



# Turn-Taking Architecture in A Preschool Classroom: A Study of Courtney Chan's Writing Class

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## Abstract

*This study explores the turn-taking architecture in a preschool classroom, employing Conversation Analysis (CA) as its theoretical framework to analyse the interaction between the teacher and the preschooler. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing data collected through library research. The results demonstrate that the teacher is in charge of starting and giving turns, while the preschoolers participate by responding together, repeating what they hear, and making their own additions. The teacher's verbal and non-verbal utterances assist in shaping the classroom interaction, which gives preschoolers a chance to develop their language abilities and become more socially competent. The turn-constructural component is seen in the teacher's prompts and the preschooler's responses, while the turn-allocation component is seen in how the teacher decides who speaks and when. The study highlights the significance of an architecturally adaptable, yet turn-taking approach in promoting involvement and language acquisition. This study enhances comprehension of how turn-taking mechanisms facilitate language acquisition in a preschool classroom.*

**Keywords:** *Turn-Taking, Classroom interaction, Preschooler, Conversation analysis.*

## Introduction

This study examines how language use affects children's participation in early childhood classrooms. Preschoolers use language not only as a subject of study but also as a means of expressing themselves, interacting with their peers, and experiencing real-world situations. The classroom becomes a place that fosters the development of social skills, independence, and confidence when teachers give students the chance to participate in activities and speak (Saraç & Tarhan, 2020).

Classroom interaction is a central element in preclassroom discourse. Both are teachers, and preschoolers must take turns to participate in the learning process. Especially in the preschool classroom, where the foundation of education for children starts. The preschool classroom is a necessary stage in children's development. The primary year in which the educational system aligns with their attitudes and their self-esteem, according to Whitbread (Saraç & Tarhan, 2020). The teacher leads the process of substitution to achieve learning goals and encourages the learner throughout the learning process. The preschool classroom teacher can significantly improve children's information acquisition by actively involving them in the learning process, which is necessary for their future development (Xiangqiong, 2019). Hence, turn-taking in a preschool classroom is a primary element to make the preschoolers engage during the learning process.

Moreover, the teacher must facilitate the conversation mechanism to encourage preschoolers to engage during the learning process. The mechanism includes initiating the conversation, taking over the turn, silencing, and repeating (Syafar et al., 2023). This keeps lessons organized, but it can also mean fewer opportunities for children to take initiative on their own. The teacher's strategy influences effective classroom interaction and plans to maintain children's engagement in the class. In accordance, the study of the interaction patterns between teachers and preschoolers in classroom discourse can shape supportive learning situations (Suwandi, 2015). Based on the background, this research aims to explore patterns in preschool classroom interaction, as observed in classroom recordings, using a conversation analysis approach.

Conversation Analysis (CA) examines naturally occurring spoken data, focusing on aspects such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, repair processes, and sequencing (Afrianto et al., 2025). Instead of seeing speaking as chaotic, CA illustrates that discussions are structured and follow social standards that everyone agrees on. CA is used to help the writer with social interaction by thoroughly scrutinizing transcripts of actual interactions. Thus, this research will reveal how speakers regulate the conversational flow of both the teacher and the preschooler.

The researchers chose preschool classroom interaction because most previous studies on preschool classrooms have focused on how teachers should build the classroom environment, rather than on the teachers' and preschoolers' turn-taking patterns in the classroom. Studies on turn-taking architecture in preschool classrooms have been

widely conducted (Sasabone, 2019; Xiangqiong, 2019). As a result, the turn-taking architecture in preschool classrooms is essential in classroom interaction. Fostering effective communication between the teacher and students is crucial. The turn-constructive must be attained effectively in organizing the substitution. Then, the turn-allocation portion is most clear in how teachers decide who speaks and when the students can speak. In a preschool classroom, teachers ensure that everyone gets the turn to talk by giving each student a chance to speak at a particular time. This architecture helps keep the learning environment organized and encouraging.

## **Literature Review**

This study explores turn-taking architecture in a preschool classroom in the English writing class setting. Turn-taking in the preschool classroom is a primary element in encouraging preschoolers' involvement. Turn-taking can significantly enrich preschoolers' information acquisition and examine their understanding. Thus, the teacher must control the turn-taking system to ensure every preschooler is involved in classroom interaction, which is crucial for impactful learning progress. Refer to Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1994), the two elements constituted turn-taking architecture, which are the transcripts, the turn-constructive component, and the turn-allocation component.

Before exploring the turn-taking pattern in a classroom interaction, the utterances must be transcribed. The result is the transcripts with the symbols used to express both verbal and non-verbal utterances. Therefore, Conversation Analysis (CA) is a method used in exploring the turn-taking pattern in classroom interaction to look at how people talk to each other in ordinary situations. It aims to identify the systematic methods people use to produce and comprehend speech (Afrianto et al., 2025). CA emphasizes the speaker's perspectives and interpretations. To put it another way, CA is a fair method of analyzing spoken language that allows one to identify standard observable rules and procedures that participants use to plan and control their conversational behavior, such as who gets to speak next, when, and how.

Next, the turn-constructive component is obtaining the occurrence of substitution in conversation. The component is filled by sentences, clauses, phrases, or the smallest unit of words (Sacks et al., 1994). The fundamentals of the component are settled to estimate when a speaker finishes the turn in order to let the listener be prepared for the next turn. The estimation contributes to smooth conversation without misunderstanding and uncoordinated delay. In short, the turn-constructive component highlights how the speaker establishes the conversation to let the listeners know when to speak.

Furthermore, the turn-allocation component indicates that the speakers are selected to substitute for the turn in the conversation. There are two techniques for how the turn-allocation happens; first, the speaker in session can define who will be the next to speak by asking a question or giving an instruction. Second, the next speaker is defined by self-initiation, when a pause occurs in the conversation. The turn-allocation component allows the listener to be involved in the conversation not only as a listener



but also as a speaker. In addition, limiting the duration and the number of substitutions must be maintained to ensure an effective conversation.

## Method

The participants in this study included Ms. Courtney, a teacher teaching a writing class, and over 10 students, comprising boys and girls. In addition, the conversation is conducted in English as the primary language. Ms. Courtney was teaching the steps of English writing for children interactively. Then, the students were at a preschool age, which is the foundational stage of education for children.

The instrument used in this study was a video recording taken from a YouTube channel by Courtney Chan ([https://youtu.be/i\\_d5sMuEm6g?si=OzXLMI6\\_pAzbk6sN](https://youtu.be/i_d5sMuEm6g?si=OzXLMI6_pAzbk6sN)). The video has achieved approximately 16 thousand subscribers, lasting 12 minutes and 56 seconds. The language used in the source is from an English-speaking country, with the source overall using the English language. The source demonstrated how Ms. Courtney, as a teacher, was managing a kindergarten class in writing class, and how the preschoolers responded during the class activity.

The researchers aim to explore fundamental classroom interactions by conducting honest conversations and learning situations. This study is associated with the qualitative research method. Video recording used to encourage the consistency of data with verbal and non-verbal utterances can be repeated. So, the researchers can observe deeply not only based on the verbal utterances (sentence, clause, phrase, word) but also with the non-verbal utterances (gesture, movement, expression, pause). Thus, this study employs conversational analysis to explore the data. Refer to Sacks et al (1994) in (Afrianto et al., 2025). Conversation analysis primarily examines the conversations people have in various contexts and during routine tasks. To put it another way, CA aims to analyze the structure of speech in an intricate exchange where two or more individuals collaborate to take turns in a social setting.

The data were explored within five steps, which refer to (Rido et al., 2020). The first step was to create a database in a single folder, where transcriptions and information collected from video recordings were stored. The second step was open-coding, in which the researchers conducted a deep analysis of the data and were open to any feasible classification. Third, the data may be open-coded to provide emergent themes and similar interaction management strategies. Fourth, focused coding was used to group the emerging themes into smaller groups. Fifth, the last set of emerging themes was introduced. Here, the data transcriptions are attached with Jefferson's symbols to depict the intricate non-verbal utterances of classroom conversation.

## Findings and Discussion

This study highlights the turn-taking architecture in a preschool classroom setting. It explored how the turn-taking mechanism was employed in an English writing class for a preschool classroom. The outcomes revealed that Ms. Courtney implemented the two components of turn-taking proposed by (Sacks et al., 1994), specifically the turn-constructural component and the turn-allocation component, as evidenced by transcribed utterances with Jefferson's symbol transcriptions.

### Extract 1

- T: Okay so:: can you put your uh whiteboard markers down ((holding the marker gesturing to put down))...and Ms. Courtney were going to work on (.)some writings together (.) remember I was telling you that you guys are so great ((pointing a picture in the cover book)) all about what you learned about grasshoppers (.) now we get to write some extra sentences in the book (0.2) are you guys ready to see what that looks like? (1)
- Sss: [Yeah] (2)
- T: Okay=so guess what remember how we were writing all about grasshoppers right? (.) ((opening book)) and remember on the first page (.) we were reading and you guys could reread it again with me go (3)
- Sss grasshoppers are:::insects (4)

The extract 1 reveals how turn-taking in a preschool classroom is arranged collaboratively between the teacher as “T” and the preschoolers as “Sss”. Refer to Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1994) work on the turn-taking component, known as the turn constructional unit. The teacher's role is to initiate the conversation and elicit a response.

In turn (1), the teacher initiates the conversation with an instructional directive, “*can you put your uh whiteboard markers down?*”, followed by attached gesture cues (holding the marker, gesturing to put down), which serve as non-verbal guidance to support the verbal instruction. The inclusion of micropauses (.) reflects the teacher’s effort to pace the interaction and maintain attention. Importantly, the teacher not only frames the activity but also projects the upcoming *task* “*some writings together...about grasshoppers*”, which functions as a pre-sequence to preschooler participation.

In turn (2), preschoolers respond collectively with “*Yeah,*” overlapping with the teacher's turn, which reveals the typical pattern of collective response in preschool classrooms, where turn-taking is not strictly individual but rather collective and simultaneous. It shows the teacher assists the children in acquiring information, then the children actively respond to the instruction (Xiangqiong, 2019). The overlap here encompasses an interactional resource that signals preschoolers’ enthusiasm and alignment.

In turn (3), the teacher resumes the floor with “*Okay=so guess what...*,” where the use of latching (=) indicates a smooth continuation without pause, maintaining control of the turn and avoiding gaps that might invite curiosity preschooler entries. The teacher navigates preschoolers' memory, “*remember how we were writing all about grasshoppers, right?*”, using repetition and questions to re-engage learners. The micropauses (.) function as an interactional boundary, sequencing the preschoolers' reminders and memory instructions into manageable units.

In turn (4), the preschooler grabs the instruction with “grasshoppers are::insects,” which demonstrates the preschooler's turn after the teacher's selection within the turn-taking system. The use of elongated sound (“::”) shows the preschooler's effort to emphasize or hold the floor, aligning with the teacher's prompt. This early initiation illustrates how preschoolers can emerge within teacher-controlled interaction and preschooler-active participation.

### Extract 2

- T: ((Pointing the written text on the board one by one)).....ready let's (16)  
 Sss: tell me twhat words we're going to write here you ready go! T:they=  
 Sss:They, T:are= Sss:are, T:black= Sss:black, T:and= Sss:and, T:  
 brown= Sss:brown
- T: Can you repeat again? Ready go!((Pointing the written text on the (17)  
 Sss: board one by one)) they= Sss:=They, are= Sss:=are=, =black Sss:=  
 black=, and Sss:=and, brown= Sss:brown]
- T: Awesome (18)

The extract 2 shows that repetition tends to examine the preschoolers' understanding of the information and instruction. According to Suwandi (2015), in classroom discourse, repetition is categorized as “sustaining moves” and serves as a means of retaining involvement and comprehension. The teacher (T) begins the instruction by pointing to the writing on the board, then gives a signal to collect preschoolers' attention “.....ready go!”. Then the teacher starts the instruction that must be repeated by pointing to each piece of information on the board, “*they=...are=...black=...*” The preschoolers repeat each piece of information given together. The response reveals the transition-relevance place when the teacher is about to finish, then the preschoolers can take the turn simultaneously (Sacks et al., 1994).

In turn (16), the teacher implements sequence repetition by giving the scheme word and then giving the following turn to preschoolers right away through latching (=). The preschoolers' repeated collective behavior shows a kind of simultaneous turn-taking, where overlapping utterance is not seen as a problem but as a standard way of talking in the classroom. The sequence structurally encourages participation and helps preschoolers apply the schemes.

In turn (17), the teacher asks the preschoolers, "*Can you repeat again?*" This changes who gets to go first, shows how the teacher stays in charge, and makes sure that everyone participates. The teacher engages the preschoolers to keep an eye on the schemes. Then, in turn (18), the teacher gave the response "*Awesome*" to sequence the end of repetition schemes. It serves as a strategy to take over the turn with a positive response. Restoring the teacher's control to lead the classroom interaction.

### Extract 3

- T: Right(.)and(.) when we looked at this photograph ((pointing a picture (5)  
in the book)) what did you guys:: notice that you saw? (0.2) [[[A  
preschooler raising the hand up]]) on this page(.) ((looking at a  
preschooler))=  
Yeah:: (Kaepernick), what did you notice?
- S1: That:: °they were jumping° (6)
- T: oouh:: that they were ↑Jumping What else did you= [((some students(7)  
raising the hands up ))] =notice, Dahlia? ((pointing a student))
- S2: They(.)were brown (8)
- T: hh↑They were brow::n [((looking at some students raising hands up))](9)  
What else ((Looking at Mia)) ↑Mia?
- S3 : eee::they have dots on them (10)
- T: They have ↑Dots on them [((some students raising their hands up))]  
(0.2)((looking at Jasmine)) hh ↑jasmine ((pointing Jasmine)) (11)
- S4: And:: they are ↑Black:: dots (12)

Extract 3 reveals how the teachers (T) distribute turn sequence to ensure that every preschooler has a chance to contribute to class discussions. The implementation adheres to the turn-allocation unit, in turn taking the component. Thus, the teacher clearly assigns the turn to one student, illustrating a distinct participation pattern such as silencing or repeating. As a result, the preschoolers can engage actively to think, speak, and listen in classroom interaction (Syafar et al., 2023).

At the beginning of turn (5), the teacher asks, "*What did you guys notice that you saw?*". There is a slight delay (0.2) during which a preschooler raises their hand. Although the teacher maintains control of the floor and clearly assigns the turn by calling the child, this utterance represents an attempt at self-selection "*Yeah:: Kaepernick, what did you notice?*". Turn allocation in this case is instructor-driven; even when the preschoolers indicate their willingness to talk, the teacher chooses who gets to speak, guaranteeing a fair distribution of turns. The teacher demonstrates a willingness to convey his ideas to the preschooler.

In turn (6), the student (S2) represents his idea. The student conveys a sentence with some interactional pattern. "*That::*" the prolongation exists when the children maintain the opportunities while endeavoring to formulate the idea that reflects the establishment of turn allocation. Then, the utterance "*°they were jumping°*" indicates that the student

lacks confidence when conveying his idea. Despite hesitation, the teacher remained silent until the idea was conveyed. Nevertheless, the preschooler was able to fulfill his idea.

In turn (7), the teacher takes over the turn by repeating Kaepernick's (S2) idea by emphasizing the utterance that arises. It shows the teacher wants to acknowledge the ideas and establish confidence. Then, the teacher sequenced the turn by inviting some preschoolers to convey their ideas by combining open-ended questions with specific turn-allocation strategies. "What else did you= [[[some students raising their hands)]] =notice, Dahlia?" Overlapping occurred during this turn sequencing. Some preschoolers show excitement to convey their ideas by raising their hands. In turn (8), the student (S3) pointed, conveying her idea confidently. Continuing, when the teacher confirmed the response, some preschoolers raised their hands. Looking at the excitement, the teacher prolonged the turn by sequencing to engage other preschoolers, "*What else(0.2)?*".

In turn (10), the preschooler's response, "*eee:: they have dots on them,*" reveals how successful the allocation was. The teacher has created space by immediately nominating the child, so the floor is held solidly, even though the hesitation marker "*eee::*" indicates that the child is still processing or constructing the answer, which shows how TurnAllocation can provide a secure and reliable space for students to participate, even if their speech is tentative or still growing.

In turn (11), the teacher looks around the classroom and observes additional preschoolers raising their hands while repeating and emphasizing a preschooler's response, "*They have ↑Dots on them*". The teacher clearly names the next speaker, "*hh ↑Jasmine,*" after a slight pause (0.2). This instance illustrates the teacher using Turn-Allocation to control who is next, as evidenced by the allocation of opportunities through both verbal cues and pointing motions, and the preschooler's subsequent claim of the turn.

In turn (12), the nominated preschooler, Jasmine, said, "*And:: they are ↑Black:: dots.*" Jasmine's use of "*And::*" indicates that she is immediately maintaining the opportunities, revealing how Turn Allocation not only assigns turns but also establishes continuity by associating each student's turn with the one before it, thereby extending the description cooperatively.

## Conclusion

This study examined the architecture of turn-taking in a preschool classroom by evaluating the interactions between the teacher and preschoolers during a writing session. The results demonstrate that the data transcriptions, the mechanism of the turn-constructural component, and the turn-allocation component proposed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1994) facilitate participation, enrich comprehension, and foster preschoolers' involvement. Ms. Courtney is the primary leader of substitution in



interaction. Nevertheless, preschoolers also participated by responding collectively, repeating ideas, and offering suggestions when given the opportunity. These interactions highlight the need for organized yet adaptable turn-taking in fostering meaningful chances for preschoolers to practice, comprehend, and improve knowledge collaboratively.

The fundamental advantage of this structured turn-taking approach is that it maintains order while allowing both the teacher and the preschoolers to take turns. It ensures that every preschooler has the opportunity to speak, which is crucial for language learning. The approach also helps build confidence since kids may speak up in a safe space where their ideas are heard.

One problem with this technique is that the teacher's influence over the discourse may make it harder for preschoolers to talk to each other spontaneously, as the teacher mainly decides who gets to speak. The teacher maintains order in the classroom, but it may hinder preschoolers' ability to initiate conversations or take on more independent roles. It could make it harder for preschoolers to learn how to have conversations on their own, since the framework can sometimes get in the way of preschoolers' led relationships.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of striking a balance between controlled turn-taking and opportunities for preschoolers to lead conversations. This will create a lively and welcoming learning environment. Teachers can utilise these ideas to improve their classroom interaction mechanisms. Turn-taking can help preschoolers learn how to communicate better, build their confidence, and work together with others.

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