Challenges of Providing Learners with Scaffolding during Synchronous Online EFL Teaching

Senkron Çevrimiçi İngilizce Öğretiminde Öğrencilere Öğrenme Desteği Sağlamanın Zorlukları

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ABSTRACT: This study employed Walsh's (2006) concept of classroom interactional competence to investigate the classroom interaction during synchronous online English language teaching. The data of this study is comprised of 8 40-minute video recordings of an EFL class at a state university's English preparatory program. The data belongs to the same group of learners who were taught by the same EFL instructor. The classes were held via ZOOM, a free video-conferencing program. The analysis focused on scaffolding moves of the teacher- specifically reformulation, extension, and modeling moves- for two reasons. First, the data was abundant in terms of teacher talk samples falling into this category. Second, several scaffolding attempts of the teacher were observed to fail due to technology-related problems. There was evidence in the data that the lack of body language harmed the dialogic nature of teacher-learner interaction and reformulation, and extension moves could not bring about extended learner turns. Regarding the unsuccessful modeling, it was observed that the teacher's failure to use annotation tools hindered the learners' noticing of teacher modeling. As a result, these findings have implications for foreign language teachers' adaptation to online teaching and also for the optimization of video-conferencing tools to be developed for educational use.

Keywords: Classroom interactional competence, scaffolding, teacher talk, online education, English as a foreign language.

ÖZ: Bu çalışma eşzamanlı çevrimiçi İngilizce öğretimi sırasında gerçekleşen sınıf içi etkileşimi Walsh'ın (2006) sınıf içi etkileşimsel yeti çerçevesi etrafında incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın verisi bir devlet üniversitesi tarafından sunulan İngilizce hazırlık programı bünyesinde verilen bir yabancı dil olarak İngilizce dersi sınıfına ait, her biri 40 dakikalık 8 video kaydından oluşmaktadır. Veri seti aynı öğrenci grubu ve öğretmenin bulunduğu ders kayıtlarından elde edilmiştir. Ders kayıtları, kullanımı ücretsiz bir video-konferans programı olan ZOOM üzerinden yapılmıştır. Veri analizi öğretmenin öğrenme desteği sağlama girişimleri üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır ki bu girişimler yeniden formüle etme, uzatma ve modelleme biçimlerinde ortaya çıkmıştır. Analizin bu girişimler üzerinde yapılmasının ilk sebebi veri setinde bu kategoriye giren öğretmen konuşması örneklerinin çok sayıda var olmasıdır. İkinci sebep ise, öğretmenin öğrenme desteği sağlama girişimlerinden bazılarının teknoloji nedenli problemlerden dolayı başarısız olduğunun gözlenmesidir. Vücut dili kullanılamayışının öğretmen-öğrenci arasındaki diyaloğu olumsuz etkilediği ve yeniden formüle etme ve uzatma girişimlerinin bu yüzden istenen seviyede öğrenci üretimini getiremediği durumlar gözlenmiştir. Başarısız modelleme girişimlerinin ise öğretmenin not alma araçlarını etkin kullanamayışından kaynaklandığı gözlemlenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, çalışmanın bulguları yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin çevrimiçi öğretim sürecine adaptasyonu ve video-konferans araçlarını eğitimsel amaçlarla etkin şekilde kullanımlarına yönelik çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sınıf içi etkileşimsel yeti, öğrenme desteği sağlama, öğretmen konuşması, çevrimiçi eğitim, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce.

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We are witnessing a shift in our perspectives of teachers' responsibilities in education which is no longer just about teaching content but is mainly about managing the classroom and shaping learner contributions (SLC) to enable learners to make most of the learning experience. In line with this shift, teachers' classroom management has been in the spotlight and referred to as Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC), which briefly describes how classroom discourse (CD) can be used to promote learning if orchestrated properly by language instructors (Walsh, 2006). The teaching endeavor has a highly dynamic structure and it rarely follows one size fits all approach. In order to equip teachers and teacher trainees with a flexible mindset, the orientation of CIC studies has been to describe how CIC emerges in different contexts rather than prescribing them a fixed repertoire (Can Daşkın, 2015). Parallel to this understanding, it is better to treat each language class as a natural habitat deserving to be analysed around its context-specific variables. The employment of conversation analysis (CA) as a research tool supports this approach as CA values how members in a given society use language to form a mutual understanding, 'how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk' (Seedhouse, 2005, p. 166). These turns are influenced by the roles of members and other institutional and context-specific norms. In line with the ethnomethodological nature of CA, which requires researchers to evaluate the data in an agnostic fashion without relying on the premises of any teaching methodology (Seedhouse, 2005), the aim of this study is to describe how an English as a Foreign Language teacher's CIC is influenced by synchronous online language teaching (SOLT), without any attempt to judge or evaluate the effectiveness of her pedagogic style.

Teacher talk is a pivotal component of classroom interaction and teachers' task is not limited to merely ask questions to elicit answers from learners (Huth, 2011), as mostly depicted in the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) circle (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, as cited in Jacknick, 2011). It is undeniable that teachers represent a higher status in the class and they are the ones who control the flow of interaction in the class. Yet, they should be competent enough to maintain this control mechanism to create more opportunities for learners to be active participants in the classroom interaction (Walsh, 2011). Language teachers need to notice how much difference their classroom talk creates as 'class-based L2 learning is often enhanced when teachers have a detailed understanding of the relationship between teacher talk, interaction and learning opportunity' (Walsh, 2006, p.16). As such, it is evident that teacher talk is not arbitrary and optimum features of teachers' talk manifesting desired levels of CIC can be listed as follows:

- 'Uses language which is mode and learner convergent and handles mode switching,
- Facilitates interactional space,
- Shapes learner contributions (SLC) by scaffolding, paraphrasing, reiterating, and so on,
- Makes use of effective eliciting strategies' (Walsh, 2006, p. 131).

Teachers' language fosters the learning process in line with the extent it meets these criteria (Walsh, 2006). Among the listed features of ideal teacher talk, this study focuses on scaffolding as a specific realization of teachers' SLC because as in the study

of Can Daşkın (2015), the data has been found to include abundant samples of teacher talk illustrating the teacher's scaffolding efforts during the recorded synchronous online classes. In order to detect SLC in language classrooms, we have focused on instances where the teacher attempted to 'expand, clarify, or summarise a student contribution' (Walsh & Li, 2013, p. 262). Even if these attempts are not noticed by learners immediately, they are counted as valuable instances where an enhanced learning opportunity is provided for them (Walsh & Li, 2013, p. 263). Though there have been other studies conducted to investigate the language teacher's talk in tertiary education context (Can Daşkın, 2015; Yatağanbaba, 2020) along with other educational levels in Turkey (İnceçay, 2010; Korkut & Ertaş, 2016; Sert, 2017), they all focused on interaction taking place in face-to-face environments. The novelty of this research is bi-dimensional. First, it is the only study focusing on EFL education taking place in SOLT at the tertiary level. Second, it focuses solely on teacher's scaffolding among other CIC components, specifically on situations where scaffolding efforts of the EFL teacher failed due to the SOLT-related features while other studies had a more inclusive approach, which also created the need for digging deeper into specific CIC components.

Online education keeps its upsurge as the technological advances continue and starts to be a component of formal education, especially in these unprecedented times when many institutions are obliged to switch to online teaching platforms due to Covid-19 even without completing preliminary preparations that would normally take years for a smooth transition to digital revolution (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Spoel et al., 2020; Strielkowski, 2020). Despite the fact that the appearance of distance education concept dates back to the 1720s, online education, that is computer and internet-based distance education, is a relatively new field emerging in the 1980s (Bozkurt, 2019). Not only because it has a relatively new history but also because most of the education was delivered in face-to-face system prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, it still presents itself as a new field deserving to be searched more in relation to its benefits and drawbacks. Regarding the advantages, online education is promoted for several reasons: enabling geographically distant learners to gather via technology, enhancing participants' computer literacy, and providing enriched dialogue opportunities between teachers and learners despite the lack of physical proximity (Moore, 1991; Palvia et al., 2018). On the other hand, it is sure to bring some challenges along. Palvia et al. (2018) mention the general negative perception on the quality of online education, participants' inability to master the required technological competence, and students' feeling of isolation from peers and instructors among prevalent concerns. Among the disadvantages of online education, Ni and Aust (2008) highlight 'transactional distance' as the ultimate challenge that needs to be addressed for quality online education.

Transactional distance briefly refers to 'a psychological space of potential misunderstandings between the behaviors of instructors and those of learners' (Moore & Kaersey, 1993, as cited in Ni & Aust, 2008). Moore (1993) argues that transactional distance is not static, and it is manifests itself in different degrees depending on the structural and dialogic features of the online education under scrutiny, which suggests that it is possible to close this gap with careful planning. To close such a gap, above all, teachers are required to depart from their conventionalized teaching habits to respond to varying levels of misunderstandings likely to arise between instructors and learners in online teaching environments and they need to improve the dialogic nature of their

interactions. As such, understanding how interaction is framed in SOLT settings is important in evaluating to what extent language learning objectives are met and what context-specific hurdles await language teachers. Keeping in mind that language teachers are responsible for building and leading classroom interaction in such a way to maximize students' learning (Walsh, 2002), we find CIC in SOLT environments as a highly significant aspect to be explored. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there is no other study exploring pedagogic interaction with a direct focus on L2 teacher's CIC occurring in SOLT.

Regarding how scaffolding takes place in language classrooms, Can Daşkın (2015) conducted a comprehensive research by focusing on all teacher moves of shaping learner contributions in line with Walsh's (2006) framework. She analysed 4-hour teacher talk from the same EFL classroom. She highlighted the changing nature of SLC attempts by discussing how much benefit students get from SLC is highly changeable depending on classroom modes and there is no way for arguing an ideal way of SLC. Cancino (2017) also employed Walsh's (2006) framework and researched EFL teachers' scaffolding moves by narrowing his focus on classroom context mode which aims to elicit learners' feelings and ideas on a given topic. He mentioned that when EFL teachers aim to encourage learner fluency, they should opt mainly for reformulation rather than modeling and extension so as not to interfere with learners' willingness to express themselves. One recent study focusing on scaffolding, though via employing a different framework than that of Walsh (2006), was carried out by Li and Zhang (2020), who investigated scaffolding moves of language teachers in a CLIL setting in a Chinese university. The scope of the research was restricted to reading classes. The researchers listed a comprehensive set of teacher acts, from marking critical features in a reading text to schema building, as scaffolding moves. The results showed that scaffolding moves of the teachers proved to be highly conducive to learning as they simplified the content and paved the way for learners' use of that content in more cognitively challenging tasks. Still, there is no research on how CIC, specifically scaffolding, takes place in synchronous online language classrooms and this is a gap that deserves to be addressed for several reasons.

Partially due to the compulsory transition to digital education with Covid-19 and mostly as an extension of the fact that digitalization of higher education has been growing as a popular option in educational settings (Kopp et al., 2019), the Turkish Higher Education Board has enacted a recent regulation on 27.05.2020 and online education has been a formal and encouraging mode of delivery in HEIs in Turkey. However, particularly teachers, who are considered to be 'digital immigrants' who need to work hard to harvest pedagogical benefits of technology (Kopp et al., 2019), have been challenged by this transition to online teaching. Along with digital literacy, such as online-compatible lesson preparation (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020), maintaining a positive attitude towards online teaching (Spoel et al., 2020) and classroom management, including the use of appropriate pitch (Mahmood, 2021), have been difficult skills to master for teachers on online contexts. Among all of these issues that require detailed attention, this paper specifically focuses on teacher talk as the primary means of classroom management and specifically explores scaffolding moves of an EFL instructor in SOLT. The study should be particularly useful in that, to the best knowledge of the researcher, it is preliminary as it focuses on scaffolding taking place

in a formal structured classroom interaction via SOLT. Regarding the obligatory transition to online teaching and learning platforms, the findings should have also implications about the nature of teacher education which needs to adapt itself to the new form of educational delivery.

Early Work on the Analysis of Teacher Talk in Online Education

Parallel to the technological developments and the spread of distance education, online language learning environments have been investigated under different research frames. The majority of the data supporting the existing research is seen to be mainly textual, along with few exceptions analyzing face-to-face online education.

Compton (2009) investigates language teacher qualities required to deliver effective online language teaching by highlighting that language teachers need more than digital literacy to achieve this task. The researcher has proposed three main categories covering the skills a language teacher needs to be competent in online teaching. These three categories are digital literacy skills, online teaching pedagogical skills and online teaching evaluation skills. Though Compton has reached this set of skills thorough literature review and all of them sound plausible, the discussion framed in his study revolves around asynchronous computer-assisted language learning while we do not know what influence language teachers' talk create in SOLT.

One other study was conducted by Guichon (2009) who explored the set of skills that language teachers need during SOLT. The researcher has identified target competencies through reflections of a group of language teacher trainees in relation to their own online teaching. The emerging set of competencies was comprised of three main categories: socio-affective regulation, pedagogical regulation, and multimedia regulation. Gouichon's study is more related to our research as the pedagogical regulation requires language teachers to question to what degree they fulfill learning objectives and how effective the teacher feedback is in favoring language learning through SOLT. Our study will contribute to this area of research in that data coming from real teacher talk in SOLT is analyzed.

Murphy et al. (2011) provide an overview of the features of effective distance language teachers with a comparative focus as they have collected the data both from distance language instructors and distance language learners. What is meant from the distance education here is inferred to be a learning environment where students are assigned tasks to complete by themselves and later get feedback from their instructors in tutorials that may take place face-to-face or via telephone. The researchers have reported that both groups of participants have emphasized how important it is for language teachers to know their subject field and support learners in language skills and how crucial it is for language teachers to provide affective encouragement for their learners. Though useful to understand teacher-learner interactions in asynchronous settings, this study does not provide us with insights into the flow of spontaneous learner-teacher interaction in SOLT.

Many recent studies in relation to the content of online education being offered in compulsory post-pandemic crisis have been conducted. The ones related to decision-makers either focused on online teaching policies and preparations of educational institutions (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020) or on teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards online teaching (Cutri et al., 2020; Darling-

Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Quezada et al., 2020). Mahmood (2021) is the only one to mention the elements in relation to teachers' talk. Accordingly, teachers should speak slowly and gently, encourage student involvement by asking questions and integrate critical thinking tasks into the classes. Though these suggestions reflect general principles, they do not provide us with concrete implications about the nature of SOLT conducted via video conferencing.

The only study that has been conducted in relation to the discourse of language teachers during SOLT in a formal setting belongs to Hampel and Stickler (2012). In their study, the researchers describe how interaction occurs among participants, including teachers and learners, taking a five-week German course via video conferencing. Due to the software structure, which did not allow more than one speaker to speak at any given time, the researchers report observing teacher-dominant spoken data while learners were seen to convey their messages via a written chat tool. They have also mentioned the teacher's active use of text chat for several purposes: responding to students, modeling written language, and summarizing spoken interaction. They draw the conclusion that many of the features associated with face-to-face interaction can be carried out if the affordances of the software to be used for video-conferencing allows. Their study points at text chatting's functioning as a tool to compensate for the lack of features specific to face-to-face spoken interaction, such as the use of body language or back-channeling.

Still, as for the aforementioned studies, the study of Hampel and Stickler (2012) falls short of addressing the gap this study aims to fill. First of all, it does not specifically provide insights about the features of teacher's talk attempting to shape learner contributions during SOLT. Secondly, the program they employed was not developed enough to allow multiple speakers synchronously. As such, there is still a dearth of studies to comprehend what language teachers go through during their synchronous online teaching experience. This study will build on existing literature by providing the most recent evidence on the thanks to the employment of a highly improved video-conferencing tool, which is ZOOM, for data collection.

Method

In order to observe how CIC manifests in SOLT, 8 hours of synchronous online EFL classes offered in the English language preparatory program of a state university were transcribed in detail. The same EFL instructor taught the classes to the same group of students for two consecutive days. According to in-house placement test results, the participants, who were all intermediate level, were verbally informed about the study before the first class by the researcher who joined the session and left immediately after informing the learners. These learners were all enrolled in the same university's English preparatory program. Though gender is not a variable in the study, there were five girls and three boys in the group whose mean age was 20. Since the medium of instruction was fully English in this university, it is proper to assume that these learners had a high level of instrumental motivation during the data collection as they first needed to prove their language proficiency in order to study their majors. It was emphasized that all personal information was going to be kept confidential. Moreover, the ethics committee approval was taken from the university, with which also the instructor was affiliated.

The classes were recorded automatically via the video-conferencing application being used to hold the sessions. The application used was ZOOM, a video-conferencing tool that allowed 40-minute group recordings consecutively. It was reported to be chosen by the teacher because it was free for the users who signed in the system and the administration of the preparatory program chose it as the platform to be used. Though the application is available for general user profile, it is known to be widely used in educational contexts. The program allows users to join the meetings through their preferred modality, via audio or/and video options, by logging into the application without installing it into their personal computers. Users may mute themselves or/and turn their cameras off at their convenience.

In this study, CIC has been taken for framing teacher talk as a field of inquiry and CA methodology was employed to evaluate CIC emerging in a series of SOLT that was conducted during the Covid-19 outbreak. The study's primary aim is to investigate how teacher talk is shaped during the SOLT setting. CA has been found useful as a methodology of analysis in that it values each conversation with attention to context-specific properties and enables us to systematically analyze the interaction under scrutiny. As such, this study adopts a qualitative research design and it functions as a case study in that the CIC of one EFL teacher was analyzed by focusing on scaffolding moves. This study aims to answer the following research question:

- How are EFL teachers' scaffolding moves affected by SOLT?

Data Analysis

Since this study has no comparative design similar to Can Daşkın (2015) and Sert and Walsh (2013), video-recordings of one EFL instructor who addressed the same group of students (*N*=8) throughout the classes was used as the data. Prior to the study, the instructor was informed and her approval was taken for the analysis of 8 hours. Since the school policy was to videotape the classes and share them on a platform where all enrolled learners could reach them, in case they would like to revisit course content, the instructor herself recorded the classes and shared them with the researcher too, after each class.

The analysis in this study focused on three recurring forms of scaffolding as a kind of SLC, namely reformulation, modeling, and extension. In total, three sets of extracts have been used in the study in order to analyze each type of scaffolding. An emic perspective to the analysis was undertaken to understand how the interaction was shaped by the participants in the data set. As Seedhouse (2005, p. 166) argues, emic perspectives do not impose a static framework for a conversation to happen and rather tries to uncover the participants' way of seeing things and how they 'develop a shared understanding of the progress of the interaction'.

Still, it may prove useful to delineate the borders of scaffolding in order to validate how they were identified in the data set. Scaffolding is a term basically referring to any learning process where a novice is assisted to achieve a goal beyond his initial capacity and this process is attached more importance than the outcome as the novice gets most from the process rather than the achieved goal (Wood et al., 1976). This assisted learning process has been widely associated with Vygotskian Sociocultural Approach and has been valued in relation to second language acquisition (Antón, 1999). Though scaffolding may manifest itself in different forms, this study complies with

Walsh's CIC concept, according to which, scaffolding attempts of a language teacher who tries to shape learners' contributions may happen in the form of either reformulation, modelling, or extension.

Ethics Committee Approval

Ethics Committee Approval for this study was obtained from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research and Publication Ethical Committee Board of Social Sciences University of Ankara (No: 7926, Date: 22.10.2020).

Findings

As teacher-scaffolding was tracked by focusing on the instanced of reformulation, modelling and extension in the data set, the findings will be presented in line with these categories. Though there were successful scaffolding moves in the data set, the SOLT context was not detected to be a facilitative factor in those instances. However, SOLT was observed to interfere with the teacher's success of several scaffolding attempts, as will be discussed below.

Reformulation

Reformulation by a teacher is achieved 'where a learner's contribution is reworked using language which is more appropriate' (Walsh, 2006), as the following extract from the data set exemplifies:

Student 1: He is in the second picture is bored.

Teacher: He is bored, yeah, he is bored. He is looking bored.

Reformulation is valued on the basis that it promotes noticing of an error by learners (Thornbury, 1997) and facilitates language learning process by directing learners' attention to what is missing in their deviant language productions (Nassaji, 2007). Extract 1 illustrates how the teacher attempted to reformulate learner utterances in a specific instance taking place in classroom context mode.

Extract 1

Reformulation in Classroom Context Mode

1 T: ok <now we have a text here a sample text but before reading this sample

2 text I want you to focus on your ideas< before writing an essay what do you

3 do?

4 (.86)

5 do you take notes you prepare an outline? do you do brainstorming? or do you

6 start and write the essay?

7 (3.15)

8 L1: I am preparing

9 (1.27)

10 T: hı hı you → you get prepared for the essay you do brainstorming =

11 = L2: plan to write ↓

12 (0.79)

13 T: you hı hı → you plan what you will write ok.

14 L2: organizing ideas

15 (0.86)

16 T: hı hı → how in paragraphs you will write and what you will write

17 paragraphs ok↑ very good so↑ if you'll write an advantage and disadvantage

18 paragraph you brainstorm and you write the advantages and disadvantages

19 right↑? then then what else do you wrITE? what else do you BRAINstorm?

* → has been inserted prior to reformulation of the teacher.

In Extract 1, the teacher is setting the scene for a writing assignment given in the coursebook where learners are going to first read a text and then write their own advantages/disadvantages essay as a reaction to that text. Before assigning the task, she tries to elicit basic steps of writing an advantage/disadvantage essay from her students. As this is a phase where the teacher attempts to establish a context for the next writing activity, it is considered to be materials mode (Walsh, 2006). Reformulation in this extract happens in three ways. First, the teacher structurally modifies a linguistically correct form to capture the intended meaning by adding a little elaboration. From line 1 to 6, the teacher is seen to elicit what the students take into notice while writing an advantage and disadvantage essay. Between these lines, she tries to facilitate the learners' thinking process by reminding some alternative strategies. The first reformulation move of the teacher appears in Line 10 after L1 responds 'I am preparing' in line 8. Though her answer seems grammatically accurate, the teacher takes it as grammatically problematic and in Line 10, she reformulates it as 'you get prepared' because what the student says apparently falls short of representing what she exactly means. Moreover, the teacher is seen to extend the learner's utterance by anticipating how the learner gets prepared for writing tasks and the teacher juxtaposes her own elaboration just after the reformulated part: *you do brainstorming*. This instance is thought to be a failed effort of scaffolding as there is no extension by L1, even no attempt to repeat the teacher's correction, which is accepted as proof of students' noticing (Sert, 2017).

In the second case of reformulation, the teacher makes a move solely as a linguistic correction of a non-target form. In line 11, L2 expresses his strategy in an incomplete phrase 'plan to write' and the teacher reformulates his saying in line 13 as 'you plan what you will write'. Again, similar to the first case of reformulation, there is no learner extension here. Moreover, in his next move in line 14, L2 gives another incomplete response "organizing ideas" and the teacher takes it as in need of improvement both in form and meaning as it is evident from her reformulation in line 16. She reformulates it in a completely different wording and she not only improves the linguistic features of the student's utterance but also carries the student's idea into a higher level by explaining what the word 'organizing' means in an essay writing task. This third case involving the teacher's further contribution explicitly appears to be a scaffolding move in the response stage of IRF sequence where the teacher not only reformulates what students say but also elaborates by adding more thought into it in line with the aim of task at hand (Cullen, 2002).

As another form of scaffolding, modeling is also a prominent feature of teacher talk in foreign language classrooms. While using modeling in the language classroom, a teacher's focus is mainly 'to provide an example for learners' on a linguistic unit (Walsh, 2006, p. 44). Walsh (2006) identifies the following turns as a case of modeling, made especially in obtrusive way in order not to interfere with the student's fluency, in the following sample:

'Learner: the good news is he boughted the new car

Teacher: =he bought a new car=' (p. 21)

In the following extract, the teacher offers modeling in a situation that starts as skills and systems mode, which later transforms into the materials mode as she elicits correct answers from the learners for a form-focused exercise about relative clauses.

Extract 2

Modelling in Skills and Systems Mode

1 T: YES, what means the things which which thing what hı hı yes good so

2 relative clauses and relative pronouns and you can go to page a hundred and

3 five and you can find some relative clauses and pronouns

4 (0.75)

5 but here let's see what you know let's do these exercises together here we have

6 six sentences and these sentences have some mistakes of course related to the

7 relative clauses relative pronouns ok let's find the mistakes and correct them

8 so first one is instead of which we should use what how about the second one?

9 find it and tell me

10 (2.5)

11 L1: what=

12 = L2: which =

13 =L3: where =

14 =L4: less =

15 =L5: whose =

16 (1.07)

17 L6: which=

18 = T: which instead of what↑?

19 (1.24)

20 L1: which who which

21 (1.89)

22 T: YESS hı hı → >instead of who, we should use which<

23 L: [or that]

24 L: [or that] yeah

25 T: good how about third one?

26 (4.60)

27 L L: /who/ /who/

28 (2.03)

29 T: who was who → instead of bla bla we should use bla bla

30 (1.70)

31 L L: /which/ /that/

32 (2.70)

33 T: ok → instead OF

34 (0.80)

35 L: that =

36 = T: whERE

37 (2.01)

38 L: that

39 T: we should use that yes which or that good very good yes FOur

   * → has been inserted prior to modeling of the teacher.

In Extract 2, the teacher sets the scene for an exercise in which the learners are supposed to find and correct the mistakes about the use of relative pronouns. Since the teacher's actions, such as eliciting, modeling, and evaluating, will be based on the language presented in this exercise, it can be considered as the materials mode (Walsh, 2006). The teacher describes what the learners are supposed to do and she immediately starts the activity without allocating any time for the learners to find the correct answers by themselves. In line 9, the teacher asks the learners to tell her the answer for the second item of the activity and after having waited for two and a half minutes, she gets several different responses, out of which only two answers are correct. In Line 22, the teacher attempts to consolidate the learners' noticing of the correct answer and she repeats the answer by inserting it in a phrase 'instead of who, we should use which'. This is her first attempt at modeling. In line 25, the teacher seeks the answer for the third item. She gets the correct answer from two different students who speak simultaneously. In line 29, the teacher seems unsatisfied with the answers and by her question 'who was who' and she implies that the response of the students is not in the form she expects. The teacher further provides a model phrase: *instead of bla bla, we should use bla bla.* However, in line 31, we see that two different students again speak simultaneously and give the answer without even attempting to use the phrase the teacher has just modeled. In line 33, the teacher tries to remind the model phrase by asking '*instead of*?' and she still gets another one-word response in the next line. In her very next turn, the teacher herself also responds with a one-word utterance. Similar to the previous reformulation case, the modeling attempt by the teacher seems to fall short of scaffolding learners to utilize the linguistic support provided for them to produce not only structurally accurate but also longer turns.

As it manifests itself in the data, the third form of scaffolding is extension, which basically refers to a teacher's shaping a learner's production to be more comprehensible to other learners (Walsh, 2006).

Extract 3

Extension in Materials Mode

  1 T: ok how about the third paragraph?

  2 (1.62.)

  3 another trick > what is the other trick<?

  4 (7.50)

  5 thESE↑ other tricks like whAT↑?

  6 [like placing]

  7 L1: [yeah they are placing]

  8 popular items, placing in aisles=

  9 = T: yea → placing items alone a section so that people have to walk all along

10 the aisle looking for them the ideas is to boost dwell time what does it

11 mean?

12 (2.81)

13 L2: waiting

14 (1.49)

15 T: hı hı → the length of time people spend in a store yes what else?

16 (1.89)

17 in the other paragraph here? is there a trick here?

18 (9.13)

19 L1: they joyed or (( )) **((inaudible))**

20 (2.70)

21 T: hı hı↓ =

22 = L2: so the people feel hunger maybe?

23 T: yesss because of instore bakery

24 (1)

25 → when you smell bakery you get hungry and you want to buy something more

    * → has been inserted prior to extension of the teacher.

Extract 3 illustrates three consecutive extension attempts made by the teacher. This part of the class is again in materials mode as the class is studying a reading text. This is a skimming activity in which the learners are expected to identify several selling tricks described in the target reading text. As the teacher checks the answers, three consecutive extension moves are observable.

In line 3, the teacher asks a display question 'what is the other trick' to see if the students have comprehended the text. In line 6, when the teacher herself is about to give the answer after having waited for 7.5 seconds, her speech latches with that of another student and the teacher passes her turn to that student. The student partially gives the answer and in the next turn in line 9, the teacher completes the missing part of the argument. Here, she makes the answer comprehensible to other students by extending the argument. In lines 10 and 11, she asks another display question for a vocabulary

item and another student gives a one-word answer in line 13. Again, the teacher extends the learner's answer herself and provides a full definition for the target word in line 15. In line 17, the teacher asks another question, but a quite long waiting time, -9.13 seconds- elapses before any student attempts to answer. In line 19, a student answers but his answer gets less and less audible as the voice fades. Here, it is unclear whether it is because of a connection problem or the student's uncertainty about the answer. The teacher waits for another 2.7 seconds for the student to take the opportunity to speak again, but the student keeps silent. The final attempt of the teacher to get learner extension is seen in line 21. In line 21, when L1 does not continue, the teacher shows her acceptance of the student's two-word utterance by saying 'hı hı', which also indicates that she is expecting to hear from that student. Girgin and Brandt (2020), who investigated teachers' uses of 'Mm hm' as a form of minimal response token, reported that when this utterance was produced with a falling intonation after a pause (see Line 21), it indicated that the teacher expected more talk from the student. In this extract, the teacher's attempt to get more from that student fails because another student, L2 starts a follow-up turn in Line 22 before L1 could not get the chance to elaborate her speech. For L2's contribution in line 22, the teacher is not asking for elaboration from the student, but she is presenting a detailed explanation herself in her turn.

Discussion and Conclusion

It is clear that SLC is an essential feature of teacher talk in foreign language classes taking place in online synchronous environments as much as it is in face-to-face education. Our study provides evidence.

In terms of the general turn-takings happening in SOLT, the Initiation-Response-Feedback interaction pattern was salient and all the scaffolding moves were observed in the feedback move, which is similar to the observation of Can Daşkın (2015) who tracked CIC in face-to-face education. Feedback move corresponds to the post-expansion phase as described by Sacks et al. (1974; as cited in Jacknick, 2011). Post-expansion in IRF sequence means that the teacher as initiator of a turn adds another turn to interaction upon students' response so that teachers may act on the contribution of students. This observation suggests that IRF sequence, frequently observed in conventional education, is also prevalent in SOLT. It is language teachers who determine the flow of the communication. Though this may be interpreted as a sign of teacher-dominant class structure as expressed by Hampel and Stickler (2012) in their study, it is not a threat to the quality of teaching taking place in SOLT. On the contrary, it may be accepted as a sign of how similar online-lessons can be to face-to-face lessons as teacher's leading position is a prevalent feature for this latter context (Walsh, 2006). Moreover, abundancy of teacher talk does not necessarily point at teacher's lecturing but at teachers' efforts to lead students to express themselves more. Similar to Putri's (2015) study, which reports that teachers' talk was mainly comprised of moves such as questions that promoted more learner contribution or appraisals that created a positive environment, our study shows that teacher talk keeps its facilitative role in online second language learning.

One other prevalent challenge arising with SOLT is the scarcity of non-verbal messages of participants, which is abundant in physical language learning settings. Regulations on personal data protection in Turkey empowers students not to open their

cameras during the lessons unless they are volunteer to do so. This creates a challenge for a language instructor in having eye contact with students in the class as students are there but hide themselves via off-cameras or mute options. Learners who participate without their cameras and probably see unmuting themselves as a burden threaten the 'dialogic nature of teacher-learner interaction' (Moore, 1991, p. 5), which is an essential element impacting the success of distance education. Similar to what Zhang (2013) reports for virtual SLA environments, this study has found that the absence of eye contact between participants, specifically between the teacher and the students, degraded the potential success of the teacher's scaffolding efforts, for all three types, extension, modeling, and reformulation. This finding of our study is in line with other studies that confirm the importance of facial expressions in allowing teachers to manage interactional organization through their gazes and gestures in face-to-face settings. Reddington (2018) observes how the teacher in her study utilizes her own gazes to embody an active listenership and to convey the students several meanings, i.e., to bind a student's contribution to the comment of a previous student, to indicate the closing-down of a student's turn, and to signal to the whole class that there are further items to be discussed. Girgin and Brandt (2020) also report how the teacher in their study employs gazes successfully to elicit extended learner turns by indicating that a further response was being expected from the student on the spot. Moreover, teachers' body language, along with facial expressions, is known to be an important tool contributing to the impact of teacher talk (Murphy et al., 2011; Sert, 2015, 2017). Paralinguistic features are essential for teachers to build rapport with learners (Peachey, 2017) and improved SOLT education should enable these features as much as possible. To compensate for this lack, software programmers may consider improving the function of cameras to be used in educational settings so that teachers may act in a wider physical space and use their body language in front of the screen as well. Sert and Walsh (2013) report that the teacher could understand if the student was eager to continue her turn by paying attention to her gaze as a clear sign of her willingness. But in the given online class, the students' cameras are turned off. It is difficult for the teacher to even identify a student when s/he produces only two words, aside from checking the student gazes. Moreover, the teacher's perseverance to ask for clarification in this study seems impeded by the low quality of the learners' internet connection. Unintelligibility resulting from poor connection quality negatively influences teachers' determination for eliciting extended learner turns.

The modeling attempt of the teacher probably failed because learners may not have noticed her modeling as the teacher did not provide the written version of the target linguistic formula. This assumption regarding the failed modeling attempt is based on Walsh's (2002) observation, according to which the discourse moves of the foreign language teachers may not always create the desired facilitative influence on learners' contributions. In this study, the restricted learner involvement has a lot to do mainly with the online teaching environment. If the teacher in this study had used text chatting or a word file for writing down the expression, the students would have noticed her modeling. As Zhang (2013) suggests, systematic optimization is needed for the application to be used for synchronous language teaching in order for teacher talk to achieve the desired goals. An ideal video-conferencing tool should provide users with a practical e-white-board option for teachers or students to write down language samples

without relying on a chatbox. An interactive whiteboard that allows both students and teacher to work on it simultaneously plays a highly supportive and facilitative function in teachers' classroom management (Peachey, 2017).

Regarding reformulations in this study, it is impossible to infer if the students, involving those whose utterances were reformulated, could notice the corrections made. This is because the teacher did not ask for further comments from the students she corrected and did not check if they noticed her reformulation. It is impossible to precisely understand why the teacher did not ask further questions as there are undoubtedly different parameters driving teachers' in-action decisions in the class. Still, depending on our observations, we predict that the video-conferencing tool, Zoom, should be one of the main factors influencing the teacher's insistence level on seeking to what extent the students notice her reformulation moves. In ZOOM, when there are multiple participants whose images expand the borders of the screen, the view of a person speaking at a specific moment does not automatically appear at the top of the screen, which makes it difficult to identify who is speaking.

Additionally, in SOLT, where it appears to be a hassle for some students to turn their cameras on or unmute themselves, the teacher experiences difficulty in maintaining a dialogic interaction with her students. In conclusion, the nature of synchronous online classes seems to require extra effort from teachers to see if their reformulation has been comprehended or not and to encourage extended learner turns. Finally, the teacher's reformulations in this study were mainly in the form of embedded recasts, where the teacher reformulated the erroneous student output 'without highlighting the error or prompting the learner to respond to feedback' (Nassaji, 2007, p. 527). However, it was seen that some of the teacher's reformulations brought along no student repair, which is similar to Nassaji's study (2007). Nassaji reported that embedded recasts without prompts mostly resulted in no student repair. This suggests that L2 teachers may enhance the influence of their scaffolding moves by combining them with some other CIC components, such as a direct question or teacher echo, to elicit a follow-up utterance from students during SOLT.

As for teacher extensions, the teacher's filling in the gaps may have obstructed extended learner turns in this data set, as in the study of Walsh (2002). In Extract 1, we see three consecutive instances where the teacher takes the learners' outputs and reformulates them in enriched sentence structures. This may indicate that the teacher was trying to connect with the learners by showing that she was an attentive listener and understood their messages well. Alternatively, the teacher may have found it difficult to lead learners to repair their own utterances as she could not have eye contact with them, and she may have found it more practical to provide her own extended speech. This observation is in line with the results of Moorehouse (2020), who also reports that discussions taking place via video-conferencing were marked with the abundance of students' lengthened silence and short responses.

The findings of this study suggest several courses of action to improve the quality of SOLT. First of all, it proves useful for teachers and learners to work simultaneously via video-conferencing programs as long as all participants are willing to keep their cameras on. Otherwise, the teacher is not able to control the flow of interaction via the employment of non-verbal communication tools such as gestures and eye contact.

Secondly, language teachers should be more insistent on eliciting longer responses from students. In order to do so, they need to observe the type of teacher reformulation that encourages learners to contribute more. Additionally, they should notice that it may be more tempting to fill in learner gaps, especially in SOLT, rather than insisting on getting a response from learners as it is quite challenging to make invisible students talk. As reported in Li and Zhang's (2020) study, teachers should pay attention to providing support without putting learner autonomy at stake. If teachers' scaffolding attempts turn into full responses that fill in learners' space, learners will not feel autonomous and responsible for participating in the class.

Moreover, online teaching is known to foster the sense of isolation and procrastination attitude, especially in language learners (Peachey, 2017), and it is again teachers who need to adopt pedagogical moves to increase students' motivation. They need to highlight the importance of dialogic interaction in the classroom for learning to occur (Li & Zhang, 2020). In order to make sure that dialogic inquiry of teachers gets the necessary response from learners, teachers may announce some classroom rules from the very beginning to highlight that classroom participation is a prerequisite for success.

One other issue is that even though all participants turn their cameras on, teachers will still have problems using paralinguistic features as fully as in face-to-face settings (Peachey, 2017). To compensate for this limited non-verbal messaging, teachers may try finding alternative ways of conveying their non-verbal messages via using emoticons in text chatting, as in the study of Hampel and Stickler (2012). All of these suggestions take us to the conclusion that pedagogical competences required for synchronous online teaching need to be discussed by considering the digital setting's features (Baran & Correia, 2014; Peachey, 2017). As Peachey (2017) points out, even teachers can feel the sense of isolation if they are not provided with support during online teaching. As such, transition to online teaching should not be treated as a smooth process, and we should prepare both pre-service and in-service teachers for this mode of education.

Finally, as the affordances in SOLT are different from face-to-face education, the teacher should have added another move to check whether students utilize her/his scaffolding moves by using another CIC component such as a display question. As Sert (2017) illustrates in his study, in order to assume that noticing of a linguistic input by the learner takes place, we need a learner initiative as a proof where a learner indicates an awareness on the target structure, i.e., by questioning or attempting to use it, which is lacking in the scaffolding situations analyzed in this study.

There are limitations to this study. The study relies on the same group of participants, making it less generalizable. Furthermore, the study used CA as the analysis tool, and we did not have interviews with the participants. If we could question the participants' reasons behind specific actions, we would be able to match our inferences with their explanations. Finally, CIC comprises of several other elements along with scaffolding and those elements also need to be investigated to see how they are formed in SOLT settings.

Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to be reported for this study.

Author Bio

The researcher conducts research in the field of teaching English as a foreign language and her research interests mainly cover pragmatics, intercultural sensitivity, English for academic purposes and classroom discourse.

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Appendix 1

Transcription Conventions (based on Walsh, 2006 and Can Daşkın, 2015)

>< <>	'Greater than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they surround was noticeably faster, or slower than the surrounding talk.
(1.8)	Numbers enclosed in parentheses indicate a pause. The number represents the number of seconds of duration of the pause or the lenght of silence
(would)	When a word appears in parentheses, it indicates that the transcriber has guessed as to what was said, because it was indecipherable on the tape. If the transcriber was unable to guess what was said, nothing appears within the parentheses.
((would))	unintelligible 4 seconds: a stretch of unintelligible speech with the length given in seconds
=	Turn continues, or one turn follows another without any pause
↑↓	Up or down arrows are used to indicate that there is sharply rising or falling intonation. The arrow is placed just before the syllable in which the change in intonation occurs.
CAPS	Capital letters indicate that the speaker spoke the capitalized portion of the utterance at a higher volume than the speaker's normal volume.
Bold	The writer's comments (in bold type)
// //	Overlapping speech by more than one learner
[do you understand?] [I see]	overlap between teacher and learner