



Rethinking Teacher Third Turns in Thai EFL Classrooms: An Analysis Beyond Feedback

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Received 26/11/2025	ABSTRACT Using Conversation Analysis (CA), the study examines a single Thai undergraduate English as a foreign language (EFL) conversation class to explore the interactional work accomplished through the teacher’s third turns within the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) sequence. Focusing on naturally occurring classroom interaction, the analysis is situated within Seedhouse’s (2004) four micro-pedagogical contexts, i.e., procedural, task-oriented, form-and-accuracy, and meaning-and-fluency. Adopting CA’s commitment to local logic, emic rationality, and situated action, the study foregrounds how the interactional work of the third turn emerges moment-by-moment in response to students’ prior turns and displayed understandings. The findings show that, unlike much previous research that prioritized a single pedagogical context, the teacher’s third-turn practices recur across the different contexts examined, while their interactional functions vary depending on local pedagogical orientations.
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	Rather than operating as uniform acts of feedback or evaluation, teacher third turns are shaped by unfolding pedagogical contexts. The study concludes by suggesting that future research adopt collective case analysis to examine the extent to which such interactional patterns recur across classrooms and pedagogical settings. Keywords: teacher third turns, interactional contingency, functional orientation, Conversation Analysis, Thai EFL classrooms
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Introduction

Creating an environment that encourages meaningful classroom participation is especially crucial for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners with limited opportunities to use the target language outside of class. Research indicates that Thai EFL learners, including those at the university level, often struggle not only with grammatical accuracy but also with the sequential organization required to take turns appropriately in everyday English conversation. These challenges have been associated with limited exposure to meaningful L2 classroom interaction. Therefore, teachers play a pivotal role in constructing classroom environments that support learners' willingness to participate. The effectiveness of the support depends heavily on teachers' instructional strategies and the ways they are enacted.

In classroom discourse, the teaching and learning process is typically organized around the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) sequences, consisting of a teacher's initiation, a student's response, and the teacher's subsequent feedback (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Within this structure, teacher corrective feedback plays a central role in expanding learners' linguistic repertoires, thereby supporting their accurate and confident use of the target language (Dawson et al., 2019). Traditionally, the function of teacher feedback has been framed primarily in terms of formative assessment, focusing on evaluating the accuracy of learners' language production.

However, Conversation Analysis (CA) research has reconceptualized the third turn (Schegloff, 1992), or follow-up move (Wong & Waring, 2010), as a sequential position that does more than deliver evaluation. CA studies demonstrate how third turns orient learner participation and shape engagement moment by moment, foregrounding the contingent use of interactional and embodied resources that are often overlooked in research traditions that do not examine interaction as it unfolds in real time.

Often treated from an etic perspective as a fixed pedagogical action aimed primarily at reinforcing learners' linguistic accuracy, the teacher's third

turn can instead be understood as an interactional space in which learning resources are contingently and collaboratively negotiated to support student engagement. Far from being a mere corrective act or a unidirectional practice between teacher and student, the third turn is multifunctional and interactionally rich (Jácome et al., 2016; Lee, 2007). Cho et al. (2024), for example, show how third turns function as interactional spaces where teachers and students co-construct meaning through sequentially organized talk mediated by embodied resources such as prosody, gaze, gesture, and body orientation. In this view, pedagogical practice in the third turn is dynamically shaped through teacher–student interaction to enable shared understanding, questioning, and negotiation of meaning.

Despite these insights, only a limited number of studies have examined teacher third turns from a CA perspective, and their analyses have typically focused on a single pedagogical context. For example, Badem-Korkmaz and Balaman (2020) and Cho et al. (2024) align their analyses with Seedhouse's (2004) micro-pedagogical contexts, i.e., procedural, task-oriented, form-and-accuracy, and meaning-and-fluency, but examine third-turn practices within only one context, rather than across the broader pedagogical landscape.

In Thai EFL teaching contexts, a teacher-led corrective approach has largely been adopted, with research primarily emphasizing etically oriented accounts of feedback and its effectiveness in addressing learning problems such as pronunciation difficulties and limited content knowledge among learners (Kaewkascholkul & Jaturapitakkul, 2023). More recently, a small number of studies have begun to adopt an emic orientation, using CA to examine the dynamic organization of classroom interaction (Farrelly & Sinwongsuwat, 2021; Supakorn, 2020). These studies document interactional phenomena such as turn-taking, wait time, and repair practices that support learners' communicative participation. However, little attention has been paid to how the interactional work accomplished by teachers' third turns varies across pedagogical contexts, or to how such variation is oriented to by students as displays of engagement.

To address this gap, this study examines how feedback functions can be enacted beyond their traditional sense, focusing on the four micro pedagogical contexts proposed by Seedhouse (2004). Specifically, it addresses two research questions: (1) What interactional work is accomplished through the teacher's third turns across procedural, task-oriented, form-and-accuracy, and meaning-and-fluency micro-pedagogical contexts? and (2) How does the teacher adjust third-turn practices in response to students' displayed engagement across these contexts?

Literature Review

The Dynamics of Classroom Discourse in L2 Learning

Classroom discourse plays a vital role in second language (L2) learning, as it shapes how participants interact and position themselves, which in turn influences their language use. The Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequence has frequently been presented as the default structure of classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), comprising a teacher's initiation (I), a student's response (R), and teacher feedback (F).

However, this macro perspective overlooks how participants' actions unfold in real-time interaction, neglecting the nuances of factors such as hesitation, prosody, repair, and turn-taking. Therefore, Seedhouse and Walsh (2010) argue that the locally produced and sequentially mediated nature of classroom interaction should not be generalized to fit the IRF sequence. This argument is supported by Waring's (2009) observation that when students self-select their turns, they momentarily reconfigure the participation framework, transforming the classroom into a more dialogic space in which teacher–student power asymmetries are temporarily reduced. Yet, Hall (1997) notes that students' willingness to speak without teacher permission is not always encouraged, especially when it risks diverting the discussion from the teacher's intended goals. This suggests that classroom scenarios do not always follow a fixed script, and researchers should remain open to uncovering their actual dynamics.

As Seedhouse and Walsh (2010) put it, L2 classroom interaction is inextricably intertwined with the unique sequential, social, and pedagogical environment in which it occurs. While the IRF pattern broadly represents the surface-level dynamics of classroom discourse, Seedhouse (2015) argues that its internal characteristics reveal a dynamic and interdependent relationship between pedagogy and interaction.

Reframing Feedback: The Third Turn as a Social Act

Feedback has traditionally been framed for assessment purposes, to correct students' errors that deviate from native-like use, positioning teachers as knowledge providers and students as recipients. The function of feedback is primarily for improving students' linguistic performance (Dawson et al., 2019). Beyond its corrective function, Vattøy and Gamlem (2020) argue that feedback can be optimized in two ways: as information and as a process. They explicitly distinguish that while feedback as information serves as a performance indicator (e.g., beginner, intermediate, or advanced), feedback as a process creates a dialogic space between the teacher and students.

Similarly, Esterhazy and Damşa (2019) also emphasize the concept of feedback as going beyond correction. Nonetheless, it is difficult to justify reframing feedback as a dialogic process through the teacher's orientation (Vattøy & Gamlem, 2020) since the task design itself, particularly when students are expected to work collaboratively, may also account for their engagement. Taking these studies into account, feedback can be reconceptualized as shifting from a passive, monologic evaluation toward a resource that supports peer interaction, aligning with Heron et al.'s (2023) argument that feedback is an integral part of teaching and learning, rather than a separate process. The empirical studies on "feedback" discussed above have emphasized theoretical insights into the functions of feedback practice as a cognitive act. However, these bodies of studies often remain confined to abstract terms such as "engagement in a collaborative way," "dialogic space," and "acting as a process," while lacking methodological insight into how these functions are actually realized in practice.

Schegloff et al. (1977) reformulated the notion of "feedback". Traditionally theorized as a form of knowledge transmission, they reframed it as a social act sequence: a first turn where a trouble source emerges, a second turn where a speaker or listener initiates repair, and a third turn where the problem is resolved. Schegloff's insight about the "third turn" is slightly different from the turn framing of the IRF sequence in a classroom situation (Wong & Waring, 2010), where a teacher's initiation and a student's response are understood as the first and second turns, and the feedback position as the third turn.

Nonetheless, Lee (2007) emphasizes the third turn as a social rather than cognitive process, highlighting that:

"Students' responses are evaluated, questions are reformulated, rules are enforced, and errors are corrected."
(Lee, 2007, p. 1227)

This social process occurs in the moment of interaction, shaped by classroom contexts (e.g., procedures, forms, accuracy, tasks) and expressed through linguistic resources such as words and prosody. Regarding the third turn in a classroom setting, Markee (2004) explicitly argues that it functions as a zone of interactional transition. Here, the roles of teachers and students come into play as they adjust turn-taking and repair in response to the unfolding speech exchange, thereby creating new learning opportunities. In summary, the third turn is not a one-dimensional act of goal achievement, but a multi-dimensional practice co-constructed by teachers and students.

Forms and Functions of Teacher Third Turns in Promoting Learner Interaction

Teachers' third turns are temporally and sequentially situated to serve various pedagogical goals, depending on the pedagogical context and the teacher's instructional aims (Wong & Waring, 2010). According to Wagner and Park (2022), the pedagogical context influences how feedback is provided in the third turn but does not guarantee its effectiveness in achieving learning outcomes, since it is locally enacted and adapted to the classroom's interactional dynamics. This insight is supported by Jácome et al. (2016), who found that students' communicative performance depends largely on the teacher's instructional goal. When the teacher offers a space for equal participation, even if language accuracy is focused, it can promote genuine interaction. This consideration may mark a turning point; however, it raises the question of whether it is objective to claim that offering "open-ended" or "follow-up" questions constitutes the point of departure. If so, instructional practice could become a form of cognitive work, designed to produce particular linguistic forms for specific outcomes.

According to Dippold (2014), students' enthusiastic involvement is not determined solely by cognitive factors or predefined rules and static structures; rather, it relates to a dynamic classroom in which the teacher's scaffolding aligns with students' micro-responses. Therefore, teachers adjust their instructional tools, combining verbal and non-verbal cues and gestures to meet students' needs and facilitate learning opportunities (Tai & Poon, 2016). In contrast to the dynamic view, Seedhouse (2004) identified four micro-classroom contexts—procedural, meaning-and-fluency, form-and-accuracy, and task-oriented—each exerting a distinct influence on learning outcomes. For example, the teacher's repair practices in the third turn, whether teacher-dominated or student-centered, depend on these contexts.

Although these studies (Badem-Korkmaz & Balaman, 2020; Cho et al., 2024; Lee, 2007; Park, 2014) have explored the pedagogical practices of third turns over the past two decades, few have systematically examined how teachers maneuver these turns across the four micro contexts. Pedagogical practices in the third turn have yet to be fully acknowledged, even though scholars such as Schegloff (2007) and Wong and Waring (2010) identify repair as a central pillar of third-turn work. Repair is commonly categorized into four types: self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, and other-initiated other-repair.

Regarding repair in classroom dynamics, Hall (2007) asserts that repair extends beyond mere error correction;

“It is an interactional resource available to teachers and students to deal with troubles in speaking and hearing that have the potential to threaten their mutual understanding.”
(Hall, 2007, p. 523)

Schegloff (2007) amplified this insight from a sociological perspective, noting that the interactional sequence in the third turn can extend into post-expansions, categorized as either minimal or non-minimal. They may use repetition for elaboration or confirmation (Park, 2014), or introduce epistemic and understanding-check questions to scaffold comprehension (Waring, 2012). In summary, teachers calibrate their third turns, minimizing them to close sequences or expanding them to support incomplete or uncertain student responses, by leveraging a rich repertoire of linguistic, prosodic, and embodied resources.

Seedhouse’s (2004) Micro-Pedagogical Context Framework

Earlier research often treated classroom discourse as structurally uniform, reducing it to the generalized IRF pattern. However, Paul Seedhouse (2004) observed that classroom interaction is context-sensitive, with pedagogical goals and interactional practices unfolding dynamically in moment-by-moment exchange. While pedagogical goals may be formulated at a macro, curricular level, interactional meanings are co-constructed and displayed at a micro, turn-by-turn level through ongoing interactional organization. From this perspective, classroom interaction must be examined in terms of how teachers and students themselves orient to pedagogy in situ, rather than through analytically imposed categories.

Drawing on CA, Seedhouse (2004) identified four recurring micro-pedagogical contexts through which pedagogical goals and interactional organization are reflexively related in naturally occurring classroom talk.

Procedural Context

The primary goal of the procedural context is to ensure that students understand how classroom activities are to be carried out. Interaction in this context is typically organized around teachers’ instructions concerning task procedures, classroom management, or transitions between activities. Teacher talk is often extended and directive, while student participation is generally limited to brief responses or clarification requests related to procedural understanding.

Task-Oriented Context

The task-oriented context focuses on enabling students to complete pedagogical tasks successfully, with priority given to task achievement and meaning rather than linguistic accuracy. Interaction is commonly organized through pair or group work, including collaborative tasks and role-plays that resemble real-world communicative situations. Teachers typically adopt a facilitative role, intervening primarily when students encounter difficulties that impede task progress.

Form-and-Accuracy Context

The primary goal of the form-and-accuracy context is to promote accurate language use, with attention directed to grammatical forms, pronunciation, or vocabulary. Interaction is largely teacher-led, with teachers controlling turn allocation, topic development, and evaluation of learner contributions. Opportunities for students to introduce personal experiences or creative content are generally constrained unless they directly support the instructional focus on accuracy.

Meaning-and-Fluency Context

The meaning-and-fluency context prioritizes the development of learners' ability to communicate meaningfully and fluently. Interaction in this context encourages extended student turns and the use of personal experiences or opinions, with linguistic accuracy treated as secondary unless it disrupts communication. Classroom activities are typically learner-centered, creating opportunities for students to engage in sustained interaction and develop communicative competence.

Methodology

Participants and Setting

This study involves an English conversation class taught by a non-Thai teacher at a public university in southern Thailand. The pedagogical goal of the class is to develop students' understanding of the features and functions of spoken English in everyday life. This class was purposively selected for its focus on developing essential English conversation skills. Two separate sessions, each covering conversation lessons, were recorded, totaling four hours. The participants included one Indonesian teacher with over eight years of teaching experience and Thai undergraduate EFL students from various faculties. Most of these students were at the A2 proficiency level and enrolled in the class to fulfill elective course requirements.

Data Collection

An iPad, an audio recorder, and four wireless microphones were used for recording. The iPad was positioned in the front-left corner of the classroom to capture the entire class. A wireless microphone was attached to the teacher's shirt, while the other three were used during group work among students. The audio recorder was placed at the center of the classroom to capture participants' speech clearly while minimizing background noise. For participant privacy, consent for participation was informed, and pseudonyms were used (e.g., Teacher as T, Student A (SA), Student B (SB)).

Data Analysis

This single-case study is grounded in CA and guided by the principles of local logic, emic rationality, and situated practice (ten Have, 2007). The analysis proceeded through two main analytic procedures: detailed transcription and sequential analysis. All recorded classroom interactions were transcribed verbatim using Transana software (version 5.4). Paul Seedhouse's (2004) four micro-pedagogical contexts (see Table 1) were employed as analytic sensitizing concepts, rather than as pre-assigned categories, to examine how pedagogical goals and interactional organization were oriented to by participants in moment-by-moment interaction.

Table 1

Pedagogical Goals Characterizing the Four Micro-Pedagogical Contexts (Seedhouse, 2004)

Contexts	Goals
Procedural	To organize and manage classroom activities by providing instructions and clarifying how tasks are to be carried out.
Task-oriented	To enable students to complete pedagogical tasks successfully, with emphasis on task achievement and meaning, often through pair or group work facilitated by the teacher.
Form and Accuracy	To promote accurate use of the target language, focusing on grammatical forms, pronunciation, or vocabulary.
Meaning and Fluency	To encourage students to communicate meaningfully and fluently in the target language, prioritizing communicative flow over grammatical precision unless communication is disrupted.

Seven segments of the classroom talk were selected in which particular pedagogical contexts were made relevant through participants' publicly displayed orientations within initiation–response–third turn

sequences. These segments were transcribed, adhering to Jefferson (2004) transcription conventions (see Appendix A) and cross-checked by the researcher and a second conversation analysis expert to ensure transcriptional accuracy. The analysis was guided by the next-turn proof procedure (Sacks et al., 1974), examining how teacher third-turn practices were oriented to by students' subsequent responses and how these practices were contingently adjusted in relation to students' displayed engagement across the four pedagogical contexts.

Findings and Discussion

Given the sequential and context-dependent nature of classroom interaction, the two research questions are treated together within a single integrated analysis in this section. The first question—concerning what interactional work is accomplished in teachers' third turns—necessarily overlaps with the second—how teachers adjust their third-turn practices in response to learners' displayed engagement—because both aspects co-occur within the same unfolding sequences. Accordingly, each extract simultaneously illustrates (1) the pedagogical function of the third turn within a particular micro-context and (2) the teacher's adaptive adjustments to students' responses. This integrated approach allows the analysis to stick to the emic orientation of CA, foregrounding how interactional work and adaptive practice are mutually constitutive in real classroom discourse.

Figure 1

Extract 1 SPEC¹—Instruction-Giving (Procedural Context) [1:3:59-1:04:33, June 4, 2025]

- 1 T: Ok, (.) alright.
- 2 °So° >I will pair you guys up< °Yeah° for this one, DIU and:: Diu and Poon
come on.
- 3 (.)
- 4 a very simple conversation You can sit there. >You don't have to< come umm
- 5 (0.5)
- 6 to perform the conversation. Just sit [there. ((the teacher looks at students))
- 7 SA: °for for° [this ((pointing to screen))
- 8→ T: [Yeah I will choose one picture, for you and then
- 9→ you make (.) a simple conversation (.) asking for an opinion. ((extending index
figure and opening palms))
- 10 SB: anything we (((unintelligible))) ((SB looking at the teacher and her
classmate, waving her hands))
- 11→ T: [I will choose, umm I will just for you. ((the teacher looks at the
students, stretching his hand))
- 12→ I want you to talk about fried chicken.

In lines 2 and 3, the teacher assigns Student A and B to the task, giving only a broad description of the task “a very simple conversation” (line 4). Registering uncertainty about the instructions, Student A self-selects as the next speaker and produces a minimal utterance in a low tone accompanied by a pointing gesture “°for for° [this”. This indexes her incomplete grasp of the teacher’s procedural details. Noticing the student’s displayed uncertainty, the teacher immediately overlaps SA’s turn to clarify his task goal, emphasizing the key word, “one picture”, and “asking for an opinion” (lines 8-9), accompanied by an index-pointing and a palm-up gesture. This third-turn repair enhances the student’s understanding and creates additional opportunities to address emerging trouble sources (Schegloff et al., 1977). In line 10, Student B treats the completion of the teacher’s repair as a relevant transition point, self-selecting by hesitantly asking a question, “anything we...,” while looking at her peer and waving her hands to the teacher.

¹ Spoken English Corpus

As soon as this signal of confusion emerges, the teacher overlaps the student's turn with an explicit directive and a stretching hand, saying, "I will choose," anticipating the student's problem. He then adds further clarification, "I will just for you," and selects a topic, "fried chicken," using a hand gesture to reinforce his explanation. In this task design, the teacher maintains his managerial role through direct, overlapped, and repetitive instructions (lines 8 and 11). These resolving third turns demonstrate how the teacher proactively resolves students' troubles with the instruction, often before learners can complete their questions or turns. It underscores that the teacher's immediate intervention to manage understanding is shaped by both the students' needs and the ongoing context. Such pedagogical practices illustrate how, in this instructional context, the teacher uses his institutionally relevant rights to exercise asymmetrical power relationships whenever necessary (Markee, 2004). This aligns with Seedhouse's (2004) argument that procedural contexts that constrain the student's full participation merely open the floor for clarification instructions.

Figure 2

Extract 2 SPEC—Task-Oriented “Going Dorm” [00:44:44-00:45:19, May 8, 2025]

- 1 T: Can you try.
- 2 (1.2)
- 3 T: Um.hmm=
- 4 SA: = I'm hungry. but I don't have money=
- 5→ T: =°Um.hmm° umm I'm hungry. I don't have money,
- 6 ((leaning on the desk and looking at the student))
- 7 (3.6)
- 8→ What: about: (looking at SB)
- 9 (3.3)
- 10 What (.) about (.) go:ing to: my house, let's say (.) °um.hmm° ((pointing at himself))
- 11 (.)
- 12 SB: what about to, going to my dorm =((pointing at herself))
- 13→ T: =Go:od what about to go to my dorm you have some food, Okay you cook? =
- 14 SB: =Yeh=
- 15→ T: =Ohh you can go, ((pointing to SA))

Extract 2 illustrates a pair task in which Students A and B practice giving an opinion on the topic of “food.” After being chosen by the teacher, SA self-selects and produces the first pair-part, “I’m hungry I don’t have

money” (line 4). The teacher immediately offers a minimal acknowledgment, “Um.hmm,” and recycles the student’s utterance, thereby displaying listenership (Wong & Waring, 2010). After a 3.6-second blank turn in which SB was expected to speak, the teacher gazes at SB and initiates a deliberately incomplete utterance, “Wha:t abo: ut” (line 8), using elongation to encourage SB to complete her turn. Nevertheless, the 3.3-second delay in line 9 indicates that SB does not respond. This leads the teacher to provide a full, multi-unit scaffolding third turn in line 10, reformulating his previous incomplete utterance. He then follows it with another elongated prompt before offering the model answer, “my house” (line 10). Both the teacher’s linguistic form and a self-pointing gesture, combined with the explicit directive, “let’s say,” and turn continuer “um.hmm” enable SB to take the floor, as shown in line 12, “what about to, going to my dorm”. This expanded third turn demonstrates how the teacher adjusts the interaction prosodically, sequentially, and through embodied actions to encourage SB’s participation (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010). Moreover, SB’s adaptation of “my dorm” aligns with the contextual prompt “going home,” which had been scaffolded by the teacher’s multiple third-turn inputs in lines 8–10. Had the teacher solved SB’s problem immediately, without providing space for thinking or giving a hint, the student might not have produced genuine communication (Jácome et al., 2016).

Once SB successfully personalizes her turn, the teacher positively assesses it with the acceptance token “good” and a confirmation-seeking follow-up, “you have some food, okay you cook?” (line 13). This aligns with SB’s contribution in line 12, to which she responds minimally, saying, “yeh,” (line 14). Subsequently, the teacher acknowledges SB’s confirmation while simultaneously returning to SA’s first pair-part through the directive, “ohh you can go,” accompanied by a pointing gesture toward Student A. Overall, the teacher’s extended third turn illustrates adaptive adjustments to student responses, shifting the interaction from teacher-led talk to a more student-oriented dialogue with relatively balanced participation.

Figure 3

Extract 3 SPEC–Task-Oriented “Fried Chicken Debate” (Blending Accuracy)
[1:04:33-1:05:45, June 4, 2025]

- 12 T: I want you to talk about fried chicken (.) Yeah, fried chicken
 13 (.)
 14 SA: Umm anything [KFC,
 15→ T: [Um.hmm]
 16 SA: Umm. most of chicken in Thailand. Do you agree with me?
 17 ((SA looks at the teacher and SB))
 18 (2.9)
 19→ T: Do you agree with me, KFC is the most what?=
 20 SA: =Maybe delicious=
 21→ T: =huh delicious? (.) fried chicken. in Thailand. (.) Do you agree with me?
 22 (0.6)
 23 SB: Umm °I don’t agree with you°
 24 (.)
 25→ T: Um.hmm (1.0) In my opinion.=
 26 SB: =in my opinion I think umm
 27 ((Unintelligible))
 28→ T: McDonal? (0.4) is better. Again, please. ((teacher looks SB and points
 his hand to her))
 ((three lines omitted))
 29 SB: =Hmm I don’t agree with that in my [opinion I think
 30→ T: good]=
 31 SB: = umm che- chicken spicy in McDonald (.) is famous=
 32→ T: Fried chicken?=
 33 SB: =Fried chicken is famous
 34 (.)
 35→ T: is more famous.=
 36 SB: =more famous.=
 37→ T: = Okay, good Easy, alright. ((clapping))

In Extract 3, the teacher assigns Students A and B to discuss “fried chicken.” As indicated by the pauses in line 13, the students treat the teacher’s assignment as problematic, requesting clarification, “anything KFC” in line 14. Student A’s topic proffer is endorsed by the teacher through his overlapping minimal acknowledgment “Um.hmm.” With this confirmation, SA launches the discussion by seeking alignment with her interlocutors via

the yes–no question, “Do you agree with me?” (line 16), accompanied by her gaze toward both SB and the teacher.

Noticing a potential source of difficulty, marked by a 2.9-second silence with no uptake from SB, the teacher recycles SA’s utterance and provides scaffolding through a designedly incomplete turn: “KFC is the most what?” (line 19). In response, SA successfully self-repairs with “maybe delicious” (line 20), thereby resolving SA’s incomplete turn in line 16. This illustrates that an explicit repair initiated by the teacher, as seen in line 19, becomes the relevant choice when the learner’s language repertoire is limited.

Through “Huh delicious?” the teacher displays his uptake of SA’s repair resolution and provides SA with an opportunity to confirm or adjust her turn. When SA does not respond verbally, the teacher continues scaffolding by reformulating her utterance with a lexical expansion. By inserting “fried,” he situates the vague reference to “chicken” (line 16) within the contextually relevant category of “fried chicken” (line 21), thereby increasing both precision and task relevance. This lexical insertion bridges the gap between SA’s limited linguistic resources and task demand. It also resolves the ambiguity in SA’s opinion-seeking turn in line 16, which introduced only a topic without expressing a clear evaluative stance for agreement or disagreement.

Beyond scaffolding SA’s turn, the teacher further orients the discussion by adding the phrase “in Thailand,” which frames the task more explicitly and aligns it with the intended instructional focus. His subsequent question, “Do you agree with me?,” recycles SA’s earlier yes–no question (line 16) but in a reformulated, more contextually grounded form. This version projects recipient orientation to SB, inviting her participation in giving an opinion—the pedagogical goal of the task. The enhanced linguistic and contextual accessibility (Markee, 2004) enables SB to produce a relevant response: “I don’t agree with you” (line 23). While endorsing SB’s displayed disagreement with the continuer “Um.hmm,” the teacher simultaneously provides scaffolding through the guiding phrase “in my opinion” (line 25). However, SB is only able to echo this phrase, offering an unelaborated response. Treating this as a source of trouble, the teacher supplies a model answer in a stretched tone, “McDonald is better” (line 28). Within the same turn, he prompts SB to recycle the full scenario by combining an explicit directive “again”, imperative language “please”, gaze, and an open-hand gesture.

Although SB is supposed to produce her own idea, her continuous difficulty in constructing cohesive turns ultimately prompts the teacher to resume greater task control to offer further interactional opportunities (Dippold, 2014). In her second attempt, SB initiates with a turn-opening frame, “in my opinion I think” (line 29), before producing her thesis statement, “chicken spicy in McDonald's is famous” (line 31). Before SB

completes her turn, the teacher offers an affiliative assessment, “good” (line 30), displaying alignment and encouragement. However, SB’s misalignment of lexical items—using “spicy” instead of “fried”—triggers the teacher’s repair initiation with rising intonation: “fried chicken?” (line 32). Alongside this lexical trouble, SB also produces a grammatical error, “fried chicken is famous” (line 33), where a comparative form is required to align with the preceding context.

Although the teacher initially attempts to support SB toward greater independence in language production, SB’s limited grammatical and contextual knowledge constrains her performance. This lack of both linguistic and interactional competence shifts the teacher’s orientation from a meaning-focused agenda to a form-focused one. Accordingly, he inserts the comparative form “is more famous” (line 35). This shift dissents from the generalization of Seedhouse (2004), underlining how the teacher’s initial meaning-centered goal becomes redirected toward grammatical accuracy in response to the student’s displayed limitations. The teacher’s mediation thus reframes the activity from goal-directed content to a process-oriented accuracy practice that is more attainable for the learner. As a result, SB successfully produces the expected comparative form, “more famous” (line 36). This achievement constitutes a mutual goal for both teacher and student, confirmed by the teacher’s closing assessment token, “good” (line 37). Overall, while the task context positions the teacher as a facilitator, SB’s limited proficiency necessitates more explicit teacher intervention, leading to the teacher-led co-construction outcome. Both extracts (2 and 3) argue that the teacher’s instructional practice is mediated by the pedagogical context and by the students’ participation form. While the pedagogical goal is designed to focus on content, when the students display non-understanding, the teacher adjusts their orientation in response to the students’ limited production.

Figure 4

Extract 4 SPEC—Form and Accuracy in “Should” [00:13:20-00:13:49, May 8, 2025]

- 1 T: When >I say< oh? (1.1) you should buy (.) MacBook.
 2 (2.2)
 3 What word (.) in that sentence (.) that (.) people most of the time use to suggestion.
 4 (0.5)
 5 SA: Should.
 6→ T: Should. Good ((index finger pointing at SA))
 7 (0.3)
 8→ Okay so should is. one of the word (0.3) that you (.) can use when you want to
 make a suggestion

In this extract, the teacher focuses on the modal auxiliary “should” for giving suggestions. Unlike in a fluency-focused context, student involvement here is limited and tightly controlled by the teacher. In the third turn (line 6), the teacher offers the positive affirmation while pointing at the student, “good,” in response to Student A’s correct answer, “should” (line 5), which addresses the question about the key lexical item for making suggestions (line 1). Once SA provides the desired answer, the teacher does not offer any further turns offering questions. By so doing, the role of students becomes a mere participant to check their linguistic knowledge, while the teacher’s evaluative turn “good” functions as a performance indicator (Vattøy & Gamlem, 2020). On the other hand, this may reflect the nature of the task, which is designed to focus on “form and accuracy” (Seedhouse, 2004). Therefore, the teacher’s instructional practice in his third turn, unlike in previous extracts (1, 2, and 3), tends to be outcome-oriented rather than process-oriented.

Figure 5

Extract 5 SPEC— Form and Accuracy in “Shall/Should” [00:22:00-00:23:00, May 8, 2025]

- 1 T: Only one, sentence (.) or phrase (.) that is really: about making a suggestion, or
 2 asking for a suggestion? ((omitted two lines))
 3 Ca- ca- can I hear from you?
 4 (.)
 5 SA: What should we do now.=
 6→ T: = ↑What? (1.4) Good, again, what, what?= ((hand extending))
 7 SA =What should we do now.=
 8→ T: =What should we do now. (0.5) That is (.) suggestion (.) what should we do.
 9→ Okay. what should we do now. °But° we can also say,
 10→ what shall we do now. (0.8) Okay, so. can you, >can you say it again<
 11 (.)
 12 SA: What should we do now=
 13→ T: =What should we do now. Now let's put shall down. What shall we do now.
 >come on<=((gazing at SA and hand extending))
 14 SA = What shall we do now?=
 15→ T: = Good, again?=
 16 SA: =What shall we do now.=
 17→ T: = Alright, so, what should we do now.What shall we do now.
 18→ Okay, (.) that's a suggestion.

Extract 5 illustrates the teacher's attempt to teach the alternative linguistic forms “shall” and “should” for giving suggestions. In response to the teacher's explicit request to share the form used for making suggestions, Student A produces “What should we do now” (line 5). The teacher immediately initiates repair with a minimal question, “↑What?” delivered with rising intonation. After a 1.4-second pause, the teacher escalates the repair by adding the affiliative token “good,” followed by an explicit directive in the echo question, “again, what, what?” (line 6) while extending his hands. The repetition of the wh-question, combined with the directive “again,” indexes that the student's prior utterance is treated as a dispreferred or incomplete response. Yet, Student A's subsequent response remains unchanged.

In line 8, the teacher repeats the student's answer, setting it up as the focal linguistic form before contrasting it with the alternative “shall” introduced in lines 9 and 10. Here, the teacher preemptively accepts SA's response with “should” but modifies it by reformulating “shall” and

prompting the student to attempt the new form. Nevertheless, the student continues to use “should,” indicating that the teacher’s implicit repair through modeling was insufficient for the student to notice the alternative.

To resolve this, the teacher shifts to explicit repair, prefacing it with a time-focused signal, “now,” at the start of what effectively functions as a behaviorist drilling sequence “; let’s put shall down” (line 13) while gazing at SA and extending his hands. This explicit repair integrated with gestures enables the student to reformulate correctly in his next turn, thereby advancing both linguistic precision and turn-taking in a relevant transition (Schegloff, 2007). Notably, the student’s earlier misalignment prompts the teacher’s request for another repetition, accompanied by a positive assessment and a directive prompt, “good, again” (line 15), to check the student’s comprehension of the new grammatical form, “shall”. Finally, the student produces the desired form “shall” (line 16), which is accounted for by the teacher’s acknowledgement, “alright” (line 16).

Unlike the instructional choice in extract 4, the teacher keeps the “question-answer” sequence open to sustain pedagogical engagement until shared understanding is achieved (Wagner & Park, 2022). This extract dissents from the notion of the pedagogical goal’s influence on the learning objective (Seedhouse, 2004), highlighting that while it has some influence on the teacher’s instructional practice, if students cannot engage accordingly, the teacher must necessarily adjust their instructional practice to align with the students’ needs. Note that although the instructional practice in the teacher’s third turn is closely interconnected with the student’s real-time engagement, when students produce a pedagogically aligned response (extract 4), the accuracy-oriented context can constrain equal participation.

Figure 6

Extract 6 SPEC—Meaning and Fluency in “Suggestion” [00:09:00-00:10:26, May 8, 2025]

- 1 T: So what (.) topic do you think you are (.) practicing and studying (.) today. °and°
how do you know that, °oh° I think this is the topic, I think >this is <the topic,
because I heard this. (0.4) Hmm.
- 2 (2.3)
- 3 Anybody knows? (.) Can anyone guess? (.) Um.hmm
- 4 (.)
- 5 SA: °They are looking something to do°=
- 6→ T: =Um.hmm (2.1) okay >again, again< please. ((holds student’s desk and looks down
her))
- 7 SA: =they are looking something need to do.= ((rubbing her palms together))
- 8→ T: =Okay, they’re looking for something to do. with this friends. Okay, so if: you
9 say:: they’re looking for something to do with this friend (.) it means
10 they’re asking for (.) for what?
11 (.)
12 For:: (.) a compliment? or for (.) a suggestion? ((stretching hands by opening
palms))
13 (0.3)
- 14 SS: [°suggestion°
- 15→ T: For (.) a suggestion]
- 16→ Good.

This extract is part of a lesson on “making a suggestion,” in which the teacher asks the whole class to identify the theme of the session. Student A self-selects as the next speaker and responds in a low voice to the teacher’s incremental turn in line 3 with “They are looking something to do” (line 5). When the student finishes her turn, the teacher uses the turn continuer, “Um.hmm” as an acknowledgment token and initiates an other-initiated repair through the explicit directive, “Okay, >again, again< please” (line 6). The teacher produces a hurried tone while holding the desk and looking down at SA. This move displays the teacher’s alignment with Student A’s response while simultaneously scaffolding her to elaborate on the answer (Park, 2014). This accounts for the student’s immediate uptake, “they are looking something need to do” (line 7), which becomes an anchor point to extend the turn.

In line 8, the teacher repeats and slightly modifies the student’s prior response into a semantically meaningful version, “they’re looking for something to do with this friend”. By inserting the missing preposition “for,”

the teacher conducts a covert or embedded correction within a confirmatory frame, “Okay, they’re looking for...”, thereby avoiding covert evaluation (Hall, 2007). The teacher then trails off with a designedly incomplete utterance (DIU), “it means they’re asking for (.) for what?”—deliberately leaving the utterance unfinished to prompt students to collaboratively complete it. This reformulated third turn that upgrades the student’s output while preserving its original meaning in combination with an explicit prompt signals the teacher’s expectation for student inference (Jácome et al., 2016). In other words, the teacher parses the meaning of the utterance by rephrasing and simplifying it—breaking down the relationship between linguistic form “adding for” and communicative function “incomplete question” (Lee, 2007).

In the same turn, the teacher narrows down the possible answers to two options: “For:: (.) a compliment? or for (.) a suggestion?” (line 12). After a brief 0.3-second pause, the whole class responds softly with “suggestion” (line 14), which is immediately overlapped by the teacher’s sequence-closing assessment, “good.” This moment exemplifies how the teacher prosodically and linguistically parses his talk by adjusting to SA’s hesitant response and moment of silence from the whole class (Lee, 2007). Similar to the task-oriented context (extracts 2 and 3), teachers’ use of incomplete prompts, embedded repair, and guiding questions places the students in an equal position to take the conversational floor.

Figure 7

Extract 7 SPEC— Meaning and Fluency through Student Initiation [00:14:33-00:15:27, June 4)

- 01 SA: don't you agree is (.) asking for the opinion.= ((waving her hands))
02→ T: =good (.) don't you agree (.) you got one more= ((nodding and pointing at SA))
03→ =what else don't you agree.=
04→ =to be honest kind of you know, ((looking at the whole class))
05→ Urh (0.4) in my opinion:: (0.5) okay:: and then personally, what else?
((lines 12&13, teacher looks the whole class))
06 (1.2)
07 SB: °what do you think°=
08→ T: = Um.hmm=
09 SB: =What do you think=
10→ T: =What do you think, yeah (.) what do you think,
11→ What do you think. good (.) what do you think.
((16&17, teacher said looking around the class))
12→ do you have any (0.3) from the conversation. (looking at Student C)
13 (1.3)
14→ Hmm ((what's)) your idea as well, ((What's)) your idea. okay good good.
((turning back to the screen))

In Extract 7, waving at the teacher with both hands, SA self-selects to initiate the sequence by asking whether the expression “don't you agree” is used for seeking an opinion (line 1). The teacher validates SA's understanding with the agreement token, “good,” accompanied by nodding and a hand-pointing gesture, before pursuing further responses with “What else?” (line 3), thereby signaling that additional examples or opinions are expected. While waiting for student responses, the teacher provides further scaffolding by modeling other opinion-giving expressions—to be honest, in my opinion, and personally—thus extending his turn to invite broader class participation. These multiple exemplars, followed by the directive “what else” and a hand gesture, prompt Student B to self-select and contribute “What do you think” (line 9) in a low voice. Upon receiving the teacher's acknowledgment token “uh-hmm” (line 8), Student B repeats his turn more audibly, eliciting multiple affirmations and a positive assessment, “good” (line 11). The teacher then continues the sequence by inviting another contribution, asking Student C, “Do you have any from the conversation?” (line 12).

Unlike the prototypical teacher-initiated IRF sequence, where the third turn follows a student's response, this student-initiated sequence reverses the pattern, with the teacher's "third turn" occurring in what would normally be the second position (functioning more like an IF sequence) through a composite F&I move that reclaims the default interactional control (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Following SB's response in line 7, the teacher's turns in lines 8 and 10–11 operate as *extended third turns*, while the incremental turn in line 12 indicates a shift toward eliciting contributions from other students. When no response follows, the teacher brings the sequence to a close with one last example—heard as "what's your idea"—and a sequence-termination signal, "okay, good good," thereby validating the closing of the student-initiated sequence. By this reasoning, the lack of student uptake, as indicated by the micropause in line 13, is treated by the teacher as evidence of comprehension and the absence of further contributions, implying that the class collectively understands the opinion-seeking expressions discussed. Contrary to the teacher-led, form-oriented context (extracts 4 and 5), the teacher's instructional practice in his third turns supports the continuation of student-initiated discourse and idea exchange (Tai & Poon, 2016) rather than providing evaluative criticism.

A Cross-Contextual Synthesis of Third-Turn Practices

In this study, third-turn features recur systematically across the four observed pedagogical contexts rather than occurring randomly. Practices such as affirmation and sequence closing appear across all contexts, whereas designedly incomplete utterances (DIUs) occur primarily in task-oriented and meaning-and-fluency contexts, and modeling is more frequent in form-and-accuracy contexts. Importantly, although these features recur, they accomplish different interactional work depending on the pedagogical goals made relevant in ongoing interaction, consistent with Seedhouse (2004). For example, DIUs in task-oriented contexts facilitate collaborative task completion, whereas in meaning-and-fluency contexts they prompt freer expression, prioritizing communicative flow over grammatical accuracy.

Similarly, embodied resources such as index-pointing and gaze recur across contexts, yet their interactional functions remain highly context-sensitive. Rather than functioning as mere postures, these embodied actions operate as co-speech resources that complement teachers' verbal practices to support learner engagement (see also Cho et al., 2024). In line with Markee's (2004) conceptualization of the third turn as a zone of interactional transition, third-turn practices become more directive and teacher-centered when pedagogical contexts foreground accuracy or urgency and more co-constructive and learner-centered when contexts prioritize participation. Supporting the view of Wagner and Park (2022), while contrasting with

traditional accounts that treat the third turn primarily as a cognitive act of correction or evaluation (Dawson et al., 2019; Vattøy & Gamlem, 2020), this study demonstrates that third-turn practices are dynamically shaped by unfolding pedagogical contexts. In this sense, the findings highlight two analytically observable orientations: contingency sensitivity, which enables teachers to provide precise, moment-by-moment support, and functional orientation, which guides the selection of pedagogical actions relevant to the local context.

Conclusion

This study examined teacher third-turn practices in a single Thai EFL classroom through a Conversation Analysis lens. The single-case analyses documented recurring interactional work accomplished in teachers' third turns and showed that these practices perform distinct functions across pedagogical contexts. In procedural and form-and-accuracy contexts, third turns tended to be more directive and teacher-oriented, whereas in task-oriented and meaning-and-fluency contexts they were organized in more collaborative and learner-oriented ways. Consistent with previous emic CA research (Park, 2014; Seedhouse, 2015) the findings demonstrate that the interactional work accomplished in teachers' third turns is contingently mediated by turn-by-turn sequential organization and shaped by the pedagogical relevance of the moment.

The analysis further shows that embodied resources such as gesture, gaze, and hand movements are recurrently deployed alongside talk as integral components of third turns, contributing to how instructions, participation, and task progression are made intelligible to students in situ, particularly when activities become interactionally complex. Overall, the study illustrates that pedagogical work in teacher third turns is socially and interactionally accomplished through publicly available resources, rather than operating as a purely cognitive act of evaluation. Through close single-case analysis, two analytically observable orientations, namely, contingency sensitivity and functional orientation, were shown to organize how teachers adjust third-turn practices in relation to students' displayed engagement.

While the findings provide data-grounded insights into third-turn practices in one instructional setting, the study is limited in its ability to determine the extent to which these interactional patterns recur across classrooms. Future research may therefore adopt collective case analysis to examine the robustness of these findings across pedagogical settings.

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Appendix A

Transcription Convention (Jefferson, 2004)

[	point of simultaneous speaking (of two or more people)
]	end point of simultaneous speaking
=	talk by two people which is contiguous (i.e., not overlapping, but with no hearable pause in between)
.	Falling intonation
,	rising intonation
word-	a cut-off speak in talk
?	sharp rising intonation
(0.2)	the time (in 10ths of a second) between utterances
(.)	a micro-pause (one tenth of a second or less)
wo:rd	sound extension of a word (more colons = longer stretches)
<u>word</u>	(underline) Emphasized word, part of word, or sound
↑	word rising intonation
↓	word falling intonation
°word°	talk that is quieter than surrounding talk
hh	audible out breaths
.hh	audible in breaths
w(hh)ord	laughter within a word
>word<	talk that is spoken faster than surrounding talk
<word>	talk that is spoken slower than surrounding talk
((comment))	analyst's notes
(word)	uncertain words