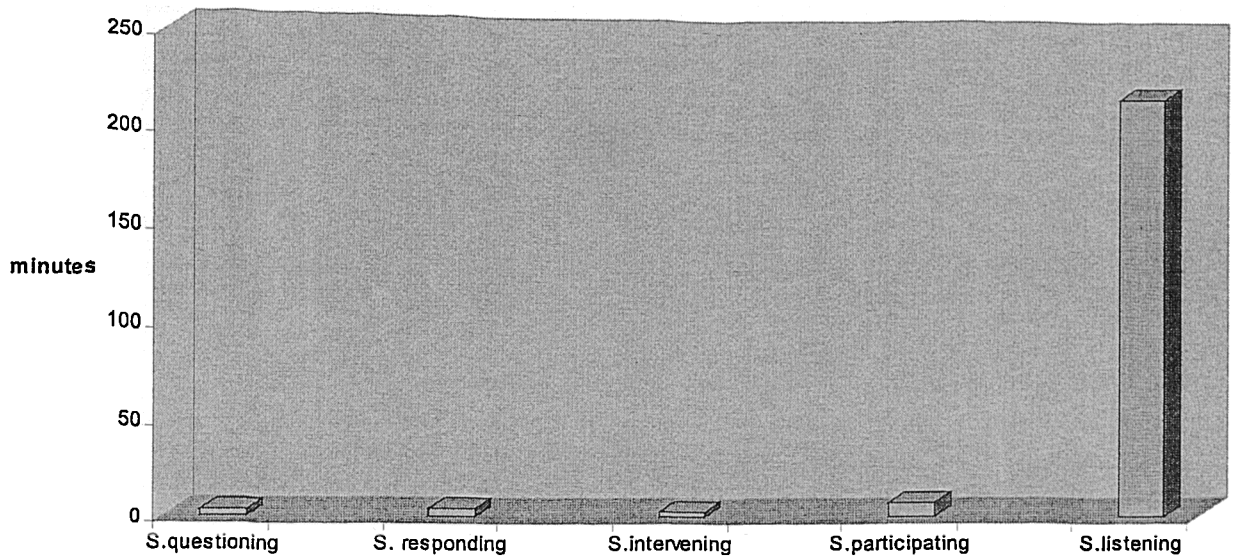
The figure shows also that plenty of time is given to the teacher's initiating, checking and evaluating. The initiating time accounts for 15 minutes, while checking time accounts for 25 minutes. In addition, the teacher spends quite a lot of time on evaluating students' answers. The evaluation time accounts for 30 minutes (see Chart 1). Therefore, there is little time for students' questions and intervention. The holding time analysis reveals, as mentioned earlier, that students' level of involvement in the interaction is low, whereas the teacher's level of involvement in the classroom interaction, as the above table shows, is high.

The distribution of time to the activities indicates that the teacher controls most of the classroom practices (e.g. initiating, telling, questioning and explaining). These are all initiating moves. This strongly suggests that the teacher has more opportunity to dominate the classroom interaction. Students' practices, in contrast, are confined to the responding moves. The following section will explain this idea in depth.

#### *5.1.1.2. Students' level of involvement in interaction*

Figure 3 shows the students' participation in the classroom discourse, classified by activity type.





**Figure 3:** Timing the students' involvement in the classroom discourse

Figure 3 shows that students' involvement in questioning, intervening, initiating and participating is quite low. The figure also reveals that the students spend most of the time listening to what is said by the teacher. The total listening time in the recorded four sessions is about 224 minutes. This indicates students' passivity and lack of interaction within the classroom. On the other hand, it demonstrates teachers' control over the classroom practice. The students use 16 minutes time either in questioning, which involves seeking information from the teacher, or in explaining, which includes the students' attempts to answer the questions initiated by the teacher. Students' participation, as indicated in the above figure, is quite low. It accounts for 7 minutes out of 240 minutes. This low involvement of the students in the interaction raises the obvious question of why they remain silent so much of the time. Are they really unable to express themselves, or are there other reasons? These issues will constitute the bulk of our discussion in chapter 8.

The following table presents the teachers and students' interaction in one session accurately. We have chosen this graphic representation because it makes clear the distribution of the activities between the teachers and the students. It also shows when and by whom the activities are held. The teachers and the students' activities are

represented with different colours. This should enable a more accurate reading, and clearly shows the distribution of the time to each of the activities.

Reco:5 Date: 07/03/99 Subject No: 1 Lesson No: 4 Attendance: 25/28

The teachers & students'Activities	14:05	14:10	14:14	14:20	14:30	14:35	14:40	14:45	14:50
	14:10	14:14	14:20	14:30	14:35	14:40	14:45	14:50	14:55
a-Administration									
b-Preparation									
c- Telling									
d-Reminding									
1. Teacher questioning									
2. Teacher checking									
3. teacher seeking									
4. Teacher building									
5. Teacher intervening									
6. Teacher evaluating									
7. Teacher explaining									
8. Teacher initiating									
1. Student questioning									
2. Student responding									
3. Student intervening									
4. Student participating									
5. Student listening									

**Table 3 :** An example of classroom interaction analysis

This visual analysis of one session's interaction from subject 1 in a Moroccan classroom shows in detail the teacher's and students' level of involvement in the interaction. Students' involvement, as repeatedly said, is quite low compared to that of teachers. This visual analysis, along with figures 2 and 3, clearly shows teachers' control of the classroom activities<sup>11</sup>. These results seem to be repeated in the other subjects. This suggests that the patterns of discourse are similar in all lessons. Table 2

shows that students' involvement in the classroom practice is between 14 and 16 minutes. These results show the consistency in both the teachers and students' practices.

In addition to the distribution of the time over the activities, the discourse structure or the organizational structure sequence can be used to explain why the teachers' level of involvement in the interaction is so high in comparison to that of the students. Such an analysis follows.

### 5.1.2 IRF structure

The aim of this section is to make sense of the timing differences (discussed in section 5.1.1) between the teachers and the students. It will also be argued that the teaching moves that were described in section 2.2.3 can be used as a way to explain power and control within the classroom. This framework can also be used as a means to depict the nature of the discursive practices within the classrooms.

Having said this, let us turn, now, to the data for more clarification. Here is an example.

(1)

(Lesson 1, lines 1-18)

I= Initiation; R= Response; N= nomination; F= follow up

1	<i>T:</i>	Mahiya fawaidu al qiraa'?	<b>I</b>
		<i>Then what is the advantage of reading?</i>	
2	<i>SI:</i>	Al qiraa' mumti'a	<b>R</b>
		<i>Reading is exciting</i>	
3	<i>T:</i>	Al qiraa' mumti'a mada aakhar nasstafidu mina al qiraa'?	
		Kamal?	<b>I+ N</b>

---

<sup>11</sup> 93% of the classroom practices are under the control of the teachers, while 7% of these



giving the student another chance or helping the student to provide the full answer, the teacher selects another student (Hind) and ignores the first. Thus, the teacher appears to control both the structure and the content of the interaction.

After the students have finished their silent reading and answered their teacher's questions, the teacher asks them to talk about a favourite story they have read somewhere. The teacher's main purpose is to allow the students to express themselves, share their ideas and possibly generate some new expressions within the context of discussion.

(2)

(Lesson 1, lines 22-27)

- 22 T: Man yahki lana qissa kara'aha (I)  
*Who is going to tell us a story he/she read in a book?*
- 23 S: Fi hadihi al kitaab. (R)  
*In this text book?*
- 24 T: (...)la fi kitaab akhar.....qissa kara'ataha fi mutala'a huraa.(F)  
*No in another book... a story you've read in a free reading.*
- 25 S: Ana 'indi qissa lakin tkhawaf. (R)  
*I have a frightening story.*
- 26 T: Ashnu hadi alqissa, Kamal? (I)  
*What is the story, Kamal?*
- 27 S: ( Starts telling his story...) (R)

(After he finished telling his story, the teacher intervenes to comment and summarise what the student has said.)

The teacher appears to be more interested in listening to and understanding what her students are trying to say rather than being concerned with the grammatical accuracy of their responses. She accepts whatever students say. Although the student's response is ungrammatical (L23), the teacher does not correct him. The demonstrative *hadihi*, which is feminine, does not agree with the noun *al kitaab*, which is masculine.

The student should have said *hada al-kitaab* instead of *hadihi al-kitaab*. However, the main reason for the teacher's ignoring the student's ungrammatical answer is her intention to encourage the students to talk and express themselves as much as they can. Though she gives the students the freedom to express themselves in the way they like, she still controls the structure of the lesson and this is what might be referred to as structure versus content. The students are allowed to tell stories but within the structure designed by the teacher. It seems from extract 2 that there is a constraint on students' turn taking e.g the story should not be from the textbook under study. In line 25, for instance, a student has a story to tell (*Ana 'indi qissa...L25*) but is not allowed to go ahead narrating it until he is nominated by the teacher (*Ashnu hadi Alqissa L26*).

It should also be noticed that the teacher-students' interaction follows the IRF sequence. This, from a critical view, means that the teacher's evaluation - which is a type of rephrasing and paraphrasing of responses - acts as a means of restricting and controlling students' responses (Thornborrow 2001).

It appears from the above analysis that the IRF pattern dominates most of the discourse. Here is another example for more clarification.

(3)

(Lesson 1, lines 9-19)

- 9 T: Mada nastafidu mina alqiraa' .....man? Yala? (I)  
*What do we benefit from reading? anyone? Yala?*
- 10 S: Na'raf ashyyaa' 'ani al hayaat (R)  
*We know things about life*
- 11 T: Na'am yumkino an yakuna lina fahmun jayaid 'an hayatna (F)  
 12 al yawmiya. Mada nastafiidu mina almutaala'a Kamal? (I)  
*Yes, we may have a good understanding of our daily life. What else do we benefit from reading Kamal?*
- 13 S2: 'indama naqra' katiir nujib bisur'a. (R)  
*When we read a lot we answer questions easily.*
- 14 T: Jaid..nuwassi' ma'lumaatina lihalat kulama sa'alana ahad (F) +(I)



put in a position where their face is threatened, because if they are nominated, they have to answer the question, and for some students, it is potentially embarrassing if they get the answer wrong.

In extract 3, line 9, the teacher directs the question to the whole class. Yet, the students are not allowed to answer it until they are invited to do so. This is one of the reasons why it has been pointed out that after each question there is a nomination of a student to provide an answer: *Mada nasstafidu mina alqiraa'*? ..*man..Yala* 'What do we benefit from reading? Yala' (L9). The teacher here nominates Yala to answer the question. Also in Line 12, the teacher nominates Kamal to answer the second question. The teacher here controls the distribution of turns. The students have to respect this distribution of turns and learn to work according to it. The teacher, as can be seen in the above examples, selects students not to take turns but to answer her questions. If students try to provide further information or extra explanation to the teacher's question, they will be abruptly interrupted and their turns ended (see section 7.4, example 6 & 7). It is also remarked from the data that after each question there is a nomination of the responder. Thus, there is a constraint on turn-taking. This constraint on turn-taking seems to dominate my data. However, there is one case in which a student plays the same role as the teacher: he initiates turns and asks questions. But, this is the exception to the norm. The classroom structure and exchanges are usually under the control of the teacher.

(4)

**(Lesson 6 lines 35-41)**

- 35 T: Fi 1948 israa'iil ihtalat filistīne wa ... (I)  
*In 1948 Israel colonised Palestine and took...*
- 36 S: Saṇ'aa' min massr (R)  
*Sanaa from Egypt*
- 37 S2: Wa shariit alhudud  
*And the belt of Alhudud*
- 38 S3: Sahiih yaa austaad? (I)  
*Is it right sir?*



- 39 T: Naam sharit alhudud fi 1382. (R)  
*Yes, the belt of Alhudud in 1382*
- 40 S: Hijri aw miladi? (I)  
*Is it A.H (Islamic calendar) or C.E. (Christian calendar)*
- 41 T: Laa miladi (R)  
*No it is C.E.*

It can be seen from extract 4 that students can break the normal pattern (IRF). The teacher's initiating move (L35) is interrupted by a student, who terminates the teacher's move (L36). Another student speaks without being nominated/selected to add new information to the previous student's turn (L37). After that, another student, unprompted, speaks in order to interfere to ask for a clarification (L38). The teacher continues her turn and expresses her agreement with the second student's response (L39). Then, the fourth student interferes and asks a question (L40) to which the teacher provides an accurate answer. Hence, the pattern of the interaction is illustrated as follows:

Line 35	Initiation →	Teacher
Line 36	Response →	Student
Line 37	Response →	Student
Line 38	Initiation →	Student
Line 39	Response →	Teacher
Line 40	Initiation →	Student
Line 41	Response →	Teacher

Example 4 breaks the classroom interaction pattern (IRF) described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Although this is not the general case, this indicates that students do sometimes initiate discussions and self-select their turn. They do not always wait to be nominated or selected by their teachers. Again, it depends on the type of the discussion and the nature of the students and, presumably, the teacher. The final remark to make about example 4 is that there is no follow-up move. Note that, although the student may have access to initiate moves on occasions, they are unlikely to have access to feedback/follow-up moves (L39, 40) as teachers are keepers of knowledge and

therefore have the power to evaluate their students' knowledge, but not vice versa (Berry 1981). It should be recalled that in section 3.5 we discussed power and knowledge and pointed out that these two terms are interrelated.

Having described the IRF pattern and its function within the classroom, let us turn to the framing moves.

### 5.1.3 Framing moves

Generally, framing moves are indications of switching from one stage of a lesson to another. They mark the ending of one unit and the beginning of another. In English they are often marked by 'well', 'right'. In Arabic, for example, as in the above extracts, they are marked by *al an, tayib, hassanan* 'now, good'. Framing moves are not always followed by focusing moves. Focusing moves means the focus of the speaker on the subject matter. They are usually marked by features such as 'today', 'our focus will be' etc.

In this section we try to argue that the framing moves and, especially, framing markers can be used to show power and control within the classroom. We will try to focus on a few markers to show how they are used by the teacher to switch from one unit to another without any prior warning or negotiation. Here is an example.

(5)

(Lesson 1, line 20)

T: Al'aan 'anhaina al qiraa' assaamita... "fawaa'ido al qiraa'ati". Mashi al'aan biwidi an 'a'rif ash fahimtum min hada adarssi?

*Now we have finished the silent reading: "Advantages of reading". Okay, now I want to know what you have understood from this lesson?*

The use of *Al'aan* 'now' and *mashi* 'okay' in Arabic signals the move from one unit to another or from one topic to another. By using the above markers, the teacher

indicates the ending of the silent reading and the beginning of the discussion. In another example in extract 1, the teacher uses the word *tayib*, 'good', to signal a topic shift from what students read to why and how the reader can establish a friendship with the book. By using these markers, the teacher expresses her authority over the interaction.

The teacher in the above example switches abruptly from the silent reading to asking the students a general question about their comprehension of the whole lesson. The teacher here does not ask the students whether they have finished the silent reading or not. She presumes that they have done so. By using the plural pronoun 'we' *anhaina*<sup>12</sup>, the teacher seems to be speaking on the behalf of her students. She takes the decision to switch from the silent reading to asking general questions about the whole lesson without checking whether her students were ready to do so.

The use of *mashi*, which means in Arabic that everything is fine and okay, implicitly indicates that the students have finished their silent reading and that they have understood the content of the text. Although the students have not finished their reading, by using this framing marker, the teacher seems to say, 'let's pretend that all of you have finished your silent reading and let's move to another unit'. In the researcher's experience, the word *mashi* is employed by those who have authority or simply those who control interactions. The use of *mashi* leaves no space for a student who has either not finished the reading or has not understood it. By ignoring these possibilities, the teacher is disempowering those students, by removing their right to check understanding, or complain that they have not finished.

#### 5.1.4 The structure and classes of exchange

In section 5.1.3 we have considered the use of boundary exchange. In this section, we will look at the other main type of exchange: the teaching exchange.

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<sup>12</sup> Note that the plural pronoun 'we' is inclusive in the verb *anhaina*. The suffix (na) makes the first plural morpheme 'we'.

Coulthard and Ashby (1976) assume three functions of the exchange, which are common to all forms of discourse such as eliciting, directing and informing. We will reflect upon each of these forms and explain how they are used to signal teacher's knowledge and power in the classroom.

#### *5.1.4.1 Teachers' elicit*

The teachers use this type of exchange to elicit information. Eliciting exchange consists of smaller units, termed moves. Here is an example from Sinclair & Coulthard's lessons.

(6)

- Teacher: Can you tell me why do you eat all that food? Yes.  
 Pupil: To keep you strong.  
 Teacher: To keep you strong. Yes. To keep you strong. Why do you want to be strong?

(Sinclair & Coulthard 1977: 107)

Sinclair and Coulthard consider this part as an eliciting exchange, which aims to elicit information. This exchange consists of three moves. The teacher in line 1 initiates a move by asking the students the reason for eating all food. The pupil responds in line 2 and then the teacher makes a feedback move in line 3, confirming the pupil's right answer. Then the teacher makes another initiating move by asking a new question.

#### *5.1.4.2 Teachers' informing*

The teachers use this type of exchange when they try to pass on new information, ideas or facts to the students. These are not followed by any feedback. Consider the following example.

(7)

(Lesson 1, line 21)

**T:** Hunaaka kutaab kathiirun mashhuriin Arab mittle Najib Mahfoud Ihssan Abdu Al Qadouss. Ha'ulaa'i kutaab Massriyiin.  
*There are so many famous Arab writers like Najib Mahfoud and Ihssan abdou Alkadous. These are two Egyptian writers.*

The teacher here states a fact or new information which students did not know before. This decreases the students' opportunities for speaking in the classroom, because they are not expected to provide any response that might be followed by feedback. At this juncture, it is the students' role to remain silent, as the teacher provides no prompt for them to speak. Questions demand answers, even if the teacher controls who is permitted to provide that answer. Statements predict no further obligatory move (Berry 1981). This type of exchange takes place at the beginning of the interaction when the teacher informs the students of the famous writers in the Arab world. Although the students do not know the role of this knowledge and where it fits in, they are expected to remember it without questioning its importance or usefulness as information given in the lesson.

In this particular case, the question arises of why the teacher picks only these two writers, when there are many more well known ones. It suggests an interest in Egyptian writing, but it is only later that it becomes clear that this teacher is Egyptian by birth. There is a link between her identity and the information given to the students. Thus the teacher has the right and power to convey to the students the kind of information she likes. Students, however, because of their limited knowledge, cannot question the teacher's choice of these writers.

### 5.1.4.3 Teachers' check<sup>13</sup>

This type of interaction is attributed to the teacher's efforts to gain feedback from students on topics or concepts they have previously learnt. It also allows the teacher to review previous lessons in order to establish a link between what has been said in previous sessions, and what is going to be discussed in the current lesson. Teachers also use this initiate type as a way to check whether the students are listening to them or not. It is not followed by any feedback. In addition, teachers sometimes ask questions to test the students' prior knowledge about certain subjects, as in the following examples:

(8)

(Lesson 4, lines 17-22)

- 17     **T:**   Hal anhait Khalid? 'ayna nahnu al'aan?  
                   *Have you finished Khalid? Where are we now?*
- 18     **S:**    la adhi  
                   *I don't know*
- 19     **T:**    Tla' bara  
                   Get out
- 20     **T:**    Al mamlaka kaanat tuda'imhum maadian wa ma'nawiyān.  
 21            Man yaqul lii maada na'ni bi maadi wa ma'nawi?  
                   *The Kingdom (Saudi Arabia) used to support them materially and  
                   who can explain me what is...madi and ma'nawi?*
- 22     **S:**    (Pause )

The teacher in line 17 checks whether the students are with her or not by asking *Aina nahnu a'aan?* 'where are we now?'. The student's answer was not convincing. As a consequence, he is expelled from the classroom (L19) - we will elaborate on this shortly. In the second example, the teacher wants to test the students' knowledge by asking them to explain what is meant by '*da'm maadi wa ma'nawi*' (material and moral support). However, the teacher's question is met by silence from the students L22. But,

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<sup>13</sup> See section 4.5.1 for the meaning and definition of the word check.

this is not the first time the teacher uses checks with her students. We understand from the timing table 2 (see section 5.1.1.) that the checking activity in subject 1 accounts for 25 minutes. This is quite a high percentage of time if compared to the rest of the activities.

Then, the teacher's role to check upon the students shows her authority over the classroom practice. She has the right to check whether the students are keeping up with her or not and also to check upon their knowledge and understanding. In line 18 the student fails to answer the teacher's question. As a consequence, he is expelled from the classroom (L 19). This shows the teacher's absolute authority within the classroom. Also the teacher's check in line 20 silences the students. It is believed that the students' pause here has more to do with the teacher's attitude towards the student (L18). The expulsion of the student from the classroom might have created an atmosphere of fear among the students: if one student is expelled for not being able to answer, then a wrong answer might have the same result. For this reason, it is believed, the students keep silent in line 22.

In order to show the teacher's authority and control over the classroom, let us examine the exchanges within the classroom.

### **5.1.5 Exchange structure and asymmetry in discourse**

We understand from sections 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 that the framing and focusing moves are options for the teachers who have full freedom and rights to switch from one topic to another, ask questions, evaluate answers and give feedback. Work on various other asymmetrical discourse types indicate that discourse structures reflect participants' roles, rights and obligations (Candlin 1992; Thomas 1995). It is part of the teacher's role to initiate discussions, change topics and provide feedback. She has also the right to accept or reject the students' contribution.

Presumably, any speaker has a right to structure his/her own contribution or make explicit its intended force in order to express him/herself clearly and in order. However,

this type of meta-statement, in which the speaker pre-structures a discourse composed of joint contributions, is the right of powerful speakers, as the case of the teacher's focusing move. Generally, the distribution of moves in the communicative exchanges is an indication of asymmetry within the classroom. This asymmetry is manifested in the use of the IRF structure and other meta-linguistic features. We have seen (section 5.1.2) that the teachers' use of the IRF (I= teacher, R= pupils, F= teacher) structure restricts and limits the students' contribution to the responding moves.

## **5.2 Politeness devices and asymmetry in the classroom**

The present section seeks to investigate the function of politeness devices within the text and the role they play in revealing the nature of Moroccan classroom discursive practice. The objective is to determine the type of linguistic features used to express politeness and see how these features express power relations among participants. Modality, lexical choice, use of the imperative and passive modals will constitute part of our micro-analysis.

The following exchange between the teacher and his students illustrates politeness strategies used by the participants.

(9)

**(lesson 3, lines 5-13)**

- |   |     |  |
|---|-----|--|
| 5 | T:  | Mada ta'ni walaja?<br><i>What does the word "walaja" (enter) mean?</i> |
| 6 | S1: | 'amu..<br><i>Sir</i>   |
| 7 | T:  | 'anta<br><i>You</i>  |
| 8 | S1: | Jara bisur'a<br><i>Run quickly</i>                                     |



- 9 T: Laa....yaa ghabi  
*No, stupid*
- 10 S2: Dkhal musri'an  
*Enter quickly*
- 11 T: Jaid Majid, issrad ila sabura?  
*Good ...Majid come to the black board*
- 12 S1: 'amu ana  
*Sir me*
- 13 T: Skut majibt al ula sahih  
*Shut up, your first answer was wrong*

The above interaction, though short, can be used as a good example to depict politeness devices used by both the teacher and her students. The students are shown to be more polite than their teacher. They express their politeness using difference markers like 'amu L6. The word 'amu is usually introduced in Arabic to express respect and obedience to someone older or more knowledgeable than the speaker. Children are encouraged to use this word inside and outside the classroom. The use of the word *austad* 'master', which is seen in our data, is one of the politeness strategies used by the students. Moroccan teachers like to be called by this name. Since teachers are in authority by virtue of their social role, students respect them generally and do their best to maintain their teachers' face by using politeness markers such as 'amu and *austad*.

Teachers, on the other hand, see their students as inferiors who do not merit any use of linguistic politeness markers. The teacher in the above extract addressed a student using the pronoun *anta* 'you'. In this context, the use of the single word *-anta-* expresses the teacher's order and command. This is equivalent to the teacher saying *anta ajib 'ani asu'aal* 'you, answer the question'.

The phrase in L9 shows the teacher's lack of orientation to politeness strategies. He asks a question to which his student does not respond correctly. Instead of helping the student by providing cues that might aid him to generate a correct answer, the teacher silences him using the phrase *laa yaa ghabi*, 'no,oh stupid'. The teacher's style

stops the student and also discourages the other students from participating and contributing to the ongoing discussion. The teacher's behaviour increases his control and dominance within the classroom. The absence of politeness markers in the teacher's utterances and their presence in the students' turns reinforces the social distance between the teacher and the students.

### 5.2.1 Modality

Modality is a linguistic feature that helps to reveal the type of discourse practice within Moroccan classrooms. Modality in Arabic is a good indicator of the type of relationship between participants. It is also an indicator of social relations. It shows how participants are close to or distant from each other. Kress and Hodge (1988: 123) define this term and state that "*modality points to the social constructions or contestation of knowledge-system*".

Lyons distinguishes modality into two types as follows. Epistemic modality is more concerned with knowledge, belief and opinion. Mitchell and El-Hassan (1994: 44) defines it as follows: "epistemic modality (...) relates to what one knows to be in fact the case or to what one judges to be possible or likely on the basis of prior experiential knowledge...epistemic modality relates to one's understanding of what is or may be assumed to be". Deontic modality, on the other hand, is "*concerned with the necessity or possibility of acts performed by morally responsible agents*" (Lyons 1977: 823). In our sample, there are many examples that illuminate the above distinction.

(10)

(Lesson 10, lines 46-50)

- 46 T: Hal atmamt al waajib?  
*Have you finished the homework?*
- 47 S: 'aduno ani ahtaaj waqt?  
*I think I will need some time*
- 48 T: Laa laa yajib an yuhdara bukra

*No no ..it must be brought tomorrow*

49 S: Mmm..ghaadi nhaawal

Mmm I will try my best

50 T: Maafiih majaan...kaan 'indak waqt kaaffii

*There is no choice ...you have had enough time.*

In this example, the student responds to the teacher's question using the weak epistemic modality '*aduno ani* 'I think'. He cannot provide a negative answer to his teacher's question by saying *no*, but rather uses this type of modality to express his uncertainty as a student. According to Palmer (1986), the use of weak modality expresses speakers' lack of confidence in their proposition. This is clearly manifested in the student's answer, '*aduno*. Mitchell and El-Hassan (1994: 46) provided different Arabic modal devices that show possibility or doubt in spoken Arabic: "*ba 'taqid*" I believe; "*batsawwar*" I imagine; "*batwaqqa*" I expect; "*yuhtamal*" its likely.

Holmes (1988) associates powerless people with weak epistemic modality, while powerful ones use strong epistemic modality. The use of minimal responses indicates the students' lack of confidence and uncertainty. This also indicates their impotence to provide a strong convincing response to the teacher's utterances.

The teacher, however, uses a strong epistemic modality. Her negative response *la laa* 'no no' to the student's answer, followed by a strong modal phrase *yajibo*, 'you must', is revealing in this context. *Yajib* expresses obligation and command in Arabic. Mitchell and El-Hassan (1994: 50) cited the following modals of necessity in spoken Arabic: "*Laazim / min allaazim, Laabudd, Daruuri/min addaruuri*", all these modals have the same meaning: it is a must or it is a necessity. In written Arabic, we find other modals of necessity such as "*yajib*", the one used by the teacher in our data. By using this phrase, the teacher leaves no opportunity for the student to discuss the matter further. This, without doubt, shows the teacher's authority and control over the interaction. The teacher's rejection of the student's proposal is carried out by using the modal verb *yajib* preceded by the negation *laa*. The phrase *laa yajibo an yuhdara bukra* might be interpreted as 'No it must be brought tomorrow' or 'No it should be brought tomorrow'. It is already known that orders are given a top-down manner or at least used by superiors. The teacher here is superior in the classroom because of her social role.

What strikes us is the teacher's use of the passive to reinforce her order. The use of 'it' in the translation is revealing. It suggests that the teacher ignores the student. Instead of addressing the student, 'you must bring it tomorrow', the teacher chooses the passive form to reinforce her order and show the necessity of her statement. It doesn't matter who brings the essay. The essential part of the action is that it has to be submitted on that day. By denying the agency of the student, the teacher also seems to deny the right of that agent to a justifiable reason to meet the deadline (e.g. illness). Where an agent is elided from a process, his right in the governing of the process seem to have been removed. It is as if the teacher says there is no choice but to submit your work. The use of the modal verb *yajib* followed by a passive voice strongly shows the teacher's authority and power. Her language reflects her social role, rank and status.

In Arabic, the use of modality followed by the passive indicates orders and commands that have to be respected and obeyed. In the present context, the student has to obey the teacher's decisions and respect her commands. In English, Fowler and Kress (1988) confirm that the passive plays the same role as the imperative. Thus, the combination of the imperative and passive in one single sentence reveals the teacher's control and use of power. Her language reflects the immense social gap which exists between Moroccan teachers and their students.

Then, the use of negation by the teacher is crucial to our understanding of the interpersonal relation between the teacher and her students. The teacher's utterances consist of single words such as *laa*, *yajibo*, and *maafih majaal*. The use of single words or incomplete sentences in Arabic expresses the speaker's unwillingness to give enough information. Based on my experience, not to talk much is a signal of impoliteness in the Moroccan context. The important aspect of the teacher's incomplete sentences is that most of them are used for negation, obligation, order and command. The use of the imperative and passive grammatical structure in the teacher's responses denotes the teacher's command and authority. In addition, the use of single words shows the teacher's disagreement with her students' responses. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this is an indicator of impoliteness because she hasn't tried to mitigate the evident disagreement (see section 2.2.2.2). Because of the social distance existing

between the participants, the teacher does not think of protecting her students' face, which the latter may strive to achieve. In addition to the social distance existing between teachers and students, the participants' socio-cultural backgrounds and beliefs about classroom practice determine the type of behaviour which the participants expect from each other.

### 5.2.2 Lexical choice

Word meaning is said to be important in examining classroom practice. Usually, words are not chosen arbitrarily but to convey particular meanings and express speakers' feelings. Linguistically speaking, personal attitudes and beliefs are expressed through the use of the language. Words are crucial to teaching and learning and also important to creating a communicative atmosphere. Yet, the teacher's lexical choice in our data would seem to hinder the interaction. An examination of the teacher's language reveals that individual words can and do carry out power and control. The use of the word *yaghabi* 'stupid' is one of the many examples- *kassul* 'lazy', *baliid* 'stupid'- that clearly indicate the genre of the teacher's discourse practice. The teacher's communicative style is affected by power and oppression. To address the students using the word *ghabi* means to discourage them from taking part in the rest of the activity. The word *ghabi* in Arabic has a very negative meaning. Its negative connotation is stronger than the English translation, 'stupid'. *Ghabi* is translated roughly as 'idiot' 'moron', and denotes someone who does not have a mind and does not think at all. In the Moroccan context, the above word is used only when trying to tease someone or when being particularly offensive.

As it will be remarked from other examples, most of insults used by teachers are made in MA. Switching from SA to MA to perform these insults increases the effect. As a Moroccan, being insulted in MA has great impact than in SA. This is because being insulted in MA is more direct and also the language used is more familiar than SA. Also, code-switching in this context shows the teacher's anger and frustration. Since

MA is the teachers' first language, it is quite easy for them to express themselves fully. There is a kind of intertextuality here.

### ***5.3 What does all this tell us about classroom practice?***

Before embarking on the implications of the above analysis, it would be useful to draw a brief conclusion of what has been discussed in this chapter. The chapter opens with a quantitative analysis of the students' and teachers' practices. The analysis reveals that the teachers' involvement in the interaction is high, whereas the students' involvement is quite low. This comparative judgement is based on the time held by the students and the teachers.

The discourse structure we examined at the beginning of this chapter indicates that 93.3% of the turns are taken by teachers, while 6.66% of them are taken by students. This means that moves and turns are under the control of the teacher. The teacher initiates talk, asks questions and nominates students to answer them, while the latter are restricted to the responding moves which generally constrain their contributions. Also, the examination of the teachers' language use explains why teachers' level of involvement in the interaction is quite high. Teachers use imperatives, passives and other impolite markers when dealing with their students. The use of these linguistic markers expresses the authority and dominance of the teachers. As a result of this language use, students are forced to keep silent. This therefore explains why the students' level of involvement in the interaction is low, if compared to that of their teachers.

The above analysis, though brief, is considered to be important in determining the type of practice within Moroccan classrooms. Instead of playing the role of the mediator, instructor and co-ordinator, the teacher reinforces the traditional concept that the teacher is the master, leader and authority figure in order to be able to control the classroom practice. It also follows from this analysis that language can be used as a means to reflect social roles, ideologies and power relations. Most people do not pay

attention to the effect that their language may have upon others. Teachers, therefore, have to be aware of the effects their language has upon their students. The data analysis demonstrates how often the teachers' practices end up in silencing the students. Therefore, lexical choice, phrases and sentences tell us a great deal about human social and interpersonal relationships. Hence, the conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that discourse structure and language reflect teachers' authority within the classroom.

#### ***5.4 Conclusion***

This chapter has presented an analysis of the nature of exchanges which characterise teacher - students interaction. The analysis shows that the teachers' level of involvement in the interaction is very high. They ask questions, initiate interactions and evaluate responses. However, the students' level of involvement in the interaction is very low. They are almost restricted to the responding moves. It has been shown that discourse patterns reveal the teachers' power and dominance over the interaction. They direct and show little regard for the face of their students, as clearly manifested in their use of imperatives, passives, modality and lexical choices. These linguistic devices demonstrate the teachers' authority within the classroom. This authority would seem to stem from their social roles and status, as will be discussed in chapter 8.

## CHAPTER SIX<sup>14</sup>.

### *Questions & answers and Moroccan classroom practices.*

#### **6.0 Introduction**

It has been concluded in chapter 5 that the discourse pattern (IRF) reflects control and asymmetry within Moroccan classrooms. It has also been remarked that exchanges and moves are dominated by the teacher. In this chapter, this asymmetry will be examined by looking at the adjacency pair question/answer. This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the nature of questions and answers used in Moroccan classrooms. It explains the function of the adjacency pair “question/ answer” (henceforth Q/A) in these interactions. Firstly, a concise definition of both questions and answers will be given and the different definitions, which stem from different levels of linguistics (syntax, semantics, discourse..etc) will be shown. Secondly, the functions which questions serve will be highlighted. This focus on the function of the question/answer phenomenon will help us to sketch out the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students and to investigate further the nature of Moroccan classroom practice. Q/A pairs can be used also to trace power and control in teachers and students’ practices. But before discussing this in detail, let us provide an overview of the structure of this chapter. A definition of Q/A adjacency pairs will be presented and discussed in full detail (section 6.1). Also a descriptive statistical analysis of open and closed question employed in the classroom will be introduced (section 6.2). The focus on the role of questions in teaching and the effect of yes/ no questions on the students’ practice will be discussed in sections 6.3 & 6.5. Finally, a general discussion will follow (section 6.6).

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<sup>14</sup> Material from this chapter was presented at the Sociolinguistic Symposium at the University of Ghent Belgium (4<sup>th</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> April, 2002)



### **6.1 Q & A definitions**

Defining the terms Q & A is no easy task, because of the variety and multiplicity of definitions given to these terms. Harris (1980: 271-2) seems to acknowledge this complexity of defining questions by pointing out that the term 'question' is very ambiguous, because it is used widely in different levels of descriptive linguistics such as syntax, semantics and discourse analysis. Keenan, Schieffelin and Platt (1978) view the Q-A sequence as primarily an important interaction unit in the development of child discourse. They state two reasons for this view. This is firstly because caretakers can draw children into an interaction through initiating a question and secondly because caretakers and children can collaboratively express a proposition before children become capable of doing so by themselves. In respect of interrogatives, they state, "the interrogative response pairs constitute a single, sequentially expressed position" (Keenan, Schieffelin and Platt 1978: 55). Keenan et al.'s statement is relevant because it focuses on the importance of the process of questioning in creating a collaborative practice. The aim of the question here is to enable children to express themselves and take initiative. There are no predetermined answers in the caretakers' questions.

Questioning can play numerous roles in the learning and teaching process. They can be used to motivate learners by raising interesting issues. They can also be used to check students' understanding and comprehension. That is to say, teachers use questions to check students' knowledge of what has been taught. In addition, questions can also be used to explore, explain or explicate ambiguous issues (Young 1992: 99). According to Young (1992), the major aim of questions is to find out information or gain knowledge of some kind. The questions can be about what the questioner does or does not know. This simply means that the questioner may or may not know the answer. But, in the educational context, things are different. Moroccan teachers, for instance, are expected to know most of the answers related to the subject of the discussion.

CA practitioners regard questions as interactive tools. Schegloff (1978) said that the essential properties of the Q/A relationship should be viewed in terms of the defining property of the minimal dialogic unit or 'the adjacency pair':

For a tangible part of what we might expect to be available to us as understanding of questions as a category of action is best and most generally subsumed under the category 'adjacency pairs' (Schegloff 1978: 85).

This notion is central to conversation. For Schegloff, question/answer adjacency pairs are the essence of any conversation because they help to create a conversational atmosphere. By asking a question, the speaker invites the participant to take the next turn and participate in the ongoing interaction. However, it seems that Schegloff considers the function of Q/A only within equal conversations. In unequal conversations, Q/A pairs may not play such a role. As will be argued later in this chapter (section 6.5), questions in Moroccan classrooms can hinder conversations rather than encourage them. Teachers use closed questions and do not encourage students to express themselves as they wish. It should also be pointed out that the social distance between teachers and students limit the turn-taking roles. Students are associated with the responding role, while teachers hold the questioning role. The following example illustrates this claim:

(1)

(Lesson 1, line 1-19)

(Q= question; R= response; N= nomination; F= feedback)

- |   |            |  |      |
|---|------------|--|------|
| 1 | <i>T:</i>  | Maahiya fawaa'ido al-qiraa'?   | Q    |
|   |            | <i>Then what is the advantage of reading?</i>                        |      |
| 2 | <i>SI:</i> | Al-qiraa' mumti'a  | R    |
|   |            | <i>Reading is exciting</i>   |      |
| 3 | <i>T</i>   | Al-qiraa'a mumti'a mada aakhar nasstafiidu mina al-qiraa'a?<br>Kamal | Q+ N |
|   |            | <i>Reading is exciting for people, how else do we benefit from</i>   |      |



*Because he has money. But if he is poor and was asked for charity, does he give? No he has no money. In this case those who read a lot find themselves ready to answer others' questions.*

We notice that in each move the teacher asks a question. The teacher asks *maahiya fawaa'ido al-qiraa'a?* 'what is the advantage of reading'? (L1). The student fails to provide her with the correct answer. She keeps asking the same question in the hope of getting the right answer (L3, 5). We notice also that by repeating the same question, the teacher urges the students to generate the right answer. Although Hind has already answered the teacher's question in L2, the teacher paraphrases the same question and redirects it to her again on the hope that she may come out with a different answer this time L5. Yet, Hind (L6) provides the same answer as she did in L2. Although the students manage to provide reasonable answers, the teacher considers their responses insufficient and continues to probe for what she views as the correct answer. Instead of simplifying the question or providing the answer, the teacher sticks to her question and pushes the students to provide her with the answer she requires. However, the students are not able to answer the teacher's question. In this case, the teacher could have supported the students by providing supportive clues, for instance, the multiple-choice option, which provides the students with the correct answer. This is, firstly, because it encourages the students to take part in the interaction, and, secondly, it enables them to answer the teacher's questions more comfortably. Generally, the teacher uses questions to initiate moves (L1, 5, 7, 9). Moreover, she also uses different types of questions to keep the interaction on. She starts the exchange by asking about the advantage of reading, and then moves into the questions of why reading is exciting and how the reader can construct a relationship with the writer. While the students appear to be more ambiguous and vague in their responses, the teacher keeps encouraging them to answer his questions. In line 10 a student provides a reasonable and correct answer, the teacher approves it but directs the same question to Kamal (L12). The teacher tries to push the students to provide the exact answer she has in mind. It seems that the teacher was determined to elicit a particular answer, even though the students provided quite reasonable answers (L10). Yet, the teacher's attempt to force students to be explicit in their answers (L 16) failed. This made her resort to a rhetorical

question (L18). Kerry (1998: 61) considers rhetorical questions to be an unwelcome mannerism. He regards them the worst genre of questions:

Worst of all, perhaps, are the teachers who turn every question into a rhetorical or pseudo-question by simply providing the answer to it. These teachers have missed the point of questioning in the classroom; the apparent form of an open-ended lesson covers a didactic approach in which students are treated as participant learners.

Kerry expresses his unease not only about rhetorical questions but also about the constant repetition of questions.

The above extract has shown us that the teacher's attempt to enforce the correct answer has failed; the following example demonstrates that the teacher's questioning strategy can bring the conversation to a halt.

(2)

(Lesson 4, lines 17-20)

- 17     **T:**     Mada aakhar tohibo an taqra'?'  
                   *What else do you like to read?*
- 18     **SI**     Maa'a'rif ....kul shay  
                   *I don't know... everything*
- 19     **T:**     Taqra' kulo Shay'... 'an ayi shay' tuhibo an taqra'?'  
                   *You read everything... on what subject do you like to read?*
- 20     **SI:**     mmm...(silence)

The student provides a general and ambiguous answer to the teacher's question (L18). The teacher, on the other hand, tries to force the student to be more explicit in his answers. The teacher here repeats the student's answer and asks the same question L19. However, the student remains silent (L20). It appears that the teacher is trying hard to push the students to provide a reasonable answer, yet, fails to achieve this, as the student resorts to silence. Alternative strategies for the teacher might have been, for instance, to

provide different answers from which the student could select one, or to ask another student instead of focusing on S1.

Now let us go back to extract 1 to see what the teacher/pupil interaction structure looks like.

Teachers	Students
Question	Response
Paraphrase + Question + nomination	Response
Follow-up + Repetition + question + nomination	Response
Question	Response
Question	Response
Follow-up + question	Response
Question + answer	Response

**Table 4:** An example of the teachers and the students' moves in the classroom interaction.

This structure is represented in numbers in the following table.

	Questioning	Responding	Paraphrasing	Nominating	Repeating	Follow-up
<b>Teachers</b>	7	0	2	2	3	2
<b>Students</b>	0	7	0	0	0	0

**Table 5:** Numerical record of the teacher's and students' interactive activities.

Tables 4 and 5 show that the teacher asks 7 questions in 8 turns. In other words, in almost every turn, there is a question. Two of these questions are followed by a nomination. Students, on the other hand, hold 7 turns, each of which is a response to the teacher's question. In addition, table 4 shows that the teacher uses more than one move in a turn, and that each turn ends with a question. Also, the teacher has the right to make a follow-up move. The teacher in the above table makes two follow-up moves while students make none. This demonstrates the teacher's right to use numerous questions and also to paraphrase, nominate and summarise.

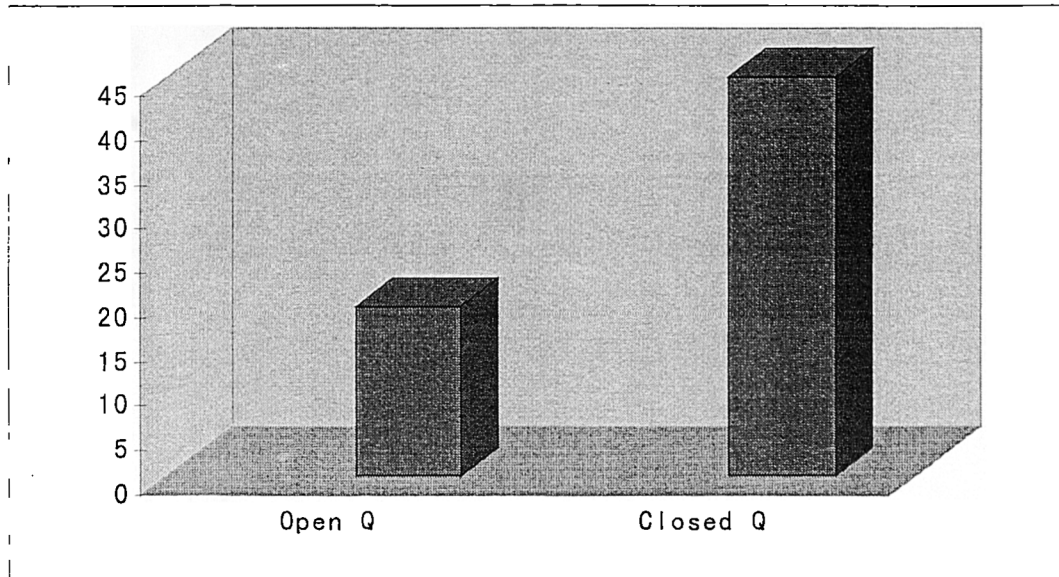
Students, however, are restricted to the responding moves. Instead of being encouraged to take part in the classroom interaction, students are forced to provide the required answers to the teachers' questions. Empowering students means enabling them to determine what is good and bad, important and unimportant in the information they are given. Empowering means also encouraging the students to ask questions, form conclusions and develop their own opinions (Kissock & Lyortsuun 1982). Empowering students in the Moroccan context means resisting the classroom norms and violating conventions on the basis of which roles are distributed within the society (see section 1.5). Therefore, a change in the classroom norms, which currently empower teachers and dis-empower students, is a big step towards a change in social and cultural practice.

## ***6.2. A descriptive statistical analysis of question/ answer use***

In section 5.1, the time held by teachers and students in the classroom was compared and it was noted that the teachers ask many questions. Questioning activities in subject 1 absorbed 20 minutes in four classroom sessions. 64 questions were asked in this period, of which 70% were closed<sup>15</sup> questions, and the remaining 30% open ones (see section 6.5 for more detail). The following chart presents the above statistics.

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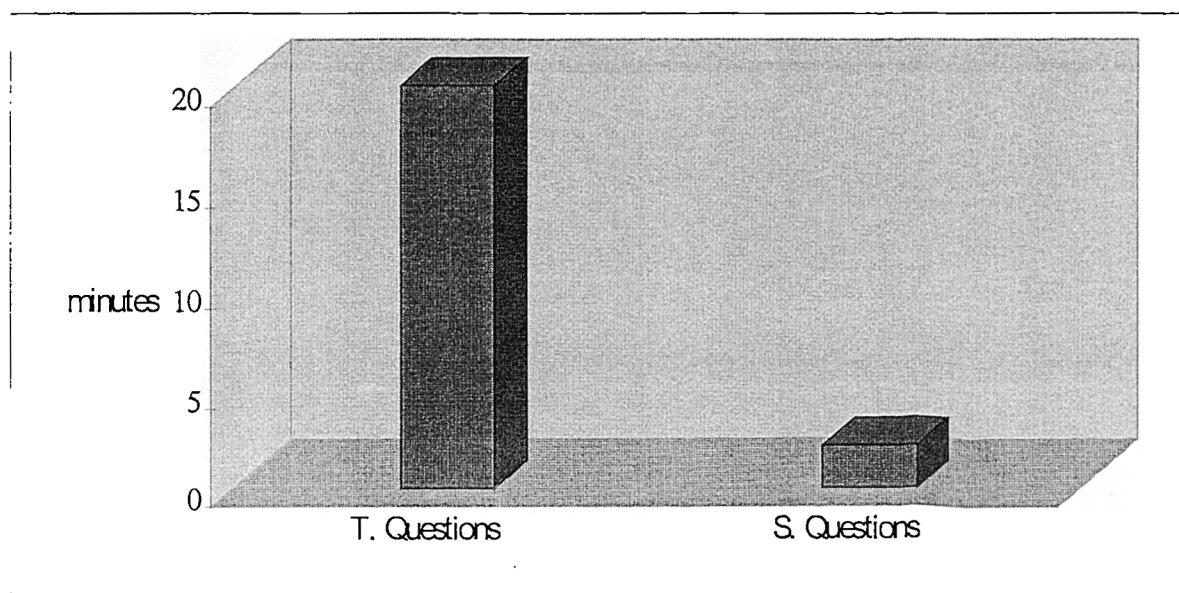
<sup>15</sup> This is a question that requires a single answer. Open questions, however, do not require a single right answer. They usually have more than one limited answer. Kerry (1998:7) provides the following definition "an open question permits a range of responses, but a closed question implies that the teacher has a predetermined correct answer in mind".



**Figure 4:** A representation of the number of open and closed questions in three classroom interaction sessions

The high percentage of closed questions is revealing. Since closed questions require limited answers, students have little opportunity to express themselves. Closed questions also restrict the students' roles and turn them into responders rather than contributors. The difference in the distribution of time to the activities and the prevailing silence within the classroom (see section 5.1.1) can be traced back to the nature of the questions used by the teachers. A comparison of teachers' and students' questioning time in the classroom is, although the roles differ, revealing, as it shows the level of involvement of both students and teachers in the classroom practice and also reveals the genre of activities both participants are engaged in. The following chart shows the teachers and students' questioning time over four classroom sessions.

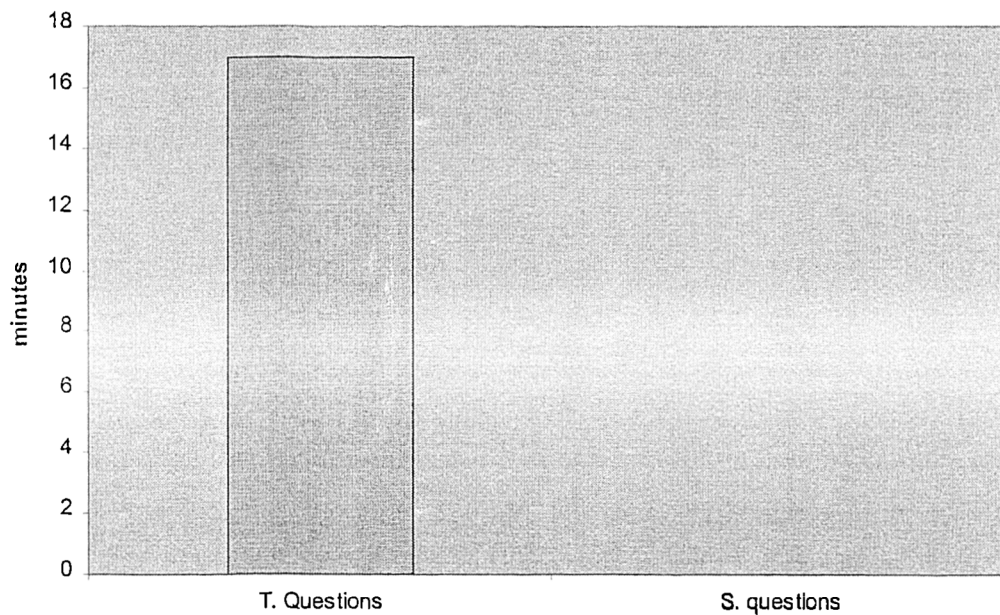




**Figure 5:** Timing teachers and students' questioning activities in subject 1

The teachers' questioning time, as this chart shows, is far longer than that of the students. The transcription of the recorded data also indicates that the teacher asks many questions and students are nominated to answer them. These questions serve different functions. Some of these questions are used to test the students' understanding and knowledge about the subject. Others are used as a means to switch from one section to another. The students, on the other hand, are restricted to answering these questions. They only ask questions to clarify some aspect of the teacher's explanations. Additionally, the above chart shows that only 3 minutes are recorded for the students' questions. This is very short if compared to the time spent in the teacher's questioning activities. Overall, the students' listening time was 224 minutes out of 240. This shows the passivity of the students in the classroom and lack of interaction. The data also shows that the students' involvement in the interaction is limited to the responding move (section 6.1). It was pointed out in example 1 that there are 7 questions to which students provide 7 answers. This clearly demonstrates both students' and teachers' roles within the classroom, and suggests that the teachers' questioning activities dominate the classroom practice. This is clearly shown in subject 2 in which students do not ask any

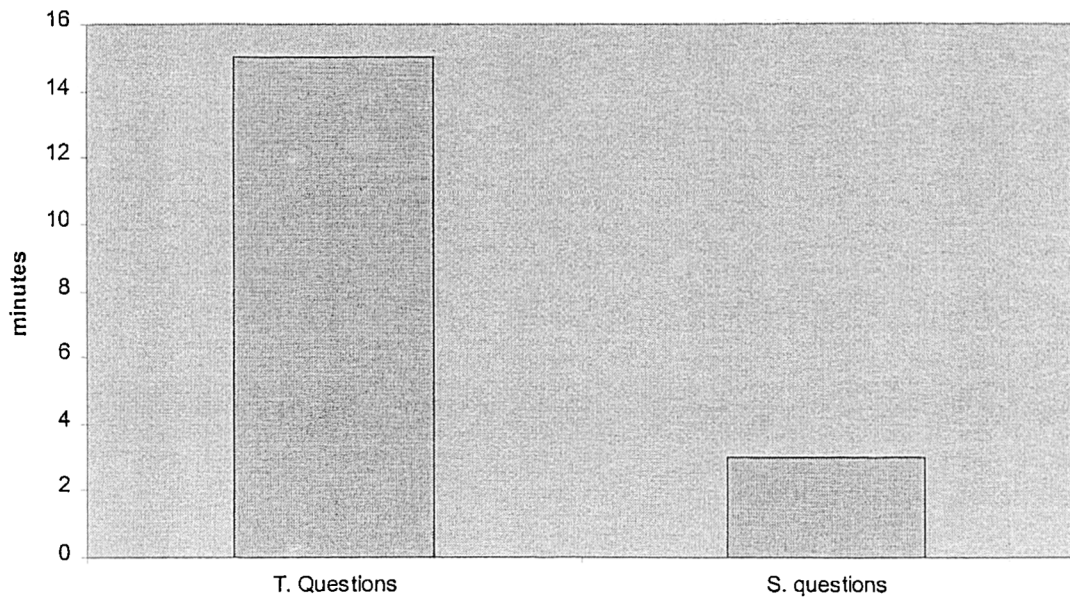
question while teachers ask 17 minutes worth of questions. The teachers ask nearly 90 questions in 180 minutes, an average of 30 questions per hour. This is much less than what Wragg & Brown (1993) found in the British context. They found that teachers ask 100 to 180 questions per hour. Although there is a disparity between our findings and Wragg & Brown's, we can still say that teachers ask many questions while students rarely ask one. The following chart will show these findings clearly.



**Figure 6:** Timing teachers and students' questioning activities in subject 2

This chart clearly supports our claim that students rarely ask a question and that teachers dominate the process of questioning. This chart also provides clear evidence on the students' passivity within the classroom. Teachers ask 100% of questions while students ask none.

Subject 3 displays almost the same results as in subject 1. The following chart shows the teachers and students' questioning time over three classroom sessions.



**Figure7:** Timing teachers and students' questioning activities in subject 3

This chart, which represents data taken from subject 3 displays close results to subject 1. There is a sort of consistency here in terms of the students and the teachers' questioning time. Teachers' questioning time is higher than that of the students. Teachers ask 83% of questions, and the remaining 17% for students. These results reinforce once again our findings that teachers control the questioning process and students are limited to answering their teachers' questions.

It should be pointed out here that teachers' questioning time is higher across all 3 subjects, while the students' questioning time is lower. These findings are consistent across the three main subjects chosen for this study.

The visual analysis (see section 5.8) also reveals that questioning takes place at the beginning, middle and end of the lesson. Before starting the lesson, the teachers ask questions about the previous session in order to establish a link between the previous and the current session. These types of questions are called *recall questions*. They are usually designed to help the students recall or revise material, which has already been

studied. Recall questions are “useful as a starting point to a session or a topic because they focus the students’ minds on the subject matter before the teacher tries to move on” (Kerry 1998: 37). Questioning also takes place in the middle of the session. Teachers frequently ask questions to check their students’ understanding. At the end of the lesson, and before summing up the whole session, teachers ask questions to check the students’ general understanding of the lesson.

Having discussed the teachers’ questioning, the question that poses itself is can students ask more questions as teachers do?

Dillon (1988: 7) asserted that there is little room for students to ask questions, because there are so many other demands on them. Consequently, they ask few questions.

For, as a rule, students do not ask questions. There is little room for their questions in normal practice, and little rhyme or reason for them to ask. They are busied with other things, notably giving answers to teacher questions. Classroom discourse normally proceeds in ways that rule out student questions, while other powerful conditions and facts of life give students good reasons not to ask. With most odds against them asking, students understandably ask few questions. (Dillon 1988: 7).

However, Kerry (1998) considers Dillon’s assertion as a context-based statement. Students may not ask questions in America, Dillon’s context of study, but British students, Kerry argues, do generate questions. Although Wragg & Brown’s (1993) project draw similar results as Dillon where in 20 lessons in primary classes, 20 questions were asked, Kerry remains skeptical about it. Although the average of one question per lesson is convincing, Kerry argues, based on his experience, that students do ask questions. He does not only emphasise the importance of students’ questioning, but considers their questions as a sign of their contributions. Students’ questions indicate their engagement in the material being taught and their understanding of the information discussed. The findings of the present study, however, do not support Kerry’s point. Moroccan students, like Dillon’s and Wragg & Brown’s subjects, do not

ask many questions. Figure 5 shows that the students asked only 3 minutes worth of questions, across four sessions in subject 1. In subject 2, students are shown to be particularly passive. They don't ask any questions at all (see figure 6). Students' lack of questions can be traced either to their lack of understanding of the material or their unwillingness to enter into the interaction.

The students' engagement in the questioning process can be achieved when trust is built between them and teachers. This trust, as Kerry pointed out, can serve as a motive to encourage students to ask questions, which are vital to learning and teaching. Additionally, teachers should give more thinking time to students, in order to encourage them to ask questions and contribute to the ongoing lessons.

Kwan (2000) conducted a study on Japanese students to see the major factors behind their silence in questioning time. She concluded that students in most cases are not familiar with the subject and hence find it too difficult to ask questions. In some cases, the students also keep silent in order not to bother friends or teachers with their questions. From her interviews with students, Kwan (2000) concluded that students did not want to give presenters a hard time by asking questions. A difficult question, as one of her interviewees emphasised, creates a hostile atmosphere.

It is apparent from the above analysis that teachers dominate the questioning process. Timing both students and teachers' questions indicates that teachers ask more questions than students do. Most of these questions are closed ones. This again does not help students to contribute effectively to the classroom practice. It is also concluded that Moroccan students, like Dillon's, Bragg & Brown's subjects, do not ask many questions.

### ***6.3 The role of questions in teaching***

In section 6.1, we began by looking at the different definitions of questions. In this section, the focus shifts to the role of questioning in 'learning and teaching'. Hence,

the main question to be asked here is why do teachers ask so many questions? In his answer to this question, Kerry (1998: 13-20) provides the following nine answers:

1. *So that pupils talk and talk constructively and on task*

The purpose of asking questions, as far as Kerry is concerned, is to encourage the students to talk and contribute to the classroom practice. However, this purpose is not always achievable if we consider the genre of questions and the type of students who answer these questions. Sometimes, there are questions which discourage students from talking, even though they are intended to motivate them to talk. In other circumstances, the students themselves are not willing to talk. The data under study will illustrate the fact that the genre of questions asked by teachers does not encourage the students to express themselves. Also, the accepted learning culture is another important factor to be considered when dealing with the students' talk and contributions within the classroom. Kerry (1998: 14) comments on this:

The first hurdle which has to be crossed by the would-be classroom questioner, then, is to establish a culture of learning in which students expect to be actively involved and to make a positive contribution.

In chapter 8 of this thesis it will be argued that the culture of the Moroccan classroom stands against students' contributions. It will be argued that students' passivity within the classroom is due to their perception of themselves as recipients rather than contributors.

2. *Signal an interest in students' thoughts and feelings*

In relation to this point, Kerry discusses motivating students to talk. One way of doing so is to encourage informal discussions, which, it is argued, encourage students to answer the teachers' questions comfortably and without hesitation. This type of discussion, Kerry emphasises, helps to bridge the social distance between the teachers and students.

Teachers who make themselves available for conversation with students, about anything and everything, have already prepared the ground for learning through questioning (Kerry 1998: 15).

However, Kerry's thoughts may be applicable in a culture in which both students and teachers are willing and able to communicate, but will never work in a culture in which teachers are perceived as masters and knowledge givers.

### *3. To help students externalise and verbalize knowledge*

One of the greatest roles of questioning is to put the responsibility of learning on the students. Students, through answering questions, have to put their thoughts, feelings and speculations and even questions into words. It is believed that learning is enhanced when students ask their own questions. By questioning, the students are able to distinguish between what is important and what is not, in the lesson they are studying (Kissock & Lyortsuun 1982). However, this is not what is happening in the classroom we have examined so far. The image of learning that emerges from our analysis is that the students are not sharers of knowledge. They are listeners and recorders of the information given to them by their teachers. In answering their teachers' questions, the students reproduce the same information, if not the same words and phrases. This problem arises because in the students' perception, learning means reproducing the right information. Our belief is that the students' perception of learning needs to be changed if students are to externalise and verbalise their knowledge.

### *4. To encourage thinking aloud and making intuitive leaps.*

To encourage thinking means to grant students the freedom to express themselves, as they like. It is not necessary to come out with similar thoughts to those of the teachers (Kerry 1998). However, this depends on the teacher's individual style and personality. Some teachers are more flexible and accept any reasonable answer to their questions. They also accept intuitive leaps from their students. Others, on the other hand, are very strict. There is no room for guesses or general answers. Students are required to provide the exact answer expected. It has been pointed out, in section 5.4 and will be seen again in section 6.5, that teachers make negative remarks in response to the students' incorrect answers. We also saw in example 1 that the teacher continues pushing the students to provide her predetermined answer.

*5. To stimulate interest and awaken curiosity*

In relation to this point, Kerry noted the fact that questions alone cannot stimulate students' interest. He states that students should not be given everything. Units in the lessons, like episodes in films, should end in 'crisis and unsolved mystery' (Kerry 1998: 16). This is one way to awaken curiosity among students and encourage them to go and find answers to the unsolved 'crisis'. He encourages teachers to make sure that their lessons end with unsolved puzzle. This will stimulate interest among students.

*6. To encourage problem-solving approach to thinking.*

Here Kerry points out that curious students need a problem-based approach to learning. He says that using questions as a key teaching skill does not help students to carefully examine the data. Whereas, using problem-solving exercises make students look at the data more closely. To him, we should make investigation central to our teaching through the use of questions.

*7. To help students learn from, and respect, one another.*

Although he does not elaborate much upon this heading, Kerry emphasises the need for collective work in which each member of the group brings his or her own contribution. He also stresses the fact that students should recognise that teachers are not always masters of all knowledge. However, he does not explicitly discuss the issue of respect. This is an important omission; we have noted a lack of respect between students in our Moroccan data, which affects participation. There are examples where students are laughed at when they get answers wrong. The act of laughing at each other, we commented, does not encourage students to participate in the classroom. Therefore, it is vital that students value each other's contributions.

*8. To monitor the extent and deficiencies of student learning*

Kerry refers to the role of recall questions. He considers them as tools used by teachers to monitor the students' progress and what they have assimilated from previous lessons. However, he goes on to say, without stating why, that this kind of questioning on its own is not adequate. To Kerry this type of question does not encourage students to think. Students are asked to recall lessons which have already been taught.



*9. To deepen thinking levels and improve conceptualisation*

The aims of effective questioning, as far as Kerry is concerned, are to deepen thinking levels. Students, he insisted, should be asked to provide explanations, reasoning and evaluation to support the contributions they are making to the lesson.

Much research has shown also that questions play a vital role in classroom discourse. Young (1992:90), for instance, pointed out that classroom research over 80 years has shown consistently that questioning is a favourite methodology of teachers. Researchers since Romiette Steven's pioneering study in (1912) have noted this and have deplored the excessive number of questions asked by teachers, when the aim of these questions is to get correct answers. However, Steven says:

the fact that the teacher has the ability to quiz his pupils at the rate of two or three questions a minute is a matter of comparatively slight importance; the fact that one hundred classrooms reveal the same methods in vogue is quite another matter (in Young 1992: 90).

This raises the educational problem that, Steven cited, questions have an undesirable effect on students who become dependent upon teachers and unable to rely on themselves. They have no way to initiate discussions or ask questions. It has been remarked upon throughout this work that the students' roles are limited to answering the teacher's questions. This is due to the fact that students' knowledge about the subject is considered to be little. They are not considered to have anything worth saying. This view affects students' activity within the classroom and contributes to the prevailing silence. Moreover, listening is seen to be the preferred learning skill among Moroccan students. Thus, learning in this context is dependent on a spoon-feeding methodology. Students generally believe that teachers are masters and their lessons have to be listened to without any comments. Teachers, on the other hand, believe that the good students are those who carefully listen to and correctly answer the teacher's questions. This belief restricts students' roles to recipients rather than contributors. It also changes the teacher's role from a mediator and material provider for independent learning to a master and knowledge provider (see section 8.2.2.2). The question to be raised here then is what is the source of this belief?

No single answer can be provided for this question. But, a careful investigation of the social and cultural beliefs of both teachers and learners may instruct us with partial if not complete answers. Since the classroom is not isolated from the entire society, the students and the teachers' social and cultural beliefs may affect classroom practices. Part of these beliefs, as will be discussed in chapter 8, is that teachers are experts and masters of their own domains. Their knowledge is absolute and should not be questioned. In addition, they have full rights to command, control and dominate the process of learning and teaching. Hence, students have to listen to them carefully and never question their ideas. If a student tries to break these classroom norms by being creative, showing initiative or generally being active, he/she will be judged as a troublemaker and hence disciplinary action will be taken against him/her. Any changes of classroom practices are bound up with a change of the social practices. Since the former constitutes a part of the latter, it is unlikely that classroom practices will change while social practices remain as they are.

Young (1992) divided the genre of questions into the following two types/clusters: the method classroom cluster and the discourse classroom cluster. The method classroom is concerned with teaching a particular subject and with preserving the knowledge selected for that curriculum. The discourse classroom is concerned with helping pupils to "grow up" into the discourse of the species in all of its variety, uncertainty and change. In the method classroom, teachers are regarded as experts in their own domains. In the discourse classroom, teachers interpret, mediate, co-ordinate, and cultivate enquiries. These two methods combine together to give teachers what Legntke and Thomas (1991: 293) called "authoritarian power". Similarly, Young (1992) expresses this power in his discussion of these two types of questions WDPK (What Do Pupils Know) and GWTT (Guess What Teachers Think). The following section will show how Young's model applies to the Moroccan classroom.

#### ***6.4 Questions and critical discourse in classrooms***

In this section we will focus on Young's typology of questions to show how these types of questions reflect power and authority within the classroom. In the meantime,

we will try to reveal how these types of questions constrain the students' contributions and participation within the classroom.

Teachers ask questions to discover how much their pupils "know" of what has been taught. Take, for example, the following example.

(3)

**(Lesson 2, line 1)**

1        *T:*     Fi al hissa al maadiya naaqashna filistine, maahiya filistine awalan?

*Last week we discussed the problem of Palestine. What is Palestine first?*

In this question the teacher checks whether her students still remember what they have been taught in the previous lesson, before she goes on to the next stage. Before moving on to reviewing the history of Palestine, the teacher makes sure that the students know what Palestine is. Strictly speaking, this example clearly demonstrates the first type of question (WDPK) proposed by Young (1992). The main purpose of the question is to remind the pupils of what they have been already taught. In this type of question, the pupils seem to know that their role is confined to answering their teacher's questions by reproducing exactly what they have been taught previously. They are not allowed to add or come out with anything different from what has been taught.

Sometimes questions can be used to test the students' basic knowledge of something, which has never been taught before. Consider for instance this example.

(4)

**(Lesson 1, line 13)**

*T:*        Al mamlaka kaanat to da'im al felistiiniiyiin maadiyanan wa ma'nawiyān. Man yaqul li mada na'ni bimaadi wa ma'nawī

*The Kingdom continues supporting the Palestinian materially and morally..... who can tell me what I mean by materially and morally?*

S: (Pause)

The teacher's question here is not to remind her students of what has been taught but to check their knowledge of something, which has never been taught before. This type of question exhibits the teacher's authority and role as a knowledgeable and expert person. Instead of explaining the two terms, the teacher prefers to test her students' knowledge. However, the teacher's attempt to test the students' knowledge fails as the students remain silent.

Additionally, teachers may ask rhetorical questions. This type of question illustrates the teacher's role within the classroom. The following example elucidates this.

(5)

(Lesson 11, lines 14-18)

- 14 T: Jayid fi nihaayati ramadaan nahtafil bi Eid al fiitar. Hal ya'mali  
15 anass fi hada al yum?  
*Good, at the end of Ramadan, we celebrate Eid al fitar (breaking fast). Do people work on this day?*
- 16 S Na'am...Laa  
*Yes...No*
- 17 T { Limada? Li anahu Eid al fitar. Anaas yahtafilu ma'a  
18 ussarhum wa aqaaribhum  
*Why? Because it is Eid al fitar. People celebrate it with their families, relatives and friends*

The teacher in the above extract asks the "why" question but does not wait for the answer. She answers her own question (L17). Her answer is meant to clarify her question. The teacher here does not give any chance to the student to justify his answer

(L16). She knows that the student is in doubt as he switches from 'yes' to 'no'. Therefore, the teacher ignores the student and asks a rhetorical question to which she provides an answer (L17, 18). The way the teacher ignores the student and holds the turn shows, once more, the former's authority within the classroom. Instead of giving the student a chance to complete his answer, the teacher holds the floor and answers the question. This indicates the teacher's authority and right to stop the student from answering the question.

The other genre of question is what Young (1992: 104) called Guess What Teachers Think (GWTT). He considers this type of question as an inductive one. Its aim is to get students to confirm their prior knowledge and to motivate them for further interaction. Pupils try to think what the teacher is aiming at. This may help them to join the discussion. The teacher's role here is to pursue a strategy, which draws out students' knowledge and leads them to inductive conclusions. This strategy helps pupils guess what the teacher is going to say and reach a conclusion before the teacher displays it to them. However, this strategy is not always successful. The following example will demonstrate that students face the teacher's questions with silence.

(6)

(Lesson 8, lines 35-38)

- 35     **T:**     Mahiya awal sura fi al-Quraan?  
                   *What is the first verse in the Quran?*
- 36     **S1:**     Mmmmm...
- 37     **T:**     Tabda' bi alhamdulillah, Hassan?  
                   *It starts with praising..., Hassan*
- 38     **S2:**     (silence)

Although this example is quite similar to WDPK examples, the difference lies in the strategy of drawing out the students' knowledge. The teacher here keeps pushing the student to provide her predetermined answer. She does so by giving them hints that might help to get the right answer. However, the teacher's questions lead to the students' silence. The teacher's attempt to test the students' knowledge fails to prompt a

response, although the teacher does provide supportive clues to stimulate answers from the students.

The above analysis of the question/answer pairs reinforces and supports Edward and Mercer's (1993: 45) following comments:

- 1- It is a teacher who asks questions. This is considered to be a result or confirmation of what we have discussed and elaborated throughout this chapter.
- 2- A teacher knows the answer. Teachers in the Moroccan context are expected to know every single answer to the asked questions. This is part of the Moroccan classroom culture. In other educational contexts, for instance Britain, teachers are not expected to know everything. It is acceptable if teachers can't answer students' questions. In Moroccan classrooms, however, this might be considered a sign of the teacher's incompetence and weakness.
- 4- Repeated questions imply wrong answers. Two examples were mentioned to indicate that teachers re-ask question either when students provide wrong answers or ambiguous ones, or simply when the answer is not the one the teacher is seeking.

These findings suggest in one way or another that the teacher has power to ask more questions and accept or reject the students' answers.

Dillon (1982) cited in Edward and Mercer (1993: 40) noted that in 85% of exchanges observed in primary classrooms, teachers asked questions after students' responses, and that in 67% of lessons, teachers responded to pupils' questions by asking another question. Edwards and Mercer's (1993) findings correspond to the point discussed before, in section 6.1, that, in every turn, the teachers ask questions for different purposes. They use them to assess, test and discover the type of knowledge that the pupils possess. Though they still have this function, as Dillon (1982b) claimed, questions are also used as a means to control and dominate classroom discourse. According to Dillon (1982) in Edward and Mercer (1993: 46), there is no evidence to indicate that the teachers' use of questions does "stimulate thought and discussions". Similarly, Edward and Mercer (1993: 46) point out that:

Most of the questions that teachers ask do not in the most straightforward sense, seek information. They are part of the discursive weaponry available to teachers for controlling topics of discussion, directing pupil's thought and action and establishing the extent of shared attention, joint activity in common knowledge (Edwards & Mercer 1993: 46).

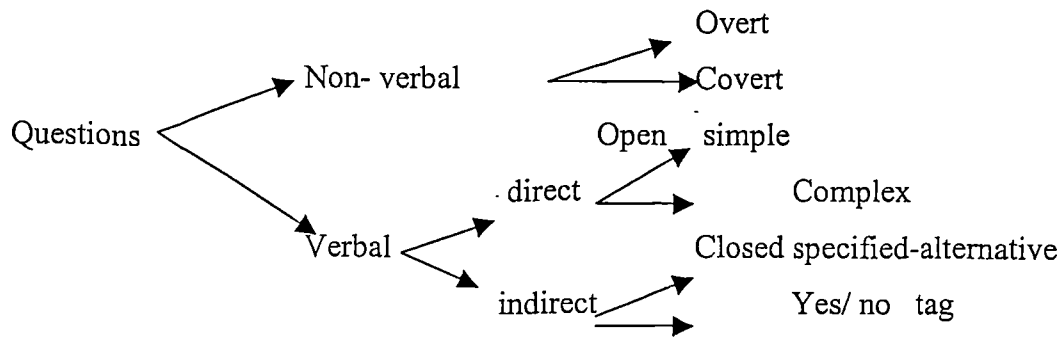
In this quotation it is stated that questions are teachers' weapons to control students' thoughts and actions. It has been argued earlier that the teachers' questions reflect their power and control. The following section will clearly demonstrate this by focusing on open/closed questions and how they restrict students' responses.

### ***6.5 Open/closed questions and control of the classroom discourse***

In the previous sections, the functions and the aims of asking questions within the classroom were discussed. In section 6.4, it was argued that teachers use questions as part of their weaponry to control the classroom discursive practice. In this section, this idea will be illustrated further but, this time, with a focus on the function of 'open' and 'closed' questions within the classroom.

Different questions have different forms and functions. There are two main types of questions: open questions and closed questions. The main goal of questions is to allow the questioner to seek information. If specific information is required, the questioner will ask a closed question which allows no free or ambiguous answers. Open questions, however, allows answerers to provide further information.

Moreover, questions express the questioner's attitudes towards asking questions. In the previous analysis, it was shown that questions are used for different purposes. It was also shown how questions are used to assess, test, enforce explicitness and control the flow of discourse (Section 6.1, 6.2). A typology of questions is presented by Kearley (1976: 359 in Van Der Meij 1986: 28) in the following figure:



**Figure 6:** A typology of question forms

(from Kearley (1976: 357) cited in Van Der Meij 1986: 28)

Among the different genres of questions displayed in the above diagram are open and closed questions. Open questions always contain WH-words like *who*, *which*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *how* and *why*. Hence, open questions are also called WH-questions. This form of questioning is similar to Arabic. Closed questions, however, do not include interrogative words. They are expressed by inversion of the subject and the predicative verb as in “*Would you like tea or coffee?*” Unlike English, which uses auxiliary verbs like *do/does* and *is/are* to form such questions, Arabic questions are formed by using the same word order and structure as in statements. Closed questions are indicated by the interrogative word ‘*hal*’ (no English equivalent). Here is an example:

Hal Maha missriya?

*Is Maha Egyptian?*

Kearley’s typology provides a sketch of the various forms of questions, which suffices for the present purpose. Although he introduces and describes different types of questions, Kearley does not discuss the function of each type, which is considered more important and useful in understanding the speaker’s intended meaning. Questions, whether open or closed have different functions and convey different meanings.

Moreover, teachers’ feedback to students’ responses is another issue to be highlighted in question/ answer adjacency pairs. Although feedback is considered to be crucial to teaching and learning, our analysis has shown that teachers’ feedback is not



always encouraging nor is it motivating students to learn. We have given examples (section 5.4) of how teachers' criticism of their students' answers or responses urge the latter to terminate their turns. Although this is not the case in all examples (example 1, section 6.1), teachers' criticism of their students' answers is present in most of the data. An example of this would be that of the student who answered the teacher's question incorrectly, and was prevented from making another attempt with the answer, "*your answer was wrong ... shut up*". This teacher's attitude, without doubt, would discourage and intimidate the learner and may even stop him from answering future questions. The following example focuses on such a practice and also on the effect of closed questions on the students' contributions. It will be argued that closed questions restrict the students' freedom to express themselves and put pressure on them to provide what is required by the teacher. Generally, it will be demonstrated that such questions can be used as a means to control the flow of the interaction.

(7)

(Lesson 10, lines 1-28)

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | T  | kam 'adad fossoul assana?<br><i>How many quarters are in the year?</i>   |
| 2 | S1 | 'adad fossoul assana 3<br><i>There are three sessions</i>  |
| 3 | T  | khata', mata'rif hata fossoul assana..kam 'adad<br>fossoul assana, Najib?<br><i>Wrong, you do not know even how many quarters in a year? How many quarters in a year, Najib?</i> |
| 4 | S2 | 'dad fossoul assana 4 wahiya faslo ashitaa'<br><i>There are four quarters a year. These are</i>  |
| 5 | T  | sa'alto 'ani al<br>'adad wa lam aqul ihssiihm lii man yahssii bitartiib?<br><i>I asked you how many and not what are they. Who can state them chronologically?</i>               |
| 6 | S3 | Hunaaka fassl arabii' Wa<br><i>There is Spring and</i>   |

- 7 T Kult ahssiim bitartiib  
*I said state them chronologically*
- 8 S3 Awalan fasslo ashitaa', taaniyan arabii' taalitan fasslo  
assayf, raabi'an fasslo alkhariif.  
*First, Winter; second Spring; third Summer; fourth  
Autumn.*
- 9 T Jaid..bitartiib fasslo ashitaa', fasslo arabii', fasslo  
alkhariif, fasslo assayf  
*Good they are: Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn.*
- 10 S4 Ashnu alfarq bayn fassl alkhariif wa fassl assayf?  
What is the difference between Winter and Autumn?
- 11 T Jlass, tatkalam ktiir yaa Khalid. Laa daa'iya lihada  
assu'aal? Kam fi alfassl min shahar?  
*Sit down, you talk too much Khalid. Is there any point to your  
question? How many months in a quarter? (to the whole class)*
- 12 S5 Arba'atun  
*Four*
- 13 T Yabdu anaka da'iif fii riyadiyaat yaa Jaouad, anta yaa  
Omar  
*It sounds like you are not good at maths, Jaouad.  
You, Omar?*
- 14 S6 Talaatato ashhur  
*Three months*
- 15 T Hassan ..idan kayfa yakuno aljawo fi ashitaa'  
*Good, then what is the weather like in the winter?*
- 16 S6 Mumtir li ana  
*Raining because*
- 17 T Qult kayfa walayssa limada. Kayfa  
yakuno aljawo fi Ashitaa', Hanan?  
*I said how and not why, How does the weather look in winter  
Hanan?*
- 18 S7 Yakuno Baarid  
*It is cold*

- 19 T Wa kayfa yakuno fii assayf  
*And how is it in the summer?*
- 20 S7 Mu'tadil  
*Mild*
- 21 T Yassalam, anaass yamutu bi alhar wa taqul mu'tadil.  
Said, sahih ana al jawu murtadil? Naam am la?  
*(Teasing phrase) People are dying because of the heat and you said mild. Is it true that the weather is mild, yes or no?*
- 22 S8 Laa  
*No*
- 23 T Kayfa yakuno iden?  
*How is it then?*
- 24 S8 Skhun  
*Hot*
- 25 T Ayu fassliin yakun aljawo mu'tadil iden?  
*In which quarter, is the weather very mild?*
- 26 S8 Fassl arabi' wa al khariif  
*In Spring and Autumn*
- 27 T Jawab wahad faqat  
*One single answer only.*
- 28 S9 Fassl arabii'  
*Spring*

This example shows clearly the prevalence of the closed questions asked by the teacher. In line 1, the teacher asks how many quarters are in the year. A student responds incorrectly to the teacher's question (L2). The teacher scolds the student for his wrong answer (L3), then directs the same question to Najib (L3), who answers it correctly (L4). Even though Najib provides the correct answer, he is not allowed to provide further information. The teacher interrupts him with a reminder that the latter should stick to the teacher's question. In Line 5, the teacher asks another student to state the quarters of the year chronologically. The student fails to do so (L6). The teacher interrupts the student abruptly and tells him to name them chronologically (L7). The student is asked to name the quarters chronologically and he has to do so. He has no

right to do whatever he likes. The lack of any place for student initiative is clearly manifested in the response to the student's question to the teacher (L10). The teacher harshly silences the student and orders him to sit down because the teacher views his question as irrelevant (L11). The problem does not lie in the student's question itself and whether it is relevant or not. The real problem for the teacher resides in the student's initiative in asking a question without being prompted to do so. This is a challenge to the teacher's authority and role within the classroom. The teacher's response to the student's questioning shows her authority and control over the classroom. Instead of welcoming the student's question, the teacher accuses the student of talking too much and demands that he sits down and keeps silent (L11). The teacher's rejection of the student's questions stands in contradiction to Dillon's (1988) emphasis on encouraging students to ask questions. Dillon urges teachers to answer their students' questions and appreciate their contributions: "appreciate the students' state of knowledge revealed by the question" (Dillon 1988: 30).

Another feature that is worth commenting on in the above extract is the teacher's criticism and negative feedback to the students' responses. In line 13 the teacher criticises the student and belittles his ability in maths because of his wrong answer. Here the teacher's criticism of the student is revealing in many ways. It shows, once again, the teacher's right to respond negatively to students' incorrect answers. The teacher shows no sensitivity to the student's feelings or 'face'. In line 17, the student's turn is interrupted by the teacher. This time, the student who is trying hard to impress the teacher is criticised for going beyond the required answer. The student here is a victim of an extra explanation he tries to provide to the teacher's question (L16). Consequently, the student is interrupted by the teacher and the question is directed to another student (L17). The teacher here not only asks closed questions, but rejects any expanded answers by students. Students' attempts and efforts to provide more information could be praised and welcomed by the teacher.

This extract is telling/revealing in many ways. Firstly, the teacher asks closed questions to which the students are only allowed to provide very restricted answers. Moreover, the students are not allowed to provide further explanation in their answers to the teachers' questions (L 16). Secondly, students' questions are not welcomed. In line

11 the student's question is rejected as irrelevant although the teacher asks the same question at a later stage. This suggests that the real reason for rejecting the question is not its irrelevance, but because it challenges the teacher's control of the discourse. Thirdly, the teacher's harshness and negative response to the students' answers reflect her power and authority within the classroom.

Educationalists (e.g. Kerry 1998) recommend that questions should be open in order to encourage learners to express their views and ideas. In the above extract, the teacher asks closed questions, which restrict the students' answers to answers like 'Yes' and 'No'. This type of question encourages students to be neither communicative nor interactive. Consequently, this leads to the prevailing silence, which helps the teacher to dominate the classroom talk. It was shown earlier in the time analysis (section 5.2) the teacher controls 93% of the talk, leaving little time for the students. There is strong asymmetry in the distribution of classroom practices, which are heavily dominated by teachers.

Only few questions, noted earlier, are asked by the students. The students use these questions to seek information and clarify ideas. The question to be raised here is why students do not ask questions? As we discussed before, students' roles are limited to answering questions rather than generating them. There are several factors contributing to these results. One of these factors is the students' belief and assumption that questions are only for teachers. Teachers' behaviour within the classroom and their negative feedback to their students, illustrated above, is another factor for the prevailing silence in the classroom.

## **6.6 Discussion**

Our description and explanation of the function of questions in this chapter convince us that questions and answers are crucial to our understanding of the interpersonal relationship between students and teachers. Questioning shows the level of interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. Our analysis, throughout

this chapter, has revealed that teachers ask many questions, to which students provide answers. The students' low level of involvement in the questioning activity is attributable to various reasons, among them is the students' belief regarding the classroom practice, i.e. that questions are only for teachers.

Therefore, students have to listen to teachers carefully and keep silent. This explains the students' passivity within the classroom and also shows why teachers hold many turns and ask many questions. As a result of this, "pupils are rarely encouraged to ask questions in the classroom. It is not uncommon to discover that less than one question per lesson is asked by pupils" (Kissock & Lyortsuun 1982: 118). Kissock & Lyortsuun (1982: 118) traced the failure of the teachers to encourage their students to ask questions back to the "system of education which is not centred on developing enquiry attitudes and skills of learning". In addition to the system of education, mentioned by Kissock & Lyortsuun (1982), the teachers' personal behaviours can be seen as crucial to promoting or hindering students' questions and, hence, interaction. The instance cited earlier, of a student's question being met with criticism is a case in point.

The question that follows from this discussion is how could questions help learning and minimize the teachers' dominance over the classroom talk? In answering this question, we will draw on Stenhouse's work (1983) quoted in Kerry (1998). Stenhouse believes that learning takes place when students are independent from their teachers. This autonomy includes their freedom to make up their minds about the educational issues in which they are engaged. For this to be achieved, teachers should be regarded as 'neutral chairpersons'. Stenhouse urges teachers to stand outside the students' discussion zone. He advises that their role should be restricted to orienting the discussion or, in Kerry's words, 'balancing any bias in their students' arguments' (Kerry 1998: 75). This can be achieved if teachers control their questioning methodology. Teachers, for instance, can intervene only to focus the course of the discussion if it loses its direction. Also, questions should be open rather than closed questions, which most often bring conversations to a halt. Questions should also aim at provoking quality learning in classrooms. This includes motivating students to promote discussions and take decisions. Group interaction and peer presentation should be encouraged in order to

reduce the teachers' questioning time to a minimum. The dynamics of the group work is that the members of the group feel more responsible 'to share knowledge and assist each other to learn' (Kerry 1998: 140). Additionally, questions should be designed to encourage students to express themselves through asking questions (see section 6.3 for more detail).

In addition to the explicit functions of questions, Lukinsky and Schachter (1998: 2) point out that there are two tacit messages inherent in this type of question asking. Firstly, questions "establish power relationship with the teacher on the top. Students are placed on the defensive". The second hidden message to be learnt from the questioning process is that for every single question there is an answer that the teacher already knows. This paves the way for the following question to be asked: what should we do to promote students' questioning in Moroccan classrooms?

The first answer to this question is that teachers should decrease their own questioning. It was noticed from the analysis of the data in this chapter that the teachers ask many questions. This finding is consistent with previous research, which indicates that teachers may ask about 100 to 180 questions per hour (Dillon 1982, Brown & Edmondson, 1984). Therefore, students can only have the opportunity to ask more questions when the teachers reduce their questioning time (Dillon 1982). This will also change the practice that only teachers ask questions.

Improving the students' questioning is another answer to the above question. This improvement can take many forms and shapes. One of these forms is what Van de Meij called modelling. Students are given different questioning models and are asked to follow them. Through this, the students can acquire the necessary skills for asking a question. There is also what is called behaviour modification. This means that efforts should be made to encourage the students to ask questions by praising those who do so (Van de Meij 1986). The aim of doing this is to motivate the students to start asking questions so that as time goes on, their questioning behaviour will change gradually. This is the first step towards empowering the students. By doing so, we can manage to fight the 'banking concept' of education, which regards students as empty vessels who need to be stuffed with ideas and information. One great weakness of this approach is

that “ the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world” (Freire 1972: 60). It is only by encouraging students to be involved in the questioning activities that the banking system of the ideas referred to by Freire will be avoided.

### **6.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter it has been demonstrated that questions fulfil more than one function: questions are used to assess students, initiate an exchange, clarify a statement and control the flow of interaction. It was also argued that questions are used as a means to exert power over students and enforce explicitness upon them. In addition, it was concluded that 93% of the questions are asked by teachers. Students, on the other hand, only provide answers to these questions. This behaviour is attributable to the students' beliefs that questioning is only part of the teacher's educational and social role, and not theirs. It was concluded also that the process of questioning and answering are not merely processes of information transmission, but are instead cultural activities where children and teachers are put into practice their beliefs via the methods and materials used. As the last chapter will indicate, teachers and students' discursive practices, which have been examined through the use of question/ answer pairs, cannot be accounted for in isolation from the social and cultural context in which the discourse occurs.

Before examining the cultural context, it remains to complete the quantitative and qualitative part of analysis, with an investigation of the way interruption reflects power relations in the classroom. This is the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER SEVEN.

### *Interruption and power use in Moroccan classrooms*

#### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the notion of interruption, arguing that interruption reflects power relations among the participants. Firstly, it will state and discuss definitions of the term ‘interruption’ and its function in classroom interaction. A comparison between interruption and overlap will be presented, in order to demonstrate the distinction between these two categories, and to show that it is interruptions that are more prevalent in Moroccan classroom practice. Secondly, it will be argued that interruption is a device of power and dominance. Thirdly, it will be concluded that interruption practice is part of both the teacher’s and the students’ social roles.

#### **7.1 Towards a definition of interruption and overlap**

Harrigan (1980) defines interruption as a turn which intrudes on the current speaker’s turn. This act of intrusion can make the speaker hesitate, repeat, stumble in his/her speech, and sometimes even lose the hearers’ attention. Zimmerman & West, on a gender based study, define interruption as “an intrusion into speech which penetrates the boundaries of a unit-type prior to the last lexical constituent” (1975: 14). For Watts (1991: 107) interruption is:

any activity, verbal or non-verbal, which intrudes upon the current speaker’s turn and in doing so presents a threat to her/his negative

face and restricts freedom of action to achieve her/his goals, simultaneously damaging, in the process, her/his positive face and thereby her/his status in the group.

It is apparent from this quotation that interruption has a negative effect on the speaker. It threatens the speaker's face by ending his/her turn.

There have been long discussions over the difference between an overlap and interruption and their functions in interaction. Overlap has been defined as the occurrence of two voices simultaneously coming together at a turn transition point where both the speakers are noticed to complete their turns successfully (Sacks et al 1974; Zimmerman and West 1975; Itakura 2000). Schegloff (2000: 7) refers to overlaps as talk by "more than a speaker at a time". This violates the turn taking organization described by Sacks et al, according to which only one speaker speaks at a time. However, Schegloff (2000) seems to realise that overlaps occur because of the second rule of turn-taking organization (section 2.5) which clearly states that a speaker can self-select when the current speaker completes his/her turn. Consequently, based on the self-select option, many speakers may select themselves at once to hold the floor. To solve this overlapping problem, Schegloff goes beyond the turn-taking rules and considers the participants responsible for a successful interaction. He views interactions as

party-administered, delegating the outcome not to any formal rule but to the conduct of the parties involved in the occasion...It is interactionally managed and recipient-designed; it is precisely in response to one another's relevant identity and interactional moves and stances that an outcome is reached (Schegloff 2000:45).

It is understood from Schegloff's comment that interaction is, more or less, locally-administered. It is up to the participants to decide who can speak next if they are to avoid overlap and interruption. However, the participants need to be aware of the negative aspects of overlaps and interruptions, if they are to prevent simultaneous speech from happening.

Tannen (1994:53), however, refers to simultaneous speech as 'co-operative overlapping'. This means, as far as Tannen is concerned, that different voices at once are a sign of participation and solidarity. She also defines co-operative overlap as a

“listener talking along with a speaker not in order to interrupt but to show enthusiastic listenership and participation”. Additionally, she regards overlap as “supportive rather than obstructive, evidence of not of domination but of participation, not power, but the paradoxically related dimension, solidarity” (Tannen 1994: 62). She rejects the rule of conversational analysis that only one speaker must speak at a time. Unlike Tannen, others consider overlap as an aspect of control and dominance rather than support and participation (Itakura 2001).

### ***7.2 Interruption as face threatening behaviour***

Interruption is a means of ending, or preventing people from finishing their turns. Not only does it prevent the speaker from finishing his/her turn, but degrades him or her by indicating that the interrupter has something more interesting to say. Thus, it negates the speaker’s rights, on the one hand, denies the validity of the interrupted activity (the speaker’s speech) on the other (Watts 1991). It is therefore strong evidence of the exercise of power. This could be categorised under what might be called the power of knowledge. Knowledgeable people interrupt others to put over their ideas or simply to hold turns and dominate talk. This type of behaviour, which occurs frequently in formal and informal conversations, is a means of threatening both one’s negative and positive face as far as Brown and Levinson (1987) are concerned (see section 2.2.2.2). Watts (1991) regards interruption as a threat to the speaker’s face because it stops the speaker and restricts his/her freedom of action (Watts 1991:107). On this basis, interruptive behaviour could be regarded as a key element in interpreting the distribution of power amongst group members during the interaction.

Harrigan & Watts’s definitions of interruption (see section 2.2.4) suggest that interruption is a face threatening behaviour because it prevents speakers from finishing their turns. Similarly, Zimmerman and West (1983:103), in gender-based research, consider interruption as a “device for exercising power and control in conversation” and argue that it is a “violation of speakers’ turns and talk”. In addition to threatening his/her face, interruption silences the speaker by putting an end to his/her turn.

Similarly, Holmes (1995:52) considers “interruption as disruptive”, arguing that utterances are instances of face threatening acts because they break the symmetry of the conversation. Itakura (2001) regards an interruption as “controlling when the interrupted speaker withdraws and the interrupting speaker completes the turns”. However, an interrupting turn is “non-controlling if the interrupted speaker’s turn is not withdrawn” (2001:1862). This definition, together with others (Sacks et al. 1974; Zimmerman and West 1975) will help us to categorize interruptive cases in our data as either *dominating* or *non-dominating* interruption.

Tannen (1994), on the other hand, rejects any interpretation which associates interruption with power and dominance. She argues that interruption is a result of style contact, the interaction of two differing turn-taking systems, and is not a result of dominance. She also refers to interruption as an aspect of solidarity and a sign of participation. Hence, she concludes that association of interruption with power is not universal. However, this is not the common view among many researchers of interruption.

A broad dichotomy can be drawn in interruption types: forced and attempted interruption (McLaughlin 1984). Forced interruption, dominating interruption, takes place when the current speaker is forced to yield the floor after the intrusion of another speaker. One of the consequences of this type of interruption is silencing the speaker (see example 4). This does not only happen with teachers’ and students’ interaction but also in mixed sex conversations (Zimmerman & West 1975). An attempted interruption, non-dominating, on the other hand, is one in which the speaker’s turn is completed despite the attempt at interruption by participants. It should be noted therefore that other terms are used to mean the same thing: successful, dominating interruption vs unsuccessful interruption, non-dominating (Malam 1995). A dominating interruption is one in which the speaker is forced to end his/her turn. A non-dominating interruption, by contrast, is one in which the original speaker continues his/her turn. It is less threatening because the interrupter recognises the possible threat and withdraws (Malam 1995: 230). Malam (1995) claims that unsuccessful interruptions, referred to previously as attempted interruption, demonstrate that the interrupter is paying some degree of attention to the addressee’s negative face by allowing the current speaker to continue.

However, interruption can be disruptive (McLaughlin 1984: 126) when the second speaker stops the first from completing his/her turn.

In his attempt to make interruption less face threatening, Lycan (1977) provides the following maxims which regulate when and how speakers should interrupt.

- 1- Interrupt only when, by doing so, you will significantly increase the efficiency of the conversation, or (less commonly) when external considerations of general utility require the goals of the conversation to be subjugated to some other goals.
- 2- Keep your interruption as unobtrusive as possible under the circumstances.
- 3- Do not interrupt a speaker if he is accessible enough for you to be able to achieve your goals by waiting a short while before speaking.
- 4- Interrupt only at the widest available point of entry.
- 5- Maintain a pleasant outward manner, and when appropriate, review your interruption.
- 6- Do not violate the formal rules defining a conversational speech situation in which you find yourself.

(Lycan 1977 in Watts 1991: 95-96)

The teachers' interruptions, as will be explained shortly, are shown to violate the above maxims. Whereas Lycan emphasises that interruption should be used to increase the efficiency of the conversation, the teachers' interruption, in our data, discourages this type of efficiency. Most of the interruptive cases, as will be seen, end up in silencing the students. Having said that, it should be noted that Lycan (1977) omits to explain how interruption can increase the efficiency of the conversation.

### 7.3 Silence and interruption

Previously, it was mentioned that one of the main consequences of interruption is the prevailing silence. In this section, we will elaborate on the different types of silence which are the results of interruption.

Sacks et al. (1974:714) noticed that there are three types of silence in the world of conversation: gaps, lapses and pauses. A gap is a short switching which usually lasts from 0.5-1.0 seconds. It occurs in the transition period from one speaker to another.

(From Hopper, 1992: 69)

Dawn:       Hello?  
              0.6  
Gordon:     Hello is Dawn there?

A lapse is defined as an extended silence which lasts 3 seconds or more at a transition-relevance place (cf McLaughlin & Code, 1982: 301)

(From Sacks et al. 1974: 715)

C:        Okay  
          (7)  
J:        Dass a rilly nice swe::der (...)

A pause, however, is longer than a lapse and a gap. Feldstein (1970) found that for pairs of females engaging in 30 minutes conversation, switching pauses averaged 0.664 seconds with a standard deviation of 0.165 seconds (in McLaughlin 1984: 111).

The pause is the most dominant type of silence in our data. It occurs when teachers interrupt students (section 7.4). A gap, on the contrary, is seen to occur when students interrupt each other. Their interruption does not take long, nor does it affect the turns of others (section 5.1.2).

#### 7.4 Interruption, power, asymmetry and dominance

In section 7.1 and 7.2, we reviewed some of the research which considers interruption a device of power and asymmetry. In this section, we shall elaborate on this in detail by demonstrating that interruption is a dimension of power and dominance. We shall draw on Itakura's definition of interruption as a device of asymmetry. The term *dominating* and *non-dominating* interruption will be used as alternative taxonomy in the remainder of this chapter. By *dominating* interruption, it is meant that the speaker's turn is dominated by another speaker. By *non-dominating* it is meant that the speaker is interrupted but his/her turn is completed.

In the following example we will try to make clear this notion of dominating interruption. We will argue that teachers are more successful in preventing students from completing their turns than students are when interrupting their teachers or each other. By dominating turns, teachers enforce their students to be silent.

(1)

(Lesson 4, lines 1-6)

- 1 T: Binissbati lisso'aal athaalith.  $1/3 + 2/3$   
*Concerning question 3,  $1/3 + 2/3$*
- 2 S: tossaawi  $6/3$   
*Equals  $6/3$*
- 3 T: laa..layssa sahiih  
*No, no it is not true*
- 4 S: Austad Hal...  
*Sir d...*
- 5 → T: Ashnu ya ausstad majibtiiha sahiih ya austad...  
*What...? Your answer was wrong.*  
 (Students laughing)
- 6 S: (Pause)

The teacher in the above extract (L4) interrupts the student and prevents him from completing his turn because he provides an incorrect answer. The teacher shows his anger at the student's wrong answer by using the words *laa* 'no' and *lissa* 'not' L3, which have negative connotations in Arabic. The use of *laa* and *layssa* indicates the teacher's authority and role to evaluate the students' answers, as he/she likes (section 5.4). The teacher's comments have to be accepted by the students, who have no right to comment on them. In cases where the students interrupt their teacher, they are never allowed to use lexical items such as *laa* and *layssa*. This would be impolite and considered unacceptable behaviour. Consequently, students would be punished for breaking the norms of the interaction. The second interruption to be commented upon is made when the student tries to ask the teacher for a clarification of something he does not understand. The teacher angrily silences the student for the simple reason that one of his previous answers was wrong L5 (*Ash yaa austad majibtiha sahiih*).

However, the teacher interrupts students even in cases when they provide correct answers. Here is an example for more illustration.

(2)

**(Lesson 3, lines 1-19)**

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | S1:  | taftakiriin 'indama qultu laki 'indi shay' urid an<br><i>Do you remember when I told you that I have</i>   |
| 2 | → T: | <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">Turid ish</div> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 5px; margin-left: 5px;">           taqul?...takalam?<br/> <i>What do you want to say?</i> </div> </div> |
| 3 | S1:  | Urid an onaaqish<br><i>I want to discuss</i>   |
| 4 | → T: | <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;">mash al'aan min ba'd</div> <div style="border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 5px; margin-left: 5px;"> <i>Not now later</i> </div> </div>                                  |
| 5 | S1:  | <i>(Silence)</i>   |
| 6 | T:   | <u>Fiih</u> ahad 'indu su'aal?<br><i>Does anybody have a question?</i>   |



- 7        **S2:**    Ah  
              Yes
- 8        **T:**        Iiwa Khalid  
              Yes Khalid  
              *(After she finishes answering the students' questions, the teacher moves on to another unit)*
- 9        **T:**        Al'aan tali'u al mutaala'a  
              *Now take out your books*
- 10       **S3:**       Al'aan yaa austad  
              *Now teacher*
- 11       **T:**        Na'am safha 81  
              *Yes, page 81*
- 12       **S4:**       Safha 81 ka
- 13 → **T:**        Page 81, wer.  
                  Qult iftah 'inda safha 81  
                  *I said open on page 81*
- 14       **S4:**       Qara'naaha fii alhissa almaadiya  
              *We have studied this in the last session*
- 15       **T:**        Idan safha 84  
              *Then page 84*
- 16       **S5:**       ma
- 17 → **T:**        I've  
                  Skut..man yaqraa'?
- Shut up,, who is going to read?*
- 18                  *(Omar is talking to another student)*
- 19       **T:**        Khruj Omar  
              Get out Omar

The teacher in the above example interrupts the students many times (L2,4,13, 17). In the first line, the teacher interrupts the student before he finishes his turn, asking him what he wants to say. In line 3, the teacher cuts off the student and tells him to postpone his request. After silencing the student, the teacher initiates another move in which she asks the students if they have any questions to ask (L6). The teacher could

have answered the student's request in L2, before moving on to asking the students if they have any questions. The teacher's move shows her authority to reject her students' requests, even at a time when it would be appropriate to deal with them. In line 13, the teacher interrupts the student who tries to tell her that page 81 has already been studied. In line 17, another student is cut off before completing his turn. The teacher uses the imperative *skut* to silence him. In line 19 Omar is expelled from the classroom because he is caught talking to another student.

Although the student is right in turn 12, the teacher does not give him a chance to finish his turn. She forces him to read page 81 which has already been studied. In line 14, the student emphasises the fact that page 81 has been studied in the previous session. The teacher, by this time, has realised the fact and asks them to read page 84. Here we observe that although the student is correct, the teacher gives him no chance to finish his turn. This shows how teachers, sometimes, undermine their students and give them no chance to express themselves.

It is clear from this analysis that the teacher controls the classroom practice. Interruption is seen in this context as a dimension of power and dominance. This dominance stems from the fact that the students are regarded as empty vessels with nothing to offer and, therefore, they can be interrupted and made to end their turns whenever the teacher sees that to be necessary.

An examination of the data shows that the participants are forced to abandon their turns. This dominating interruption typically occurs when students provide wrong answers or hold long turns. The following examples will provide further illustration:

(3)

**(Lesson 14 lines 1-31)**

In this lesson the teacher talks about the family of Najib, their manners, way of living and their relation to each other. The message the teacher tries to convey is that the family of Najib can be regarded as an ideal family.

1     -   T     Kam 'adad afraad 'aa'ilat Najib?

*How many members does the family of Najib consist of?*

- 2 S 'adaduhum sitatun  
*Six members*
- 3 T Man rab hadihi al-aussra? Nabil?  
*Who is the father of the family? Nabil?*
- 4 S2 Abdessalem wa abdu  
*Abdessalem and abdu*
- 5 → T lilaussra rabun waahid, man  
rab al-aussra, Hassan?  
*There is only one father to the family, who is he? Hassan?*
- 6 S2 Abdessalem  
*Abdessalem*
- 7 T Jayid wa man hiya rabat al-aussra? Nawal?  
*Good, who is the mother of the family? Nawal?*
- 8 S3 Rabat al-aussra hiya Khadija wa 'omroha  
*Khadija is the mother of the family*
- 9 → T Laa laa nti mash  
hna. rabat al-aussra na'ni um al-aussra.  
*No no, you are not with us. We are talking about the mother of the family.*
- 10 S4 Fatuma  
*Fatuma*
- 11 T Hassanana, man hiya Khadija?  
*Good, then who is Khadija?*
- 12 S4 Hiya bint al-aussra  
*She is the daughter of the family*
- 13 T Ta'ni ahad afraad al-aussra  
*Do you mean a member of the family?*
- 14 S4 Na'am, wa hunaaka  
*Yes, and there is*
- 15 → T Man ya'od afraad aakhariin? Bad'an bi albanaat  
tuma alawlaad.

*Who is going to name the other members of the*

*family, starting with the girls then the boys*

- 16 S5 Hunaka Najib, Mohamed and Kh  
*There is Najib, Mohamed*
- 17 → T Albanaat tuma alawlaad yaa Khalid  
*State the girls and then the boys*
- 18 S5 Khadija, Hanan, Najib tuma Mohamed  
*Khadija, Hanan, Najib and Mohamed*
- 19 T Mada ya'mal Najib?  
*What does Najib do?*
- 20 S6 Huwa mutaqaa'id  
*He is retired*
- 21 → T Laa yabalid. Alab huwa al mutaqaa'id  
li'ana sinu akbar. Amaa Najib falaazaal shaaban. Mada ya'mal  
Najib? Hanan?  
*No stupid, the father is retired because he is old, but Najib is still  
young. What does Najib do? Hanan?*
- 22 S7 Najib yadrosso fi al jaami'a  
*Najib is studying at the university*
- 23 T Mada yadrosso fi al jaami'a?  
*What does he study at the university?*
- 24 S7 Al 'olum al ijtimaa'iya wa Mohamed  
*Sociology and Mohamed*
- 25 → T Laa tossrii'ii,  
nahnu natakalam 'an Najib al'aan  
*Do not jump we are  
talking about Najib now.  
(Students laugh loudly)*
- 26 S7 Silence
- 27 T Wa mada taf' al Khadija?  
*What does Khadija do?*
- 28 S8 Hiya mudarissat jughraafia  
*She is a teacher of geography*

- 29 T Jayid, tuddariss al jughrafiya, wa mada ta'mal Hanan?  
*Good, she teaches geography and what is Hanan doing?*
- 30 S8 Hiya  
*She is* {
- 31 → T Shkun gal lak tkalam, faqat takalamt  
*Who told you to speak. You have just spoken.*  
( and the conversation goes on)

The teacher forces the student to withdraw his turn because the latter responds incorrectly to the teacher's question (L4). The teacher, however, takes the floor and asks another student (L5). Again, in L20 the teacher cuts off Najm because he is not able to provide the correct answer. The teacher accuses him of not concentrating on the lesson. In each turn, the teacher asks a question. This conveys the idea that he is the questioner and his students are responders. Note that when students fail to answer the teacher's question, the teacher interrupts the students and forces them to end their turns (L 14,16, 21). In this extract, like others, the teacher is aggressive. In line 21, the student is told he is stupid because he is not able to provide the exact answer. So the students are not only interrupted in this extract, but are also humiliated. If Tannen (1994), as has been indicated earlier, considers interruption a device of solidarity and participation, then this example, however, suggests the reverse. Interruption is a device of power and dominance because it does not encourage the students to express themselves and participate in the ongoing interaction. In line 31, student 8 is silenced for daring to offer more than one answer. It has been also remarked that, in many cases, after the teachers' interruption of their students, the latter keep silent. This supports Itakura's (2001) claim that interruption can be controlling when the participants are forced to silence. In our data there are 16 cases of silence which are caused by the teachers' interruptive behaviours. Silencing students happens either when students provide wrong answers or take long turns. It should be also emphasised that these students keep silent in the remainder of that lesson. Having been silenced once, they don't dare speak again. We notice in extract 4, for instance, that student 2, who was active before the interruption occurs, remained silent throughout the rest of the lesson. The same happens for student 7 in extract 4. The teacher appears to ignore them and selects other students to take turns. It is remarked that at least 2 students are silenced per lesson. This has an impact

on the students' contribution. Some students would prefer to keep quiet than to participate. This act of silencing students is viewed by students to be humiliating.

The teacher in the above example not only violates the speakers' right to complete their turns, but also humiliates them. The teacher's practice stems from her social role, which grants her the power to behave as she did in the above extracts.

The following extract will explicitly show that interruption is a device of asymmetry and dominance within the Moroccan classrooms.

(4)

(Lesson 15 lines 1-23)

- |    |      |   |
|----|------|---|
| 1  | T    | Man yossanif li anwaa' al hayawaanaat<br><i>Who can categorise for me the genre of animals?</i>   |
| 2  | S1   | Hunaaka naw'ayni mina al hayawaanaat<br><i>There are two types of animals</i>   |
| 3  | T    | Mahuma?<br><i>What are they?</i>  |
| 4  | → S1 | Hunaaka al hayawaanaat al 'aliifa wa al mutawahisha<br><i>There are wild and tame animals</i>   |
| 5  | T    | <u>Fin</u> ta'ish al hayawaanaat al 'aliifa?<br><i>Where do tame animals live?</i>  |
| 6  | S2   | <u>Fi al ghaaba</u> wa hiya<br><i>In the forest and it is</i>   |
| 7  | → T  | Hal ta'rif al farq bayna al 'alif<br>wa al mutawahish?<br><i>Do you know the difference<br/>         between tame and wild animals?</i> |
| 8  | S2   | (Silence)   |
| 9  | T    | Karim <u>ashnu al farq</u><br><i>What is the difference Karim?</i>  |
| 10 | S3   | Al 'aliif man ya'ish ma'ana wa al mutawahish man ya'ish fi  |

alghabati

*Tame animals live with us but wild animals live in the forest.*

- 11 T Man ya'ti bimal 'an dalik?  
*Who is going to give us an example of that?*
- 12 S4 Al qita ta'isho ma'ana.  
*The cat lives with us*
- 13 → T Limada ta'isho alhayawaanaat ma'ana?  
*Why do the animals live with us?*
- 14 S5 Li anaha aliifa wa tajido  
*Because it is tame animals most*
- 15 → T Na'lam anaha aliifa limada  
had howa asso'aal...Omar?  
*We know that it is tame animals. Why?  
this is the question ...Omar?*
- 16 S6 Li'anaha laa tadoro bi al inssaan  
*Because they do no harm to humans*
- 17 T Jayid li anaha laa tulhiqo adrar bi al inssaan. Idan limada  
lanaqbalu al hayawaanaat alwahshiya ma'ana?  
*Good because they do no harm to us. Then why do we not accept  
wild animals to live with us?*
- 18 S6 Li anaha wahshiya  
*Because it is wild animals*
- 19 T Mahowa wajibna nahwa alhayawaanaat?  
*What is our responsibility towards the animals?*
- 20 S7 An nahtama bihm wa nahtarimhum  
*We look after them and respect them*
- 21 T Limada yajibu alihtimaamo bihm  
*Why do we have to look after them?*
- 22 S8 li'anahum mitlana  
*Because they are like us*

23 S9

Layssa mitlana li

*No they are not like us because*

24 → T

khalihajib 'ani assu'aal, ausskut, takalam MahfoudGive him a chance toanswer the question, shut up...come on Mahfoud.

Note that in line 6 the student is cut off in the middle of his turn by the teacher who asks him *Hal ta'rif al farq bayna al aliif wa a mutawahish?* (Do you know the difference between tame and wild animals?). The violation of the student's turn is a result of the student's unsuccessful attempt to provide a correct answer. Although the teacher tries to make the question clearer L7, the student keeps silent after being interrupted. In line 15, another student is cut off in the middle of his turn simply because he is not able to provide an accurate answer to the teacher. The teacher nominates student 6 to answer the question. Moreover, in L23 and 24 the teacher interrupts the student who in turn interrupts his classmate. What is striking in this example is that the teacher, besides interrupting, warns the student to keep silent *khalih yujib ani.....ausskut*, 'Give him a chance...shut up'. This is the second time that the teacher orders his students to be silent. Although it sounds as if the teacher tries to give a chance to another student, the previous examples have shown that the teacher silenced more than one student.

In this example, the teacher interrupts his students five times while the latter do not cut him off once. This clearly shows the teacher's dominance and control over the classroom interaction. He has the right to distribute turns (L23, 24) and interrupts students whenever he likes. Here is another example for more details.

(5)

(Lesson 16, lines 1-11)

1 T: Fi ayyati qaara yujado al-maghrib?

*To which continent does Morocco belong to?*



- 2 S1: Fi alqaara al-afriqiya  
*Morocco is in Africa*
- 3 T: Mada yahudo al-maghrif mina ashamal?  
*What borders Morocco from the North?*
- 4 S2: Al bahro al-abyad  
*Mediterranean Sea*
- 5 T: Ashnu aqrab balad min shamal al-maghrif?  
*What is the nearest country to Northern Morocco?*
- 6 S3: Al-jazaa'ir wa  
*Algeria and*
- 7 T: → Al-jazaa'ir tujado fi sharqi al-maghrif, man yajib?  
*Algeria is located in Eastern Morocco*
- 8 S4: Franssa wa rubbama  
*France or maybe*
- 9 T: → laa mash sahiih, qult aqrab balad ila shamaali al-maghrif?.....Nadim?  
*Not correct, I said the nearest country to the North of Morocco.....Nadim?*
- 10 S5: Spania  
*Spain*
- 11 T: Hassanana, Ispania hiya aqrab bald ila shamaali al-maghrif.  
*Good, Spain is the closest county to Northern Morocco*

This extract demonstrates once again the teacher's successful attempt to interrupt the students and stop them from completing their turns. In line 7 the student is not given a chance to complete his turn. The teacher interrupts him because his answer is wrong. The same scene occurs again in line 9, when a student is cut off before finishing his turn. The students' turns in line 7 and 9 are interrupted and dominated by the teacher. This is what we refer to at the beginning of this section as *dominating interruption*.

What attracts our attention from the above extracts is that although the students are interrupted and humiliated several times, there is no complaint on their part about the teachers' interruptive behaviours. This situation is unlike political interaction or

interviews, in which participants complain about being interrupted by others. In their analysis of an interview with Margaret Thatcher, Bull and Mayer (1988) remarked that the interviewee complains about being cut off or interrupted by the interviewer, using expressions such as “May I just finish”, “let me finish ....” In the classroom, however, these expressions of complaint are not heard. This is attributed to the students’ perceived lack of rights to complain against their teachers’ interruption.

The teacher also uses sarcastic phrases after each interruption. This is a good indicator of the speaker’s power and control within the classroom. After interruptions, the teacher often denigrates her students using lexical items, which discourage them, e.g. *balid* ‘stupid’. Here are other examples:

(6)

(Lesson 17, lines 1-21)

- |   |     |  |
|---|-----|--|
| 1 | T:  | Alyawm sanatakalm ‘an Ahmed Shawki, man howa?<br><i>Today, we will talk about Ahmed Shawki, who is he?</i> |
| 2 | S1: | Howa kaatib wa shaa’ir ma’ruf.<br><i>He is a famous writer and poet</i>                                    |
| 3 | T:  | <u>Fin tawlad</u> Shawki?<br><i>Where was Shawki born?</i>   |
| 4 | S2: | <u>Tawlad fi</u> al-qaahira<br><i>Was born in Cairo</i>  |
| 5 | T:  | Ayna tujad al-qaahira?<br><i>Where about is Cairo?</i>   |
| 6 | S3: | Tujad fi tunas<br><i>It is in Tunisia</i>  |
| 7 | T:  | <u>Mat’akad?</u><br><i>Are you sure?</i>   |
| 8 | S3: | Na’am ya austad qara’toha<br><i>Yes teacher, I read it.</i>  |
| 9 | T:  | <u>Skut ya Mughafal</u><br><i>Shut up you stupid</i>   |

- 10 S: Silence
- 11 T: Ayna tujad al-qaahira? Man?mmn...Nadia?  
*Where about is Cairo? Who? mmn...Nadia?*
- 12 S4: Fi massar  
*In Egypt*
- 13 T: Jayid, al-qaahira tujad fi massar. Idan ayna darassa Shawki wa mada darassa?  
*Good, Cairo is in Egypt. Then where does Shawki study? And what did he study?*
- 15 S5: Darassa al-qaanun fi franssa.  
*He studied law in France*
- 16 T: Sahiih, mada 'amila ba'da roju'ih?  
*True, what did he do after his return?*
- 17 S5: Sbah austad fi  
*He becomes a teacher in*
- 18 → T: Man qal lak hada?...fham 'anass awalan, irfa' yadak tuma jib..man yujib?  
*Who told you that, understand the text first, raise your hand, then answer. Who answers?*  
(students are silent)
- 19 T: Rachid?  
*Rachid?*
- 20 S6: Asbaha shaa'iran fi alqassar.  
*He becomes a poet in the palace*
- 21 T: Jayid, asbaha shaa'ira alqassar.  
*Good, he becomes a palace poet*

The first thing to be noted from this interaction is that it is a question/answer based interaction. The teacher asks almost all questions to which students provide answers. Students get little reward for their right answers, but can not escape being scolded when they get it wrong. In line 13 the teacher praises the student for her right answer. The teacher's praise is quite encouraging and motivating. However, she does

not maintain this discipline throughout her lesson. In line 9 she interrupts the student using degrading Arabic words *mughafal*, 'stupid'. As a consequence of this, students keep silent and won't answer the teacher's next questions. The teacher, however, resorts to nomination as a way to keep the interaction going. This time, Nadia is nominated to answer the question (L 11). Nadia's correct answer is praised by the teacher. But the teacher's praising act seems not to last long. In line 17 she cuts off student 5 and tells him to raise his hand before speaking. This indicates that students are not allowed to speak unless they are permitted to do so. As a result, the students keep silent and the teacher uses the same strategy as in line 11. This time she nominates Rachid (L19) who successfully answers her question.

This extract, like the previous ones, shows clearly that the teacher's interruptive behaviour silences the students. Also it portrays the teacher's and students' roles within the classroom. Almost all questions are asked by the teacher and answered by the students. The most noticeable features of this extract is that the teacher's feedback to the students' incorrect answers is not encouraging. Students are cut off and scolded for providing incorrect answers. As a consequence of this, students keep silent.

In section 6.5, example 7, the teacher interrupts her students several times. In line 4 Najib answers the teacher's question correctly and goes further in order to provide further information but the teacher cuts him off and tells him to stick to the question. Najib's motivation and willingness for participation and contribution to the classroom interaction comes to an end after being interrupted. In line 6, a student fails to state the quarters chronologically. As a result, he is abruptly interrupted and his turn is ended (L7). In line 16, a student is interrupted because he goes further to justify his answer. The teacher is not happy with the student providing further information. It is noteworthy in these examples that the teacher interrupts the students not because their answers are incorrect but because they go further to provide explanations and further information. This, once again, shows the teacher's authority and the students' limited role within the classroom. They are not allowed to express themselves as they wish. The students in this extract are victims of their extra information and explanation. Instead of encouraging and praising them, the teacher cuts them off and abruptly ends their turns.

Sometimes, the teacher interrupts her students without even commenting on their incorrect answers. The following extract demonstrates this strategy.

(7)

(Lesson 17, line 30-54)

- 30 T Ma alfark bina Sawki and Leiyla Abu Zeid?  
*What is the difference between Shawky and Leiyla abu Zeid?*
- 31 S1 Shawki missri wa Leiyla maghribiya  
*Shawki is Egyptian and Leiyla Moroccan*
- 32 T Ma alfarq kadalik?  
*What is also the difference?*
- 33 S2 Leiyla kaatiba wa Shawki shaa'ir  
*Leiyla is a writer and Shawki is a poet*
- 34 T Jayid, Shawki shaa'ir wa Leiyla kaatiba? Mada aakhar?  
*Good, Shawki is a poet and Leiyla a writer. What else?*
- 35 S3 Leiyla sahafiya  
*Leiyla is a journalist*
- 36 T Naam, ayna darast Leiyla?  
*True, where did Leiyla study?*
- 37 S4 Fi franssa wa kada  
In France and also
- 38 → T } hal darast Leiyla fi faranssa?  
} *Did Leiyla study in France?*
- 39 S4 Na'am tuma dahabat  
*Yes and then she goes*
- 40 → T } Fatiha, ayna darassat Leiyla?  
} *Fatiha, where did Leila study?*
- 41 S5 Darassat fi Jaami'at attikssaas  
*She studied at the University of Texas*
- 42 T Mahiya mo'alafaatuha?  
*What are her publications?*
- 43 S6 "Raju' ila tofula"

“Return to childhood”

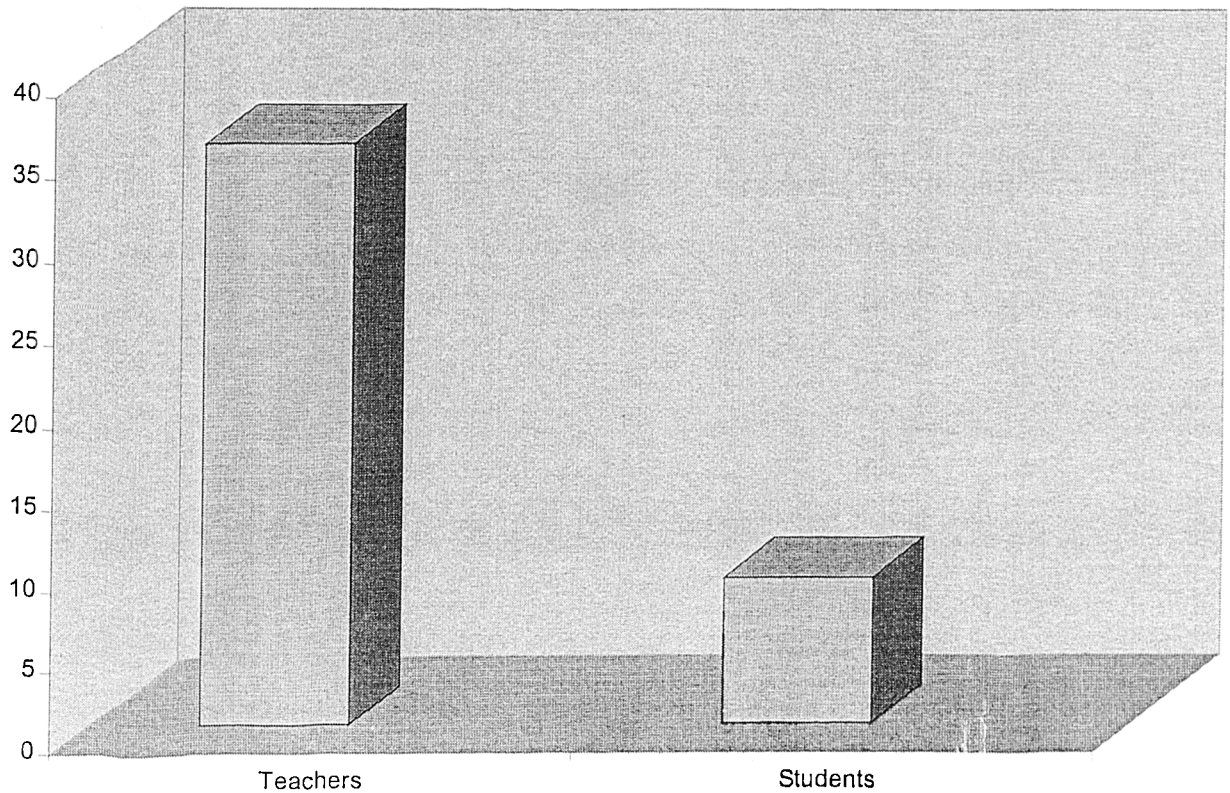
- 44 T Ma madmun hada al-kitaab?  
*What is this book about?*
- 45 S7 ‘an amrica wa alhayyaat  
*About America and life*
- 46 T Laa, man? Najib?  
→ No, who? Najib?
- 47 S8 Yatahadat ‘an siirat Leiyla wa tofulatiha  
*It talks about Leiyla’s childhood*
- 48 T Ayna ‘amilat Leiyla awalan?  
*Where did Leiyla work first?*
- 49 S5 Fi amrica wa ba’da  
*In America and after*
- 50 T Ayna ‘amilat Leiyla?  
→ *Where did Leiyla work?*
- (Silence)
- 51 T Ayna ‘amilat ba’da takharujiha min jaami’at Mohamed  
alkhaamis? Said?  
*Where did she work after graduating from the University of  
Mohamed the fifth? Said?*
- 52 S9 Fi atalfaza alwataniya  
*In national television.*
- 53 T Sahiih  
*True*

In this extract, the students are given a text about Leiyla Abu Zeid, a Moroccan writer and a journalist. The teacher wants them to compare Shawky to Leiyla. She begins by asking them comparative questions. In line 30 the students are asked the main differences between the two writers. The students first recognise that the two have different nationalities and while Shawki is a poet and a writer, Leiyla is a writer and a journalist. The students’ answers to the teacher’s questions were correct. However, things start going wrong in line 37 when student 4 provides an incorrect answer. The teacher immediately interrupts him (L38) and repeats the same question. In line 39 the

same student sticks with his answer. The teacher interrupts him again (L40) and directs the same question to Fatiha. The teacher's nomination of Fatiha is used in order to silence student 4 who keeps attempting to answer the teacher's questions. Fatiha provides the correct answer (L41). In line 45 Student 7 is interrupted after he fails to answer correctly his teacher's question. The teacher disagrees with the student, using the negation *La* 'no' (L46). In line 49 student 5 was unsuccessful in answering the teacher's question. The teacher interrupts him and directs the same question to the whole class, who welcome the teacher's question with an overwhelming silence. In line 51 the teacher adds more information to make her question clearer and nominates Said, who manages to provide the correct answer (L52).

Although the teacher avoids using degrading language and sarcastic tone, as we have seen in the previous extracts, she couldn't avoid interruption all together. It is noticeable in this extract that the teacher does not only interrupt the students, but ignores their answers as well. Her lack of comments and feedback to the students' incorrect answers makes students persist with their answers (e.g. student 4, L38). Part of the teacher's strategy in this extract is to interrupt students who incorrectly answer her questions and direct the same question to other students (L46, 51, 52). Similarly to the previous extracts, the teacher's interruption generates silence among students.

The 10 hours transcribed data contains 45 interruptions. Teachers made 36 interruptions, while students only interrupt 9 times. This means that nearly 97% of the interruptions are made by the teachers. Dominating interruption is the most prevalent type of interruption made by the teachers. The following chart represents the frequency of the teachers and students' interruption in the classroom.



**Figure 7:** The frequency of the teachers and the students' interruptions in the classroom

### ***7.5 Discussion and comments***

Throughout this chapter, we have argued that interruption is defined in various ways, reflecting the perspectives of different disciplines. It was also highlighted that there are two types of interruption: dominating and non-dominating interruption. The focus, however, is on how interruption reflects power relations among participants. Our discussion of other views of interruption has helped us to explain that interruption is an aspect of asymmetry. It is interpreted as such because it violates the turn-taking organisation asserted by Sacks et al. (1974).

It follows from the foregoing analysis that interruption has a great impact on the students' participation in the classroom. Most of the interruptions are a result of the students' wrong answers (example 1). Nevertheless, the teachers' way of interrupting their students seems to be embarrassing and degrading. Example 1 and 2 show us that



the teacher not only interrupts the students who provide wrong answers, but also scolds them for doing so. Consequently, there is a pause in the conversation. The students remain silent for the remainder of the lesson. Teachers switch to MA to express their anger and unhappiness with the students' answers. Switching from SA to MA is occurs most frequently when teachers scold their students or interrupt them. This is revealing in many ways. Firstly, teachers resort to MA to show their deep frustration and disappointment with the students' answers. Secondly, switching to MA is a strong signal that the teacher is not happy with their answers. So speaking in MA is more direct than in SA and thus teachers are more impolite. Overall, teachers address the students in the language with which they are most familiar. As a Moroccan, the message would be the most unambiguous in MA than in SA.

This chapter, together with the previous chapters, has provided clues for answering this question: how do teachers dominate the classroom practice? The examination of the interruption within the Moroccan classroom indicates that interruptive behaviour hinders interactions. Although students show their willingness to express themselves and contribute to the ongoing interaction, their teachers' interruptive behaviours make them prefer silence to interaction. This result contradicts Tannen's (1994) claim that interruption increases interaction and encourages solidarity among the speakers. Our findings, rather, support the research which regards interruption as an aspect of asymmetry and dominance.

Furthermore, the descriptive statistical analysis has shown that 97% of the interruptions are by the teachers, while only 3% of the interruptions are by the students. This suggests that the teachers dominate the flow of the interaction.

Teachers, as some of them commented, have the full right to interrupt their students if they respond incorrectly. Teachers, however, should be aware of their behaviours in their classrooms and the impact of these behaviours on the educational process. In the previous chapters, we discussed the IRF patterns and its impact on the interaction, and also highlighted that the pattern of questioning has powerful implications in terms of both lesson content and discourse structure. It was noted that all interactions are teacher-initiated; this leads students to believe that teachers have the

right to speak at any time, while students can only speak when they are told to do so by the teacher. The same story can be repeated when dealing with interruption. Students believe that part of the teacher's role is to interrupt them at any time. This belief, again, increases the imbalance of power within the classroom (see section 7.5.1). It puts the teacher at the top of the classroom hierarchy.

### 7.5.1 Interruption and students' perspectives

Although this research does not present the students' views about the classroom practice in much detail, it is useful to refer to a short conversation that was held, during the fieldwork, with a few students. Interruption and other classroom practices were the topic of this short conversation. Most obviously, the students referred to interruption as an embarrassing and discouraging behaviour. They associated interruption with students' failure to provide correct answers or useful talk. One of the students, Nabil, said, "when the teacher interrupts me, I realise that I am responding incorrectly. I look down on myself and wish I had never taken that turn". The last part of Nabil's quotation is telling here because it highlights the consequences of the interruption within the classrooms. One of these consequences, as can be inferred from the above quotation, is the discouragement of the students from taking further part in what is going on in the classroom.

The students consider interruptions part of the teachers' social role. "Part of his (the teacher's) job is to make sure that students are answering his questions correctly", Khalid said. Again, this touches upon the distribution of roles within the classroom. Students view themselves as respondents and their teachers as questioners. This is the general belief among the students and teachers. This prevalent belief in the Moroccan classroom is part of the Moroccan social beliefs.

Hence, the idea to be conveyed from the above discussion is that interruption is part of the teachers' role. It is reinforced by the norms of the society as well as the curriculum system, which grants the teacher this power. Here, the point should be made that the curriculum has power over the teachers. The teachers, on many occasions

during the interview period, claimed that the curriculum constrains their practices. The impression was gained that teachers themselves are under pressure, as they themselves experience the exertion of power by their superiors. This would indicate that the exertion of power is a socially structured behaviour.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

It has been argued in this chapter that interruption is a dimension of power and dominance. Various definitions of interruption were presented, which stem from different perspectives. It has been regarded by some scholars that interruption is a means of increasing the efficiency of the interaction; and by others a device of asymmetry and dominance. Our findings have shown that the teachers' interruptive behaviours within the Moroccan classrooms reflect this dominance. The quantitative and qualitative analysis has shown that the frequency of the forced interruption in the data is quite high compared to other types of interruption discussed in the bulk of this chapter. It is also concluded that students hardly ever interrupt their teachers. They do, however, interrupt each other. It is also suggested that interruption is part of the teachers' social role. This, to some extent, indicates that classroom practice and social practice are interwoven.

## CHAPTER EIGHT<sup>16</sup>.

### *The social and cultural dimensions of classroom practice.*

#### **8.0 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to specify the nature of the social practice of which the classroom discourse practice is a part. This is the basis for explaining why the discourse practice (see chapter 5,6,7) is as it is. The second objective is to spell out more clearly aspects of the third dimension of Fairclough's framework that I provided in the first chapter: discourse as social practice.

In order to bridge the gap between linguistic analysis and social analysis, we have chosen to interview the participants involved in the data. It is hoped that the interview analysis will enable us to explain the previous findings and answer the previous questions of why teachers seem to dominate the classroom discursive practices, and how classroom discursive practices contribute to reproducing society (social identities, social relations, system of knowledge and belief). Answering these questions necessitates looking at the wider social context of which the classroom is a part. To do so, we shall concentrate on what Barnes (1976) calls teachers' and students' frames of reference. But, before answering the above questions, we shall remind our readers of the findings in the previous chapters to refresh their minds and establish a solid background for the coming discussion.

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<sup>16</sup> Material from this chapter was presented at 'Text and Talk International conference' at the University of Ghent, Belgium (14<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> August, 2000)

In chapter three, we highlighted the notion 'power' and showed how it has different definitions, which stem from different perspectives. We concluded that not all definitions are applicable to the classroom context. In this study, an examination of the covert use of power seemed most appropriate. Power is hidden in discourse and is often invisible to people (Fairclough 2001). In the fifth chapter we described the structure of the classroom discourse in our data and concluded that teachers do dominate classroom practices. They control the structure of discourse and interaction patterns. They initiate talk, control topics and distribute turns.

In the sixth chapter we focused on the adjacency pair question/answer. We concluded that the use of different genres of questions do signal the dominance of the teacher over the classroom practice. The seventh chapter tackles the notion of interruption and concludes that teachers interrupt students more than vice versa. It also concludes that interruption is an indicator of power and dominance since it prevents students from finishing their turns and also from expressing themselves.

Based on the above descriptions and on our discussion in the previous chapters, we decided to share our thoughts with the participants themselves. We have done so for two main reasons. Firstly, the aim is to be as objective as possible in the analysis of the data. Secondly, following Fairclough and Chouliaraki's (1999) call for a transdisciplinary approach, we decided to involve the participants in the research to share their views about classroom practice. The only way to do so was to invite them for an interview, which helped to stimulate responses about classroom practice. Most of the questions were open questions (see the methodology chapter for more details about the participants). The interviewees' answers are analysed and represented in the form of diagrams.

## **8.1. *The interview analysis***

### **8.1.1 Introduction**

This section presents analysis of the interviews of Moroccan teachers whose recorded data was transcribed and analysed (see previous chapters). Following

Fairclough's framework, a textual analysis has been conducted in the previous chapters. This textual analysis of the data suggests that the teachers do dominate the classroom practice. We traced this dominance to the social distance between the teachers and students. We also referred to the social and cultural factors that are behind this practice. This, however, does not prevent us from sharing the participants' views about our findings in chapter 5,6,7.

Before we embark on the analysis of the interviews, let us first remind you of the main questions of this research.

1. Does transdisciplinary analysis contribute to our understanding of Moroccan classroom discursive practice?
2. What is the nature of discursive practices within Moroccan classrooms? Do these practices reflect power relations among participants?
3. Do Moroccan social and cultural practices have an impact on classroom practices?

Twenty-two teachers were interviewed over a period of four weeks (see chapter 4 for more details). The analysis of the interviews revealed that the teachers fall into two groups. There is one group self-constituted who said that teachers do dominate the classroom practice. Yet, they reject the idea that they exert power over their students. They trace what is going on in the classroom back to the students' passivity, providing different reasons for their dominance of the practices. The second group, however, reject any ideas that associate classroom practice with power and ignore the view that they dominate classroom practice. They insist on the fact that what is going on in the classroom should not be approached politically. If teachers control the classroom practice, they said, it is because of the teaching and learning pedagogy. Power, for most of them, is needed in order to enhance learning and restore order and discipline. It is an unquestionable part of the classroom discursive practice.

The first group refused to consider what is going on in the classroom practice to be part of social and institutional struggle. For them, there is a big difference between what is academic and political. The argument they put forward is that we talk about

power and ideology only when we have two sides fighting for their own interests. In the classroom, however, both sides should be oriented towards the benefit of their pupils.

Fatima, interviewee, repeats this point of view, when she says:

I know from my experience that the majority of teachers would love to see their students taking part in classroom activities. We have to be cautious not to confuse between what is political and educational.

## 8.1.2 Data analysis

### 8.1.2.1 Results and findings

This section presents a brief summary of the findings of the interview analysis. A detailed discussion of these findings will follow in the coming sections.

#### Question 1: Do you think you control classroom practice?

The interviewees are asked to provide *yes* or *no* answers followed by justifications.

The following diagram presents an answer to the above question:

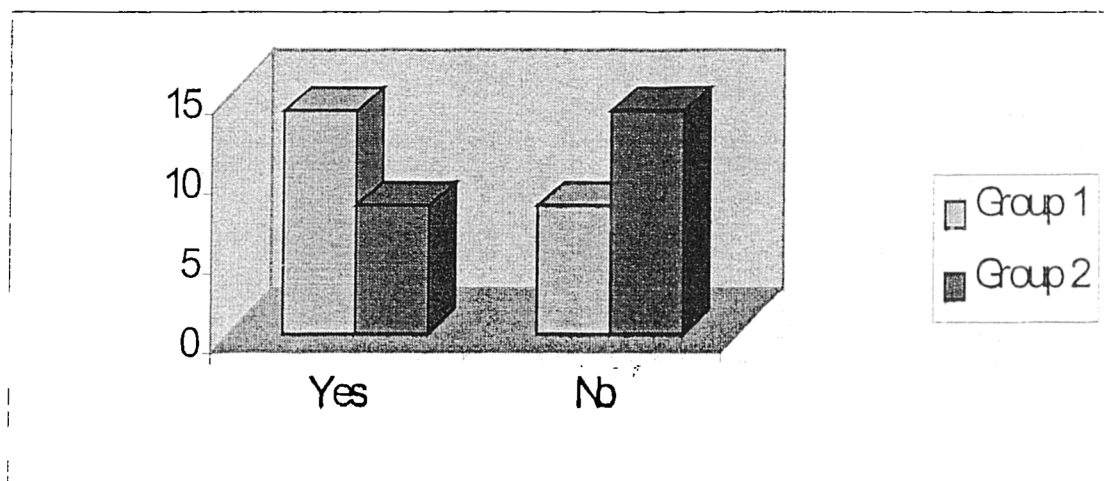
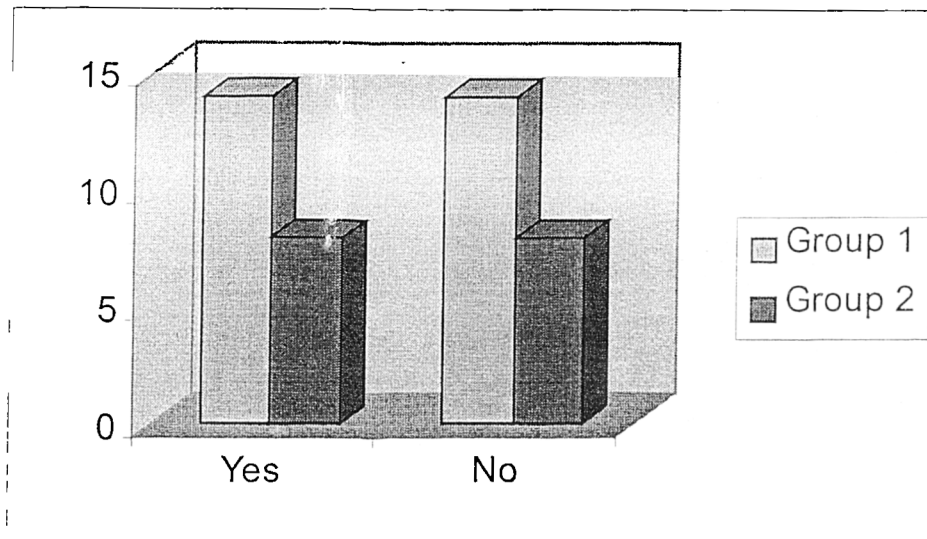


Figure 8 : Do you think you control classroom practice?

This figure reveals that 14 teachers out of 22 said that they control classroom practice. However, they provide several reasons for doing so (see section 8.2.2.3 for more detail). The remainder, which is 8 out of 22, said that they do not control the practice. They also provided various reasons for their classroom practice.

### Question 2: Does unemployment affect classroom practice?

This question was included after several teachers mentioned the impact of unemployment on classroom practice.

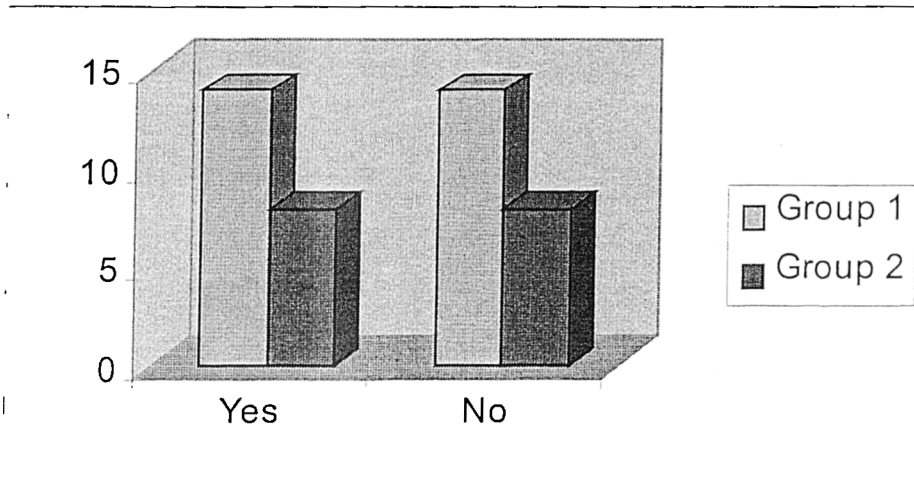


**Figure 9:** Does unemployment affect classroom practice?

This figure shows the same result as table 1. The interviewees provided the same answers as in question 1. 14 teachers out of 22 answer *yes* while the remainder 8 interviewees answer *no*. We will discuss in more detail the teachers' answers to this question in section 8.2.3.3.



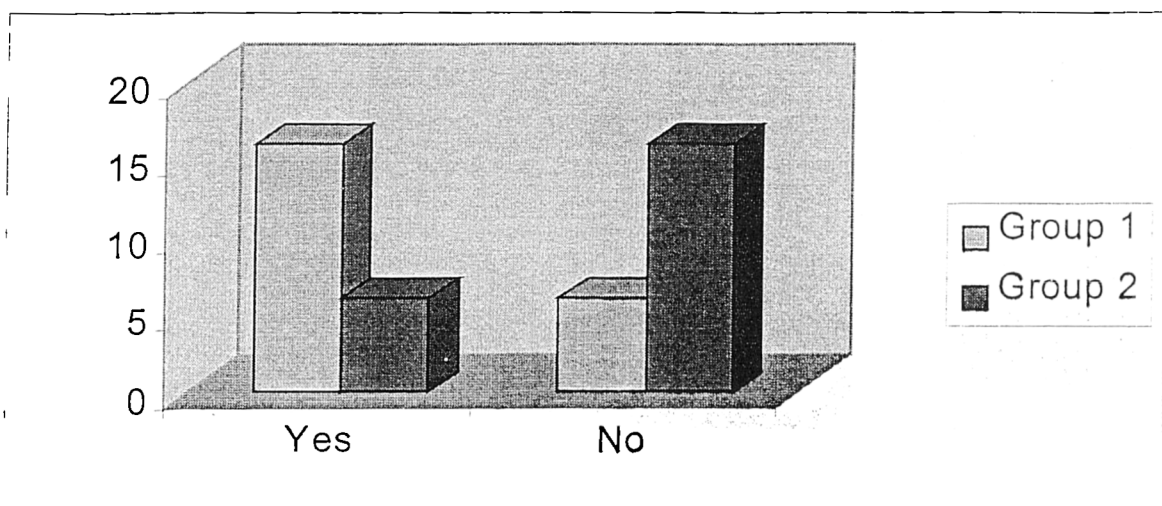
**Question 3:** Does perceived social stratification of students affect classroom practice?



**Figure 10:** Does perceived social stratification of students affect classroom practice?

In their answers to this question, the teachers display the same result as the two above questions. It is notable that there is this degree of consistency in answering the above questions. The teachers have consistent answers to the three questions. This facilitates the task of grouping the teachers into two groups. The first group, 14 teachers out of 22, answers *yes* while the second group, 8 out of 22, answers *no*.

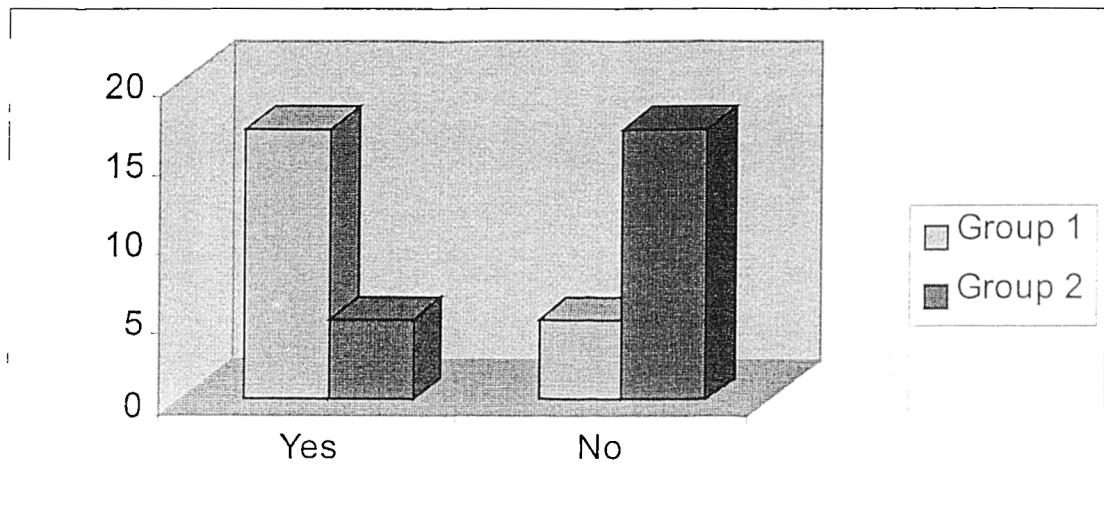
**Question 4:** Does classroom practice shape social practice?



**Figure 11:** Does classroom practice shape social practice?

The majority of the teachers, 16 out of 22, answers *yes* to this question. The remainder, 6 out of 22, answers *no* (for more discussion of this result, see section 8.2.3.5).

**Question 5:** Is interruption an aspect of dominance and asymmetry?



**Figure 12:** Is interruption an aspect of dominance and asymmetry?

This figure shows that the majority of the teachers do not agree that interruption is a device of power and asymmetry. Only 5 out of 22 teachers regard interruption as a device of power and asymmetry. The majority of teachers legitimise interruption and consider it part of their teaching pedagogy (see section 8.2.3.6 for more details).

After interviewing teachers about their classroom practice using indirect questions to stimulate objective responses, the majority of teachers said that they *control* classroom practice but do not exert *power* over their students. The problem seems to arise in defining the term 'power'. Power in Moroccan contexts is always associated with politics. In order to separate or distinguish between political practice and educational practice, teachers refused to use the term *power* and prefer *control*. Here we introduce both terms in Arabic. The term *Kuwa* 'power' is often associated with political leaders and highly ranked people. It is more to do with ideology and politics

than with the academic environment. The term *murakaba* 'control', however, means watching somebody while doing something. Though teachers accept the fact that they control classroom practice, they provide many reasons for doing this. The blame falls on students who are considered non-productive and are dependent on their teachers' efforts, a problem which worries teachers a great deal. Some of the interviewees have already complained about the excessive efforts they have to invest in the classroom. Generally, teachers appear to be blaming students to justify their practices.

Other interviewees, however, refused to talk about power within the classroom. They consider the term *power* a loaded word to be used in classrooms. The difference in roles and names should not be interpreted as power-based difference, they said. Hassan said: "We are teachers and they are our students. So without the difference in roles, we would not talk about classroom practice".

There are other teachers who regard what is going on in the classroom as part of the teacher's main job. For them, students have to listen and contribute only when they are asked to do so. This group of teachers value the idea that the teacher is the most knowledgeable and expert person in the classroom. Students, on the other hand, are weak in terms of knowledge. In general, teachers' discursive practice represents/reflects their general beliefs about classroom practice. Much research has referred to the importance of both teachers and students' beliefs about classroom discourse, e.g. Johnson's (1995) research in British context.

The teachers' theoretical beliefs about learning and teaching are important aspects of classroom interactions. It is the main filter through which they make instructional judgements and decisions. If we understand the nature of teachers' theoretical beliefs, then we can, at least, understand the filter through which they act in the classroom and also understand the type of interaction (Johnson 1995).

Thus, both the teachers and students' classroom practices are part of their social practice. Therefore, the control of the interaction is a normal practice and culturally accepted phenomenon. Both teachers and students' beliefs are instrumental in shaping how they understand and interpret classroom interactions (Johnson 1995).

Having these facts in mind, now, let us consider a more detailed analysis of the above brief results mentioned in section 8.2.2.

#### *8.1.2.2 Question 1: Do you think you control the classroom practice*

This was my main interview question. The analysis of the teachers' answers to this question indicates that, as shown above, the majority, 64%, of teachers felt that they did control classroom practices. They mention different reasons for their practice: pre-school education, family practice, social stratification between students, and unemployment. These reasons are worth reflecting upon, if we are to make sense of the teachers' claim.

### **The cultural context of schooling**

#### *The Quranic school*

The first question to be asked here is how does preschool education in Quranic school affect classroom discourse practice?

Before answering this question, first let us explain what is meant by the Quranic school.

Quranic schooling was held in mosques, or in rooms about the town belonging to them...in which all sit on the ground, the teacher facing his pupils, whose bare pates are all within reach of the switch in his hand. Instead of books or slates, each one is provided with a thin board, narrowed to the lower end...one of the bigger boys being set to teach them to write the alphabet which they have already been taught by ear, the letters are written out on the board for them to copy. The lessons are then read aloud by all together rocking to and fro to keep time. Some delighting in a high key, others jogging in lower tones (Meakin 1902:203 cited in Wagner 1993).

Although the above description of the place and atmosphere of the Quranic school is 100 years old, the same description holds today. Wagner (1993) provides a similar description to that of Meakin (1902). Despite his description of the general atmosphere of the Quranic school, Meakin did not refer to the teacher, *faqih*, the most important character within the school. For those who are not familiar with the term *faqih*, it means a 'wise man'. In its literal sense, the term designates a scholar of Islamic jurisprudence. But, in common Moroccan usage, it generally signifies an individual with a certain level and type of religious knowledge, usually attained through formal religious schooling (Wagner 1987). The *faqih* is a man who has memorised the Quran. You do not need any other qualifications. Some *faqihs*, especially in the countryside, do not even master classical Arabic.

Historically, Quranic schools had no form of government regulation. They were essentially the private enterprise of individual faqihs. One of the key elements of the Quranic pedagogy is memorisation. A person who has memorised the Quran in its entirety is highly respected and considered to possess a blessing or 'baraka' as a carrier of the Quran (Wagner 1987). The act of memorisation is, for many believers, the cornerstone of the faith; the decline in memorisation in contemporary times is considered by some Muslim scholars to be indicative of an erosion of belief. However, according to Wagner (1987), the intensive act of memorisation tends to curb the students' intellectual and moral activity at the precise moment when it should be developing rapidly.

How can the Quranic school affect classroom practices and make teachers responsible for dominating classroom practice? Going back to the above description, one would notice that the faqih - teacher - is considered to be the master, knowledge giver and the Quranic leader. Students, therefore, have to memorise what is given to them. Achievement is entirely based on how many verses a student memorises daily. This act of memorisation contributes to the creation of passive classrooms. Therefore students are hardly seen to participate or contribute to the learning process. On his part, the faqih has to make sure that students memorise the Quran properly without any addition or deletion from the original verses. In some rural areas, understanding what is memorised is not necessary. Students memorise verses without knowing their meanings.

This type of learning and teaching process has a tremendous effect on students' learning when they move on to primary schools. As they are not used to participation and discussions, the interviewees said, students remain silent throughout the class. Teachers put much effort into breaking the silence, but in vain. They (teachers) found themselves unwillingly dominating the classroom practice.

The Quranic school does not only encourage memorisation, but, also values the teaching process of the faqih who has never been trained either how to teach or introduced to educational pedagogy. The consequences of the Quranic school are that it disempowers students and empower the faqih. For students, since their earliest years, the ideal way of learning is to give back what they are taught. They are neither encouraged to be proactive nor to show initiative. Their roles seem to be restricted to memorisation. This kind of thought does not only have an impact on their learning process, once they get into the primary school, but it also puts the teacher in a dominating position which he/she may not want. Thus, the learning process consists of two bodies: firstly, the teacher - the instructor and knowledge giver – and secondly, the students – the receivers. Majid, a young teacher from group 1<sup>17</sup>, expressed the above view clearly and said:

parents need to change their views about the teacher's role. They have to teach or inform their children that we are here to help them, direct them and not to do everything for them. Unfortunately, recently, we do the opposite. We have to grab so many turns and do almost everything while our students keep silent. We have to break this silence by encouraging our students to take part and make them aware of the importance of their contribution within the classroom. We, as well as parents, have to consolidate our efforts in order to overcome this problem.

Majid's words illustrate the fact that some teachers are aware of their practices within the classroom and that they are not happy about these practices. They would like their students to take part and contribute to lessons.

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<sup>17</sup> Group 1 is the group that says that they dominate the classroom practice but blame students for that. The categorization of the interviewees into groups is based on their answers to the given questions.

Besides the Quranic pedagogy, families are held responsible for what is going on in the classroom. Teachers stress the fact that most parents advise their children to listen carefully and never talk. They also warn them of the consequences they may face if they are caught talking or making noise. Parents, themselves, are unaware of the importance of classroom practice. Not only do they consider teachers to be the most knowledgeable, expert and master of their domain, but also, they support unconditionally their practice. Parents' beliefs about classroom practice are derived from Moroccan social and cultural beliefs. A teacher is a prophet for some parents. He deserves to be fully respected and obeyed and therefore his/her authority is not to be questioned.

These social and cultural views exemplified in the parents' teaching contribute to empowering teachers while disempowering students. The dominance and control of the classroom practice by teachers can be interpreted as the outcome of the parents' beliefs. Hence, to change classroom practice and to create equal participation in 'the classroom, we need to raise awareness among parents of the appropriate roles for their children within the classroom and also the role of teachers, not as dominators, but mediators. If we manage to provide training for parents as well as children, then we might end up with a generation fully aware of their role within the classroom. Should we be able to do that, then, creativity and productivity should increase. But, is this enough to create a communicative atmosphere and change the current Moroccan classroom discursive practice? Certainly not, students themselves need to be aware of their behaviour within the classroom. The majority of the interviewees mentioned the fact that students' expectation of each other also affects classroom practice.

#### *Students' expectations of each other*

Students' expectations of each other are seen to be crucial in explaining what is going on in the classroom. Their perceptions of classroom discourse play an important role in the success of the classroom events. This emphasises the fact that the success of any classroom event depends on the students' contribution and response to it. Many teachers also consider sub-culture differences among students and their perception of each other to be an important factor in explaining classroom discourse. In this context,

and to link other research to my analysis, Cazden (1988: 67) said that “one of the most important influences on classroom communication is the participants themselves - their expectations about interactions and their perceptions of each other.” Johnson (1995) asserted that patterns of teacher/ student interactions in classroom lessons are cultural phenomena, not “natural” in any sense.

My interview findings strongly support Cazden's view, indicating that students' expectations of each other play an important role in what is going on in the classroom. According to my experience and considering the teachers' views, I would say that the students' perception of each other affects the classroom practice. Many students do not contribute to classroom interaction for fear they should make a mistake and other students laugh at them (see section 7.4, extract 3, 4) (Wagner 1993: 23). Also teachers' responses to the students' answers generate such a type of behaviour.

These social factors hinder classroom interaction and contribute to granting the teacher more time and space to dominate the classroom practice. Although they explain their dominant practices by referring to the students' beliefs, teachers have omitted to refer to their beliefs about these practices and also to the social structure of which the classroom is a part. Moreover, the students' lack of interaction and teachers' control of the classroom practice are traced back to the fact that students expect each others' contributions to be always correct. From my experience and from the provided data, if a student expresses him/herself incorrectly, the remainder of the class laugh at him/her (see section 7.4, extract 3, 4). This type of behaviour in the classroom hinders classroom interaction and stops students' contributions. Therefore, this supports the teachers' claim that they do dominate classroom practices, but unwillingly. The following section will provide an extensive elaboration on the reason for the students' silence and the teachers' dominance of the classroom practice.

#### *Silence or dominance of the talk.*

Some of the teachers justified their dominance of the classroom discourse by the fact that they couldn't stand silence. Silence means to some of them failure and inertia. It also means to others their incompetence to create an active atmosphere of learning



and teaching (Kwan 2000). Silence in Moroccan classrooms is always associated with failure and is generally considered to be unacceptable.

Shamin (1993), a Pakistani researcher, when questioning teachers about their effective teaching within the classroom, came out with a different response which reflects teachers' beliefs about classroom practice. She quoted the following extract which is teachers talking about silence.

To me silence is a result of teachers' inertia, when silence occurs; it means the teacher is not making the lesson productive enough for students to learn. Silence gives me the sense of failure because in my hidden vision success means being quick and highly efficient.... I speak a lot because deep down I believe that teaching, effective teaching, is imparting knowledge all the time.... consequently, I ...feel that I would not do my duty and would be a failure unless I spoke a lot.

In her comments on the above quotation, Shamin pointed out that the above teachers have a misconception that the effective teacher is one who gets quick responses and also one who talks all the time. It follows from this that the teachers' practice can be explained as a struggle for a successful pedagogy. It is a struggle involving the fighting of silence and the creation an active atmosphere for learning. Therefore, teachers' dominance of talk within the classroom, as far as the teachers are concerned, is due to the prevailing silence. To fill this gap left by students, teachers resort to dominating talk. Nonetheless, the teachers omit to mention those aspects of their practices which are derogating and demeaning to students, and which directly contribute to silencing of students (section 5.4, 7.6).

The converse relationship between the teacher and students' talk is clearly expressed by Najib, group 1, who said:

When there is more talk, there will be less student participation, resulting in long silences in the classroom that will prompt the teacher to talk more.

What has been described here is in fact fairly typical in Moroccan schools. Most of the Moroccan students will not ask the teacher for clarification even if they do not understand what the teacher is saying. When students remain silent, the teacher has no way of knowing whether students have understood or not.

From the teachers' interviews, we identified the following reasons that were behind students' lack of participation:

- 1- The students' low proficiency in standard Arabic.
- 2- Their fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed by their teacher and classmates.
- 3- The teachers' intolerance of silence, which leads to a very short wait time for students to think about the question and come up with an answer.
- 4- The unequal speaking opportunities afforded to each student by the teacher.

It should be noted however that although the teachers mention the students' low standard Arabic proficiency, this is not the main reason for their silence. This is because teachers often explain lessons in Moroccan Arabic and students often use the same dialect in their contributions (Wagner 1993).

The third reason that the first group of interviewees mentioned to justify their denial of controlling the classroom practice is the prevailing unemployment within Moroccan society. In this context, we ask the question how can unemployment have an impact on the classroom practice?

#### *8.1.3.3 Question 2: Does unemployment affect the classroom practice?*

As figure 9 indicates, 82% of the interviewees believe that the rising percentage of unemployment has an effect on classroom practice. According to some teachers, students do not show any interest in their teachers' practice. When they are asked about their lack of interest and involvement in the teaching and learning process, students' answers seem to converge on one response "there are no jobs after graduation". Some of

them dare to express their belief of the unfairness in working hard, now, and still suffering after graduation because of the lack of jobs. Some went further to state cases of friends and brothers who had good results and are, for so long, unemployed. Social matters like this, without doubt, have great impact not only on classroom practices, but also, on other social domains. Again to break the silence created by students' passivity, teachers have to do everything in the classroom. Salah, a newly appointed teacher, expressed his frustration and said "Now I come to understand the effect of other social issues on education. Students' passivity within the classroom and the lack of participation are kinds of protest/ complaint against the shortage of jobs"

Indeed, Salah's words are revealing in this context. Following my experience, students worry a lot about their future. For most of them, education means getting a job after graduation. However, the shortage of jobs and the prevailing unemployment frustrates them and discourages them from showing interest in classroom practice. Students already know that working hard does not have a reward in the near future. The only reward they may have is to listen and allow the teacher to do everything for them.

#### *8.1.3.4 Question 3: Does perceived social stratification of students affect classroom practice?*

Eighty percent of the interviewees, as figure 10 shows, agreed upon the fact that the social structure has an impact on the classroom structure. They point out that students coming from lower social classes always find it hard, although they are clever enough and are proficient in standard Arabic, to express themselves in front of their more upper and middle class classmates. This social stratification between students hinders communication within the classroom. Thus, lower class<sup>18</sup> students expect upper class classmates to perform better than them. These socially constructed beliefs affect classroom practice. It discourages students from taking part in what is going on in the classroom.

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<sup>18</sup> My categorization of classes is based mainly on the students' parents' occupations, income and education.

Teachers, because of the social role they play in teaching and learning, are regarded to be the most powerful, knowledgeable and classroom masters. They are leaders of their own classrooms. One part of their job description is to maintain discipline, install order and keep a social distance between them and their students. The same can be applied to the teachers' relations with their superiors.

Students, for instance, see themselves as recipients while teachers are instructors. The teachers are not only responsible for the teaching and learning within the classroom, but also for maintaining order and establishing discipline inside and outside the classroom. I remember when I was at school, parents complaining to teachers about their children's behaviour at home, and this still happens. They usually ask teachers to punish their children for their bad behaviour at home. The teacher here plays two roles: teaching and punishing. This reinforces absolute power of teachers, and shows how it is ratified by parents.

This distorted image of the teacher's role, which the society has created, has its own side effect on the classroom practice. As a result, a rigidly structured classroom emerges. Though aware of these issues, teachers blame society and never look at their own practice. "It is the society which enhances these thoughts. We and our students are the victims of these thoughts," Salah from group 1 said.

The above discussion leads us to discuss more deeply the relationship between classroom practice and social practice.

#### *8.1.3.5 Question 4: Does classroom practice shape social practice?*

Figure 11 shows that 73% of the interviewees said that social practice shapes and is shaped by classroom practice. Here, we would refer to both students and teachers' practice. When we refer to social practice, we mean the family, community and the whole society. As mentioned earlier, students' community practices, which are brought to the classroom, affect classroom practice. Edward and Mercer (1993) offer a clear explanation of the relationship between the classroom and the society. Both teachers and students' language in the classroom reflects and is reflected by their community and

family practice. The participants' practices are derived from social practice. Hence there is a mutual relationship between classroom practice and social practice. This relation is often invisible to people. The fact that students do not differentiate between practice inside and outside the classroom, is a fact that needs to be discussed within the classroom. In section 1.5.1, we discussed authority within Moroccan families and concluded that the father has the power and authority over the family members. He is the leader of his own family. Leadership is always respected and people show no objection to it. Moreover, obedience to superiors is valued by Moroccans and considered part of the culture. The teacher is the leader and students have to respect him/her in the same way that they respect their fathers.

#### *8.1.3.6 Question 5: is interruption an aspect of dominance and asymmetry?*

73% of the interviewed teachers (see figure 12) rejected the association of interruption with power and dominance. They consider interruption within the classroom as part of the teaching and learning methodology. Teachers, the interviewees reiterated, have to interrupt their students whenever they find it necessary to do so. Nevertheless, they pointed out that teachers have to interfere gently in order to provide help without making the students feel guilty. "Sometimes, even though students' answers are incorrect, we have to encourage them and leave them express themselves instead of ending their turns. This is the only way to empower our students", Lahsan, group 1, said. However, this claim contradicts our findings in chapter 7. We have demonstrated that the teacher's interruption of their students does not enable the latter to express themselves.

On the other hand, other teachers consider students interrupting them to be a violation of classroom rules and regulations. Hamid, from group 2, said "we have to make sure that pupils strictly obey classroom instructions and regulations. When teachers' authority is challenged by students, the learning and teaching process will become too difficult. Students are advised to follow our instructions and remain silent". Here, the teacher associates teaching and learning with silence that has to be kept by students. Hence, when there is a silence, there is no interruption. The fact that students have to keep silent is a good indicator of how teachers dominate classroom practice.

The point to be emphasised again is that *both* teachers and students' beliefs of classroom practice create controlled and dominated practices. Therefore, in order to improve the classroom practice, teachers and students have to participate equally, but this depends on the type of teachers and students we are talking about. It is always the teacher's role to initiate discussions and ask questions.

The question we would like to ask and answer at the same time is how can we reduce these dominant practices, meanwhile encouraging student participation? Designing a pedagogical solution to this problem is not as easy as one might think, especially if we bear in mind that what is going on in the classroom is a matter of beliefs, which are deeply rooted in the Moroccan culture. If anyone is to address these issues, he/she must take into account Moroccan social and cultural values. Hence, a change in students' and teachers' beliefs would be inconceivable without a change in the overall social and cultural beliefs. Teachers, therefore, need to be trained and be aware of their practices. Students must also be taught the importance of their contributions and participation within classrooms. In other words, students need to be empowered to overcome these cultural beliefs, which stand as a barrier against their contributions and endow teachers with more power.

Said, interviewee from group 1, proposed that we have to concentrate on teaching our students how to communicate, ask questions and interrupt. Training students could be an attempt to change their social and cultural beliefs of classroom practice, the interviewee suggested. Here, critical awareness needs to be taken into the classroom. Both the teachers and the students have to be aware of their roles in the classroom. Teachers, for instance, have to be aware that they are actors that need to interact with the audience and not simply perform in front of it. This requires a change not only in their beliefs about classroom practice, but also in their pedagogy of teaching. By changing their pedagogy of teaching, the teachers can at least avoid the clash with their students' perceptions of learning.

*Clashes of two pedagogies:*

The majority of the interviewees traced the dominant practices within the Moroccan classrooms back to the clash between the students' and teachers' pedagogies. This clash, which we referred to earlier as silence against dominance, gives birth to classroom practices dominated by the teacher. Teachers' discourse pedagogy clashes with their students' perception of learning. Students mostly prefer to learn via the modes of memorisation and imitation. Like the *faqih*, they want the teacher to do everything for them. They consider themselves recipients rather than participants in the process of learning and teaching. Thus, this clash of two different views and beliefs gives birth to a different classroom practice. This, as far as the teachers are concerned, explains why teachers dominate classroom practice. The problem is not one of power relations, the teachers said, but a clash of pedagogies, if not beliefs. Though teachers claim to be willing to change their practice and encourage their students to take part, the latter refuse to do so. However, this claim on the part of teachers must be viewed in the context of their interruptive behaviour and questioning methodology, which we examined in chapter 6 and 7.

Even if the teachers' claim is a valid one, changing pedagogies is not straightforward, as illustrated by Shamin's experience in the Pakistani context. Shamin, a trained university teacher, after finishing her research degree in a Western university, decided to introduce a new teaching and learning methodology. She told her students from the outset that she would like to introduce a new methodology for teaching and learning which was different from the traditional one that the students had been exposed to (Shamin 1993). She also told them that the main objective of doing so was to redefine the roles of both teachers and learners. Group and peer work were the main goal of the agenda. At the outset, students were happy and showed no objection to her new methodology. A few weeks later, however, students started showing their frustration and unhappiness with the new methodology. Some of them had already complained about the demands made on them as learners in terms of the amount of assigned readings and the contributions which they were expected to make.

as the learners continued to complain about the lack of time and the heavy demands made on them by the course, I felt terribly exhausted and wondered if, by introducing this new methodology, I was creating psychological barriers to learning rather than facilitating the process which had been my aim in the first place. I also started wondering for how long I could take this 'wear and tear' and whether it was really worth the effort since the learners certainly seemed to prefer the traditional method of teaching and learning (Shamin 1993: 109).

Shamin's failure to establish her innovative methodology and reconstruct the authority structure in the classroom is traced back to the learners' anxiety about the stability of roles and responsibilities in the classroom. Similarly, Moroccan teachers experience the same problem. If the majority of teachers dominate classroom practice, it is because, the interviewees said, of the learners' attitudes and beliefs and also because of the learners' respect of the well-established traditional social order.

The traditional question that many researchers ask is what is the source of the learners' beliefs and assumptions about the classroom practice, their rights and responsibilities as learners in the classroom? Classroom practice is set up in the community. Teachers teach as they were taught and learners learn in the way the community tells them they should expect to be taught.

## **8.2 Discussion**

The above analysis introduces us to two main views. There is a group of teachers who said that they unwillingly control the classroom practice. They refer to many social and cultural factors that are behind their practices. Moreover, they express their eagerness for change and stress the fact that they want their students to be more active and independent. They also welcome the researcher's proposal of reducing the teachers' dominance over classroom practices by encouraging students to take part. In the meantime, however, they deny that they exert power over their students. Teachers' denial of having a part in the power set up is very revealing. It indicates that Moroccan people - and among them teachers - never like to get involved in political matters. As



we have said elsewhere in this chapter, the term power is associated with *makhzan* among Moroccans. However, students are not ready to take over that power. They strongly believe that their role is secondary and that their main contribution to the classroom practices is restricted to listening and keeping silent.

Students' thoughts meet the expectations of our second group of teachers who resist the claim that teachers dominate the classroom practice and that students should be empowered within classrooms. As we have discussed above, this type of teachers do not believe in students' contributions to classroom practices. It is the role of the teacher to provide everything. Students' roles, therefore, are confined to listening to what is said by the teacher. The teacher does most of the talking in giving out information, instructions, reproofs, assessments and his/her talk may be characteristically described as "telling" with the performance given largely from the "front of the stage" where his/her position is a symbol of reinforcement of centrally controlled interaction. The ratio of teacher talk to pupil talk in most of the lessons analysed was of the order of at least 10 to 1, with most pupil replies being short.

Generally, the above analysis revealed that there are two different groups of teachers, which are differentiated on the basis of their beliefs about teaching methodologies. The first group, which consists of the majority of young teachers (among them four young females), acknowledges the problem and expresses their willingness to change their practices. The second group, however, consists of four older teachers and two young female teachers. This group rejected any claim which associated teachers' practices with power and control. The categorisation of the two groups is based on the consistency of the members in answering the questions given. We remarked that age plays an important role in the type of answers provided. The conservative older teachers resist any attempt which suggests an empowerment of students. They show their approval for their traditional way of teaching and learning, which locates the teacher at the front of the classroom. Some of them even legitimise the derogatory language which we described in section 5.4. They consider it part of their teaching pedagogy.

Nonetheless, some of the teachers express their willingness to change some of their practices. They provide the following suggestions to overcome the classroom crisis.

#### *A. Improving questioning techniques*

Research stresses the importance of teaching students that a question may have different answers and that there is no right answer to a question (Kerry 1998). Rahim, a teacher from group 1, said that it is important not to make students feel that they have to come up with the right answer to every question:

This was a very effective way of introducing the idea to the students that they don't have to know the right answer. In fact, often they need to think about the question and provide an answer.

Encouraging students to check their answers with their teachers and their classmates helps students to speak up and contribute to the classroom activities. Moroccan students, based on my experience, are usually very confident about speaking up if they have a prior discussion with their teachers.

Therefore, one way of defeating silence is to encourage group work and discussion between peers. This will encourage the most hesitant and shy students to make valuable contributions.

One of the teachers reported that "group and peer work highly motivated the students to take part in the classroom practice". In order for group and peer work to be effective, teachers must create a friendly atmosphere and establish a good relationship with the students.

#### *B. Establishing a good relationship with the students*

Establishing a good relationship with students is extremely important in creating a conducive learning atmosphere in the classroom. One way of doing this is to involve students in discussion about their feelings about each other (Shamin 1993). The barrier of

power and social role will be removed once teachers establish a good relationship with their students. Treating students as friends, to some extent, is regarded to be effective in creating an atmosphere of discussion and participation. It also triggers students' involvement in classroom practice. Maintaining social distance often discourages the students and enhances silence within the classroom. Rachid, group 1, said

our aim is to make students feel comfortable and free in the classroom. This takes away some of the fear and embarrassment they might suffer as a result of getting the wrong answer or admitting that they don't know the correct answer. When we allow students to have time to think, to check with each other or even to admit publicly that they don't know the answer, without fear, then this will increase students' confidence.

Amina, group 1, also reported that her students participated actively when she introduced group activities and panel discussions. Majid, group 1, refers to the impact of the social and cultural factors on the students' classroom practices.

I think students' expectations of each others and their beliefs of the classroom practice always ruined our plans. 90% of students don't like to talk for fear other students should laugh at them, in case their contribution is not right. How can we expect equal practice while 90% of students prefer silence? Teachers have two choices, either dominate the classroom practice and ignore students or try hard to get the students involved and this will take time.

Then, students' behaviour within the classroom is a result of their social and cultural beliefs. As we mentioned earlier, students' practices within the Quranic school seem to have an impact/ influence on their practices within the government school. The students consider themselves recipients, and their teachers, knowledge givers.

When we asked a teacher about his role in the classroom, he promptly said

It is the teacher's role to initiate discussions and ask questions in order to make sure that students comprehend what he/she is delivering. When we talk about equal participation, we do not mean something like 50% each, but generally, students should be encouraged to participate.

The interviewees rejected the idea that the teacher has to do everything. “Spoon-feeding should not exist in our classrooms. We have to teach our students how to rely on themselves.” Saaid said.

However, the image of teachers is always there. They are leaders and students do believe in their leadership. This belief is a part of the Moroccan and Arab culture. Some even compare teachers to prophets. In this respect, Najib, group 2, said

I still remember something from my early school days, and we still do, by the way, whatever the teacher wants and does. He is the first to issue judgement. He has power. For students to believe that language is a power, this is right. Teachers need this power.

When Najib and other interviewees are asked about power as a means of hindering communication, they strongly show their opposition. “That is not true,” they said. Being powerful in the classroom does not mean being a dictator. There are limits for discussions and contributions.

Power is limits that is our message to students. A successful teacher is he or she who uses power in its right place and in the right way. We do not and should not interpret classroom practice as a social and institutional struggle. All classroom practices should be discussed from the teaching and learning perspective (Abdesalam, group 2)

Another teacher went on to say that teachers are responsible for carrying out what they are told to do. He carried on saying that syllabuses have to be respected and units must be completed in specific times. The fact of following these academic pedagogies does not mean exerting power over students.

From the above discussion, one might understand that the term “power”, as we introduced in the second chapter, has different definitions and meanings. According to our interviewees, power means limits. Although the interviewees try to deny the political side of the term power, their definition is significant in so many ways. It draws two lines: The teachers’ and students’ limits. However, these limits are parts of the Moroccan society. Students should observe their limits and act accordingly. In

accordance, teachers have to make sure that these limits are respected and are never violated or broken by their students. It is all to do with mutual respect. Discipline and respect are said to encourage teaching and learning.

The teachers' leadership is unquestionable. Respect and obedience to teachers are socially emphasised. This is one of the reasons why my interviewees avoid talking about power relations within classrooms. Teachers are there to deliver a message. Whatever they do should not be interpreted beyond the teaching and learning norms. It is also remarked from the interview analysis that teachers justify their practice by blaming students for the genre of practices in classrooms. However, although they blame students for what is going on in the classroom, they were unable to justify their derogatory language. There is a clash here between what the teachers say and do. It appears that teachers are aware of their practices, but their blame of students is just one way to cover their true practice.

### **8.3 Conclusions**

After the analysis of the teachers' interviews, we drew the following conclusions:

- The transdisciplinary analysis, which consists of combining CDA and structured interview methodology, has helped us to look at the classroom practice from different angles. The methodology has provided a linguistic as well as a socio-cultural analysis. The teachers claim to unwillingly dominate the classroom practice. Their dominance of these practices, they said, is traced back to students' beliefs about classroom practice.
- Awareness of the classroom practice needs to be raised among students, teachers and families. Also the impact of the social and cultural variables on classroom practice needs to be made clear among students and teachers.

Following the CDA analysis, we also concluded that the teachers control the classroom practice. The interview analysis adds more explanations to our findings drawn from chapters 5,6,7. The teachers are given an opportunity to explain their classroom practice. Their views are considered crucial to explaining what is going on in the

classrooms. Although the teachers provided many reasons to justify their practices, their apparent beliefs clash with their practices. Also even though they provide explanations which generally held students responsible, they failed to make sense of their practices, which are analysed and discussed in chapters 5,6 and 7. The interview analysis also provides an idea about the power of the norms and conventions and their impact on the classroom practice. It teaches us that considering the participants' views and perspectives of their own practice is crucial to fully understanding the classroom practice. The use of the interviews makes CDA more objective and provides a defence against criticisms, which consider CDA to be descriptive and subjective in its way of analysis. Moreover, the transdisciplinary analysis that Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) called for is adequate and helps us to tackle the subject under study from its different angles.

We also explained that power and authority are mainly respected and valued by Moroccans. Teachers, we demonstrated, like parents have power and authority over the classroom. It is explained over the course of this chapter that students' classroom practice reflects their family practice as well as their social practice. The most predominant feature of this practice is silence and lack of interaction. Children are often advised to keep quiet and interact only when they are told to do so. Additionally, the impact of the Quranic school methods of teaching has been discussed in this chapter. It has been concluded that the Quranic memorization based method of teaching and learning does not encourage students to interact. Also students and teachers' social and cultural perception of teaching and learning have been reflected upon in this chapter. It is remarked that these perceptions shape and are shaped by the classroom practice.

Throughout the analysis in this chapter, we tried to describe the facts, explain them and often provide suggestions to overcome the problem. This chapter not only provides a full description of the classroom practices, but also refers to the social and cultural factors that seem to play a crucial role in these practices.

## CHAPTER NINE.

### *Conclusion and Findings.*

#### **9.0 Introduction**

In my analysis of discourse and power in Moroccan classrooms, I have pursued two main methods of analysis, consisting of linguistic and social analysis of Moroccan classroom discourse. The linguistic analysis is presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7. These three chapters present detailed analysis of IRF patterns, modality, politeness, Q/A and interruption. The main focus was to examine the type of linguistic features and the extent to which they reflect power relations among teachers and students. Social analysis of Moroccan classroom practice was presented in chapter 8. It consists of analysis of the interviewees' data. Chapter 9 looks at the findings in order to answer the research questions asked in chapter 1:

1. Does transdisciplinary analysis contribute to our understanding of Moroccan classroom discursive practice?
2. What is the nature of discursive practices within Moroccan classrooms?  
Do these practices reflect power relations among participants?
3. Do Moroccan social and cultural practices have an impact on classroom practices?

These questions are implicitly answered over the bulk of the thesis. In the next section, we address these questions through the discussion of the findings of this research.

The first section of this chapter summarises the findings of our study, looking closely at the two main methods of analysis employed in this research: textual and social analysis. The second section evaluates the study and points out the limitations of this research. In the final section, we will discuss the implications of this current research, and the questions it raises for further work.

### **9.1 Findings of this study:**

Based on the analysis presented in this research, findings are categorised into linguistic and social findings. Since this research has adopted a CDA framework which sees linguistic and social practice as mutually constitutive, these two aspects of the research can be said to complement each other. We will take both of these aspects in turn. Firstly, with regard to discourse practice, this research has looked at IRF pattern, modality, politeness, Q/A pairs and interruption.

#### **9.1.1. Linguistic Findings**

Our analysis of IRF patterns in Moroccan classroom discourse has suggested that initiation and follow-up moves are dominated by teachers, while responding moves are restricted to the students. This, it is concluded, does not only reveal the passive role of Moroccan students in this particular data, but also indicates the scale of time and space controlled by teachers. Hence, it is concluded that in this context, the IRF pattern is an index of power and control.

The next aspect of this study is the analysis of question/answer adjacency pairs. To examine the adjacency pairs in Moroccan classrooms, we have drawn on conversation analytic frameworks. Our findings regarding the use of Q/A in Moroccan classrooms suggest that teachers are questioners and students are respondents/answerers. Throughout our analysis, we have found that most of the questions are asked by teachers, and that the students are restricted to answering them. Since closed questions, we argued, do not encourage students to express themselves and since it urges them to provide limited answers, it is concluded that these questions are



means of control. Teachers' style of control and dominance, it has been demonstrated throughout this research, is visible not only in this question - answer phenomenon, but also in their interruptive behaviour.

Interruption is another theme used in this research. It is used to further examine the nature of classroom practice. To do so, we have drawn on conversation analysis. Turn-taking is central to conversation analysis. It is the main convention that governs the participants' conversations. However, the violation of these rules brings the interaction to a halt. In our analysis, we have distinguished between two types of interruption, *dominating* and *non-dominating* interruption. *Dominating* interruption is considered to be a violation of the conversation rules (section 7.2). It was concluded from the data analysis that teachers interrupt their students more than vice versa. The frequency of *dominant* interruptions is high in comparison to *non-dominant* interruption. The analysis also suggested that most of the students are discouraged from engaging further after being interrupted. Therefore, it was concluded that interruption in this context is an index of control and asymmetry. The analysis of classroom interaction in this study clearly suggested that the students are forced, on many occasions, to end their turns and to keep silent (see section 7.3). Although interruption, from a structural viewpoint, indicates that conventions of interaction are broken or not respected, pragmatically, it suggests that the interrupter has power over the other participants.

Politeness has also been examined in this research. The aim was to examine the function of politeness devices and the main role they play in revealing the nature of Moroccan classroom practice. The analysis of politeness features shows that teachers use impolite linguistic features in their interaction with students. Modality also was used to investigate the type of social relationship between teachers and students. Generally, it was concluded that teachers' use of modality and impolite features expresses teachers' power and dominance.

The above findings indicate that Moroccan classroom practices are dominated and controlled by teachers. This clearly answers our second research question proposed in section 9.0.

### 9.1.2. Social findings

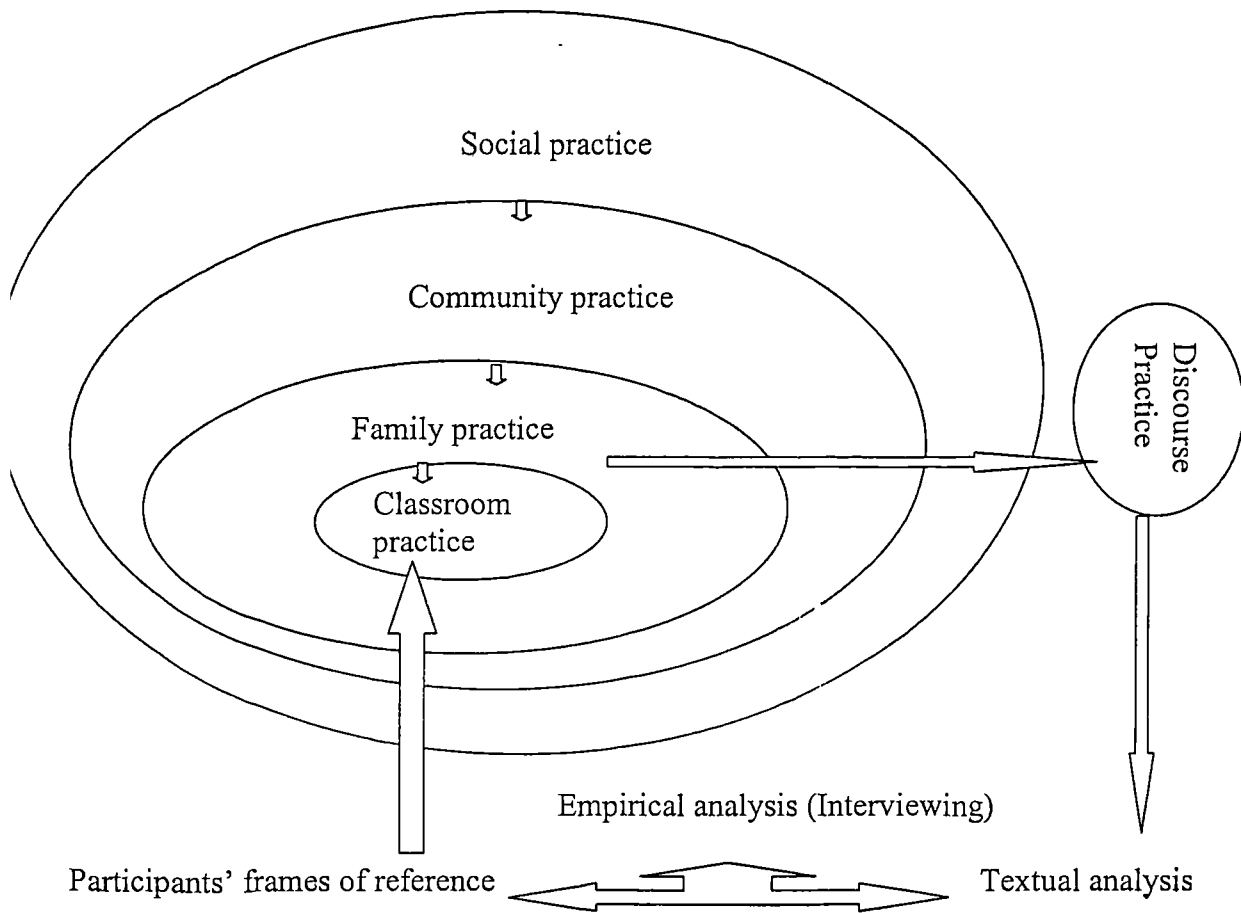
With regard to social analysis, our findings are mainly drawn from structured interview analysis. Our findings in this section are meant to give an overall explanation of the findings presented in chapter 5, 6, and 7. The majority of the interviewees, whose recorded data were analysed, agreed that they are forced, because of the students' prevailing silence, to control the classroom practice by asking questions, and holding many turns. Yet, they denied their involvement in the power set-up. They mention different social and cultural factors that seem to contribute to what is going on in the classroom. Among these factors are family practice, Quranic school and students' perception of each other (section 8.2.2.3). Generally, it was concluded that teachers and students' social beliefs about classroom practice influences their practice. The teachers and students' classroom practice shapes and is shaped by their social and cultural practice. The students do still believe in the teachers' power. They believe that society has endowed teachers with complete rights to control and dominate classroom practice. This supports Fairclough's (1992b) conclusion, which states that institutional practice shapes and is shaped by social practice. Therefore, these findings demonstrate evidence for our third research question: social and cultural practice do seem to affect classroom practice.

It has also been concluded that teachers justified their practices by blaming the students for being too passive and also mentioning other social factors that seem to trigger students' practices. Among these factors are the students' social beliefs that teachers should provide the learning experience and that their role as students is to keep silent and listen attentively. Teachers also mentioned other social reasons such as unemployment, which, they said, discourages students who think there is no reward for their hard work. However, it has been noted that teachers failed to justify some of their practices such as the use of derogatory language. This has uncovered a clash between what teachers are saying and doing. Hence, teachers' above justifications are seen, at least in part, as an ideological cover to their practice rather than a genuine explanation of the obstacles facing more effective interaction in Moroccan classrooms.

Generally, this research has concluded that linguistic analysis examined in chapter 5, 6 and 7 and structured interview analysis complete each other. It was concluded that classroom discourse practice would not be fully understood without understanding social and cultural factors that generate such a type of practice. Our structured interview analysis has enabled us to investigate the complexity of the findings drawn from textual analysis. It has helped us to share teachers' views about their classroom practice. These views bring to the analysis vital explanations such as the impact of students' and parents' classroom beliefs on classroom practice. These explanations wouldn't have been available for consideration without the structured interview analysis. This vital information which comes from interview analysis emphasises the importance of multidisciplinary analysis. This provides a clear answer to our first research question in section 9.0: using a transdisciplinary analysis has, in this case, clarified our understanding of classroom practice.

### **9.1.3. The analytic framework.**

The analytical framework used in this study is summarised in the following figure:



**Figure 13:** The analytic framework

The above framework considers classroom practice as a result of social, community and family practice. It also refers to the participants' beliefs and attitudes, which are derived more or less from family or community practice. The framework considers linguistic analysis to be adequate means to depict the genre of Moroccan classroom practice.

To understand classroom practice, we needed to examine teachers and students' discursive practices. Textual and structural analysis reveals the type of language use and linguistic features employed. Linguistic findings have clearly revealed that Moroccan

classroom discursive practices are dominated by teachers. However, no explanation has been given for the teachers' dominant practices. This is because textual analysis alone does not enable us to do so. Since language reflects the participants' attitudes and beliefs, the interpretation of what is described cannot be made without referring to the participants' frame of reference. This could be possible only by interviewing them about their practice, otherwise this can only be guessed at. However, the participants' frame of reference can only be considered if we refer to the context, which generates it (e.g. family or community context). Both community and family practices represent social practice.

Thus, classroom practice is a result of different interwoven practices, each of which cannot be explained nor understood without reference to other practices. Classroom practice, therefore, is the outcome of different social and personal practices. These practices are found in the discourse practice. Our findings conclude that teachers and students' practices shape and are shaped by the social practice. In other words, the discourse practice reflects and is reflected in the social and cultural practice.

This framework emphasises the fact that classroom practice is part of social practice. One way to establish this link between social and classroom practice is to adopt, as has been mentioned earlier, a multi-layered approach. Like many studies, this research has adopted or used its own methodology, based on marrying different frameworks belonging to different approaches. Our social findings suggest that structured interview analysis has not only enabled us to examine the findings drawn from textual analysis, but helped us to establish a link between linguistic and social analysis.

## ***9.2 Evaluation of the study***

The aim of this study has been to examine the nature of the Moroccan classroom discursive practices and to look at power relations between students and teachers. To examine these practices, this study has used a multidisciplinary analysis, in which

critical and non-critical approaches complement each other. However, each framework used in this research has its strengths and shortcomings (see chapter 2).

Fairclough's framework is the main model used in this research. Although it provides different mechanisms of analysis, (textual, discursive and social) and although it emphasises the fact that texts have social implications, this framework has been criticised for being abstract and not providing a clear way of analysis (Widdowson 1998). This research, which faced many difficulties in applying Fairclough's framework, supports the above criticism. One of the difficulties this research faced in implementing Fairclough's framework is how to bring textual and social analysis together. To overcome this problem, we have used interview analysis to establish the missing link between the linguistic analysis and the social one. Our textual analysis is mainly descriptive and is shaped by our interpretation as researchers. This interpretation is often considered to be ideological and thus to serve one's own motives. If we have based our analysis solely on the text, then our explanation and interpretation of the relationship between the text and social practice could be entirely subjective and could therefore lack validity. It is only by interviewing teachers that we come to make sense of our textual findings in a more objective way. Teachers' explanation of the classroom practice has more to do with social and cultural practice. So without the structured interview work, we wouldn't be able to understand the sources of these practices. Structured interview analysis has given credibility to this research and enabled us to establish an analytical link between the text and social practice. This overcomes Fairclough's link which is based on self-interpretation: "One's analysis of the text is shaped and coloured by one's interpretation of its relationship to discourse processes and wider social processes" (Fairclough 1992b: 199). It is this claim that made Widdowson (1998) and others doubt the validity of CDA research. And since texts bear traces of the society, as Fairclough said, the structured interview analysis enables us to see this link clearly. Teachers' new information is not only new to this research but also to the researcher himself. The structured interview analysis brings both social and linguistic analysis together. It establishes and explains clearly the dialectical relationship between classroom discourse practice and social practice. The classroom discourse, as a situational context, has provided much insight into the wider social context.

By bringing together different frameworks belonging to non-critical and critical approaches, this research has contributed to some of the ongoing debates on the usefulness of multidisciplinary analysis to strengthen an individual field. This study has employed different methodological frameworks, drawing on the analytic tools of the Birmingham model, conversation analysis and Fairclough's critical model. The multi-layered analysis, as Mills (1997) terms it, used in this research has helped us not only to describe and explain the nature of Moroccan classroom practice, but also to find out the main reasons behind such practices and to understand the root of Moroccan classroom practice as well as the participants' thoughts about these practices. The usefulness of this methodology lies in its attempt to bridge the gap between linguistic and social analysis. Interviewing the participants adds more credibility to the analysis and findings of the study. The participants have their own reasons and justifications for their practice. Therefore, consulting them is a step forward in discussing how to overcome these dominant practices. This underlines the importance of the structured interview role in this research. Without it, we wouldn't have been able to establish the link between linguistic and social analysis.

On the linguistic level, this study has emphasised the importance of the discourse in building a successful interaction. The teachers' discourse has been a centre of focus in this study. It is hoped that this will draw attention to the effect which language choice has upon classroom practice. It is only through realising the consequences of language use on the interaction that change in the classroom practice can take place. Also this research has provided the linguistic field with a new methodology as well as new results taken from a context never been subject to such analysis before.

Like most studies, this study has its limitations. One of these limitations is the absence of the students' voice in this research. I think it would have been more useful if we had interviewed the students. This would, at least, help us verify the teachers' claim that students are to blame for the genre of practices we discussed in the previous chapters. Also, the researcher's short conversation with a few students has shown that students have explanations of their practices, too. Since interviewing the teachers has benefited this study, it is fair to assume that interviewing students' would further

illuminate the mechanisms of interaction in the classroom, and how dominant practices can be challenged. The constraints of doctoral research did not allow us to pursue this aspect, but this is certainly an area which should be addressed in further work.

Our current dataset is taken from one city in Morocco. While we have no reason to believe that the data is not representative of Moroccan classroom discourse, our results would be strengthened further by the finding of similar patterns in other educational institutions. The size and scale of this study has to be seen as a limitation in terms of its likely effects on educational policy, and further work would be a necessary precursor to any movement towards changes in pedagogical practices.

There are also limitations to the study itself. In particular, the ethnomethodological work required the cooperation of teachers, and, initially at least, there was a great deal of resistance to this. Some teachers resisted being interviewed, or, conditions were specified before the teacher would agree to be interviewed. This affected the questions which could be asked – in particular, any questions which could be seen to be political had to be omitted. This general suspicion of the researcher's motives led to him not being welcomed in classrooms, and made the initial stages of research very difficult. It may be that having more opportunities to visit the school before embarking on the interviewing process would have built trust between the researcher and the teachers, and thus enabled a deeper discussion of the issues.

But the main difficulty this research encountered was the lack of sociological literature and lack of work on classroom data outside the West. Throughout the period of this research, finding appropriate academic sources to support our ideas and analysis was difficult, because of the lack of research in this particular area. The originality of this research – classroom data outside the West, Moroccan society – made it problematic to substantiate our experience of Moroccan culture and education with the same academic rigour which could have been achieved had the research been undertaken on similar data from a western country. Given the struggle we have had with strengthening this aspect of our research, we hope that the foundations we have laid will provide a useful basis to those engaging in future research into Moroccan discursive practices.



### **9.3. Implications:**

However, despite these methodological difficulties and the lack of research materials about Moroccan classrooms, this research has gone beyond the critical dimension to propose solutions to the issue discussed here. Since one of the main tenets of CDA is to help people find solutions to their practices, this research comes out with the following suggestions which we think would be helpful to change the discussed practices.

Most obviously, changes in the way teachers are trained may help to overcome the dominance in classroom practice. This training should include raising awareness of the impact of social and cultural beliefs on classroom practice. Students themselves need to be aware of their roles within the classroom. They have to know that they are key players in their classrooms. Although the above suggestions may contribute to change, the process of change itself remains a complex issue. This is because classroom practice is not isolated from society. It is influenced by many spheres. First, there is the influence of the education system manifested in textbooks and the established curriculum, which, one way or another, encourage teachers' dominance. Second, there is the social influence manifested in teachers and parents' conception and thoughts of classroom practice, which is a practice fully controlled by teachers. These expectations, along with students' beliefs, make it very difficult to talk about changing classroom practice. However, if a change is to happen, it has to occur gradually. Raising consciousness is a precondition for new practices and classroom conventions. Therefore, both students and teachers have to be aware of their practices within the classroom. Critical language awareness is a means to achieve this task. If new classroom conventions are established, then these conventions may have an effect even outside classroom practice. By conventions, it is meant here emancipatory discourse practices in which students and teachers have equal discourse practices. If this change occurs successfully within education institutions, then it will pave the way to change in other institutions and hence changes in the social order. It should be pointed out here

that change can only occur when awareness is turned into action and when critical language awareness is included in education programmes (Ivanic & Janks 1992).

Raising consciousness should also reach textbook designers and curriculum planners. This can be achieved through teachers' own reflection on the curriculum. New materials would not only reinforce the process of change, which we are talking about, but would acknowledge the right of students by empowering them and disempowering teachers or, at least, reducing their dominant practices. This would be a starting point towards change in other institutions. Thus, since discourse shapes society and society is shaped by discourse, change in discourse practice will lead to change in social practice. The focus on classroom discourse in this research is but a contribution to this complex process of change. It raises awareness of Moroccan classroom discourse practices. Yet, this change can not take place, unless those people concerned can be convinced that their practices need changing.

This in turn has implications for wider changes in society. Such changes would need to include parents' perceptions of classroom practice and this in turn would lead to shifts in family practice and practices in the community at large.

#### **9.4 Further work:**

Many issues discussed in the bulk of this research require further examination. The first issue that arises, and that evidently needs to be investigated further is students' views and perception of Moroccan classroom practice. As it is mentioned in section 9.2, the absence of the students' voice remains one of the limitations of this research. Their involvement in research could provide insightful information to the analysis of Moroccan classroom discourse and will also provide, at least, their view of the teachers' claim that students are to blame for what is going on in the classroom. In this research, as has been seen in chapter 8, teachers held students responsible for their dominant practices. This claim was left unverified, as students were not interviewed. Interviewing

students will clearly underline the importance of structured interview analysis to CDA research.

We also believe that further research should involve parents. A focal emphasis should be on the parents' thoughts and perceptions of the classroom practice. Since many teachers complain about the way the parents instruct their children about the classroom practice, it would be useful to consider the parents' thoughts and perception of the classroom practice. This will be achieved by interviewing them in the same way as teachers and students. The outcome of this ethnomethodological research should increase further our understanding of classroom discourse, and thus could feed into processes of change.

The last issue that requires further examination is the effect of students' gender on classroom discourse. This is to examine the gender discursive practice within Moroccan classrooms. It would be also very revealing to look at teachers' classroom practice from a gender perspective (Zimmerman & West 1975). For example, are there gender distinctions in the practices of teachers and students? Does gender have any impact on interrupting behaviour, lexical choice or access to the floor? This is not an issue that we were able to explore within the constraints of this research, but an area which in our data has potential for further investigation.

Finally, it would be interesting to apply the proposed framework (section 9.1.3) to other Moroccan institutional discourses such as health institutions, private firms and other public institutions. This is to examine the nature of discursive practices within such contexts and also the relationship between employers and employees. Applying the above framework to other Moroccan institutional discourse would reinforce our findings and strengthen our claim that there is a dialectic relationship between Moroccan discourse practice and Moroccan social practice.

## **9.5. Conclusion:**

In our analysis of discourse and power in Moroccan classrooms, we have pursued two main methods of analysis: linguistic and social. We have examined the linguistic features chosen by participants, we have also examined the structure of classroom interaction, looking at the distribution of turns in classroom contexts, questions /answers and interruptions. In doing so, we have chosen a multi-layered approach, in which different frameworks belonging to different approaches have been used (IRF model, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis and interview analysis). We have also conducted a social analysis which involves quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of interviews.

The main rationale for this analysis was to bring together different disciplines which are seen as incompatible (Miller 1997, Thornborrow 2002). The data we have analysed represents a Moroccan classroom interaction in which asymmetrical relations between teachers and students exist. These asymmetries are manifested in the linguistic choices used by teachers and also the genre of questions used. The interruptive behaviour in the classroom is another phenomenon that clarifies the asymmetrical relation between teachers and students.

In this chapter we have given a general conclusion of the findings of this research. Besides introducing the findings drawn from textual analysis in chapters 5, 6, 7 and findings in chapter 8, we highlighted the importance of the structured interview analysis to this research and the role it has played in enabling us to understand and explain the linguistic phenomena which had been discussed in the previous chapters. This is followed by an evaluation of the framework and the methodology used in this study. It is concluded that structured interview analysis establishes a missing link between linguistic and social analysis. It is also concluded that raising awareness is crucial for a change to take place. A change within educational institutions, it is believed, will lead to changes in other institutions and thus changes in the overall social order. The chapter then ends with suggestions for further research.

This research has examined Moroccan classroom discursive practices by applying

critical discourse analysis. The analysis was conducted in two ways: textual and social. The main focus of the textual analysis is on the IRF model, adjacency pairs (questions/answers) and interruption. Textual analysis has suggested that teachers control classroom discourse. This is manifested in their holding of turns, employing impolite phrases and interrupting students. It is also noted that teachers ask closed questions, which restrict students' participation. The social analysis, however, has indicated that there are social and cultural factors behind Moroccan classroom practices. The conducted interviews have shown that teachers hold students responsible for the type of practices which occur in the classroom. They consider students often to be passive and show no interest in the process of learning. They traced this back to social factors such as unemployment, which, they said, discourages students to take part in the classroom practice as they think there is no reward for their work. Therefore, teachers' control of classroom practice is based on their above claims.

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**APPENDICES**

## ***APPENDIX A: Examples from the interviews***

The interview report: 2. 9. 00 recorded between: 14pm to 16.30pm

**Teacher 5**

*Please listen to the tape and answer the following question:*

**Me** Which is the ideal lesson for you:

- a) A lesson in which the teacher does everything.
- b) A lesson in which the teacher and the students participate equally.
- c) A lesson in which students speak little.
- d) If none of these please state your own.

**Teacher:** The best way to teach a lesson in general... I think I choose a lesson in which students participate equally. You talk about students and the nature of the topic...the nature of teachers. I think the teacher should be given a time to initiate the topic and rise discussion then after he has to ask questions to see if students understood what have been said. So you don't give them something like 50% each. The teacher always begins the lesson, then ask questions and after students' answers, he/she summarises what have been said.

**Me:** **What do you think of the first choice? (Teachers have to do everything).**

**Teacher:** No way, teachers can do everything.....teachers can not do everything and should not do everything. This will be something like spoon- feeding. If you are talking about spoon- feeding, teachers can do everything. But if you talk about creativity and training students how to study and what to gain, teachers should be mediators in this case.

- e: What do you think of people who said that teachers' language in the classroom is invested with power relations.

A teacher is a teacher. The image of the teacher is always there. He has power and should believe that...this is our culture. You talk about our community and culture. There are many sayings about the teacher and about his power....there is that social connotation related to the teacher....so there is a power. I still remember things from the first early days of my school, something like whatever the teacher, and we still do it, wants and does, he is always the first to issue judgement and initiate lessons. So he is power. For students to believe that language is power, that is right. You need that power.

- : **Why do you need it?**

You need it because, sometimes, you need respect and discipline, you want them to listen to you, you need it because they should know that you are there for them to help if they need any help. It is a matter of participation rather than suppression..

**By showing power, don't you think it hinders communication and stop students' interaction?**

No, the definition of power here is different. It is not something like being a dictator. I want students to know that there are limits, this is what I mean by power. There are limits with the time, place, topic and participation. A successful teacher is he or she who uses this power in the right place.

**What do you think of teachers who keep interrupting their students or even use a derogatory language?**

Language itself is...when you talk about language. The teacher must be very careful. I still have some bad words in my dictionary, some of them I learnt from my teacher. At

an age of imitation, students pick up everything on their teachers.

**: Many researchers associate interruption with power and said interrupting students means exerting power over them, does this make sense to you?**

Actually, the teacher who has a good practice, and a good understanding of teaching will know when to interfere and interrupt students. Sometimes, you feel a student can not move anymore and needs a help from you, it is that kind of intelligent interference that is required. ....if a student can't answer a question and keep going around the bush, the teacher should interfere and says yes this is good, but we think of something different ...or if we do so and so...and ask an other student, but if the student does not give the correct answer he/she should keep him talking for a certain amount of time.

**: If we go back to the social and cultural beliefs you talked about in the beginning, do you think these beliefs affect classroom interaction?**

**Teacher:** Yeah, actually oh...it is sometimes two way interaction. It is for students...students Believe that they don't need to work hard, because teachers are always there and is always right. Sometimes, the teacher even feels that it is some kind.....It should be some kind of reshaping and remodelling teaching. Don't forget that teaching is taken from the old social beliefs concerning even the religious teaching of the Quran. On Friday prayer people are not allowed to say a word. I feel what is going on in the classroom is a copy of what is in Friday prayers. We have examined these traditional ideas that the teacher has to do everything and students listen to him carefully.

**: Following your last idea, do you think that the Quranic pedagogy used in the Quranic school affects classroom interaction?**

Actually, the whole system is based on imitation, listening rather than participating. The faqih does everything for them. This makes students believe this to be the ideal pedagogy of teaching and learning and this of course affect the classroom practice once students move on to primary schools.

**Many people think that the social structure has an impact on the classroom structure. Do you agree with them?**

No I don't think so.

**In your view does students' perception of each other affect classroom interaction?**

When you talk about schools, obviously, you talk about gangs, peer groups...I can't answer this question.

**If we go back again to language, many people say that language shapes and is shaped by society, do you think that language used by students in the classroom reflects society?**

Of course, in general that is right. When you talk about language and society, you talk about two faces of the same coin. But, the teacher should chose some kind of elevated level of language, I talked here about the vocabulary. Students' language always reflects their respect and obedience to the teacher. The teacher's language on the other hand, reflects his social role as a teacher.

**If you are asked, what is the teacher's role in the classroom, what would be your answer?**

A teacher, a successful teacher, is an actor, a well-trained actor who works on a stage. The teacher is a good actor. He is not an actor who makes the audience laugh and cry, but an actor that plays with the audience and not in front of them.

**If we go back to turn taking and power relations, I read many articles which associate turn-taking to power relation, do you think by many grabbing turns, teachers exercise power over their students?**

I don't think so. The idea of power is overgeneralised. As I said earlier, our definition of power is different.

**What would be your suggestion or proposal to improve classroom interaction or change classroom practice?**

Merely, it should be something like participation rather than spoon-feeding. It should be about something that depends on different views of achieving facts. If we try to teach them how to be creative and how to learn.....this will be the first step to be creative....the teacher will have that power for the benefit of students. It is something of encouraging students to think and not only to listen.