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# Hold-ups in classroom interaction: The multiactivity of managing students' participation in a Brazilian primary school

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Anhand von Videodaten aus einer brasilianischen Grundschule beschreiben wir ein Phänomen, das wir Hold-ups nennen. Bei hold-ups handelt es sich um Handlungen der Lehrperson, die dazu führen, dass solche Initiativen oder parallele Aktivitäten von Schülerinnen und Schülern gestoppt werden, die mit einer laufenden Aktivität nicht in Einklang stehen. Unabhängig von ihrer sequentiellen Position (nach der Selbstauswahl eines oder mehrerer Schülerinnen und Schüler oder als Folge mangelnder Aufmerksamkeit von Schülerinnen und Schülern) regeln hold-ups die potenziell störenden Handlungen und fördern gleichzeitig die laufende Unterrichtsaktivität. Um die Multiaktivität durchzuführen – einerseits eine laufende Klassenraumaktivität zu fördern und gleichzeitig zu verhindern, dass die sequentielle Progressivität durch eine konkurrierende Aktivität beeinträchtigt wird – bedient sich die Lehrperson einer Reihe von multimodalen Ressourcen (z.B. Gesten, Körper- und Objektbewegungen, Blick, Prosodie). Durch die Multiaktivität der hold-ups sozialisiert der Lehrer die Erstklässler in die Praktiken und Regeln für die aktive Teilnahme an den Klassenaktivitäten und ermöglicht es den jungen Lernenden, die Klassenaktivitäten als kohärenten Gesamthandlungsablauf zu erkennen. Die Ergebnisse beleuchten die Feinheiten der Multiaktivität von Lehrpersonen und bieten Einblicke in Studien des Portugiesischen aus einem verkörperten interaktionalen Ansatz.

### **Stichwörter:**

Grundschule, Mehrparteien-Interaktion im Klassenzimmer, Verkörperung, Multiaktivität, Koordination von Schülerpartizipation, Sprecherwechsel Sozialisierung, Portugiesisch, Gesprächsanalyse.

### **Keywords:**

primary school, multi-party classroom interaction, embodiment, multiactivity, participation management, turn-taking socialisation, Portuguese, Conversation Analysis.

## 1. Introduction

Teachers draw on a vast embodied repertoire to do the specialised work of promoting learners' participation and maintaining their shared attention while still advancing the pedagogical activity at hand (Hall & Looney 2019). Likewise, students face classroom-specific interactional challenges, such as getting access to the floor (Waring 2013; Sahlström 2002; Cekaite 2007; Kääntä 2012) and asking for clarification (Kääntä & Kasper 2018; Somuncu & Sert 2019). How teachers and students jointly accomplish classroom activities has been mainly investigated within the scope of conversation analytical classroom research (Gardner 2019). Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis (EMCA) has been argued to be a suitable framework to study classroom interaction primarily due to its methodological apparatus, which allows for detailed analysis of the practices and actions that teachers and students accomplish as they meet in pedagogical settings (Hall 2019; for a full review, see Gardner 2019). This paper aligns with this body of work and, drawing on data from a primary-school classroom, focuses on a specific interactional practice used to manage students' potentially disruptive participation.

Teachers' complex work of managing students' participation, monitoring their engagement with the lesson, and ensuring the progression of the lessons – especially in the case of young learners, who are often willing to participate and get easily distracted (Tulbert & Goodwin 2011; Sidnell 2015; Gaspelin, Margett-Jordan & Ruthruff 2015) – has only begun to be unpacked (see the chapters in Hall & Looney 2019). Hall et al. (2019), looking at data from a second grade American Geometry class, offer some insights into this matter in the light of the affiliative work that teachers have to do in order to manage students' contributions. In their paper, they showed how a question posed by a student during an activity of storytelling was held up by the teacher through a pointing gesture and smiley voice, which allowed her to reach the end of the story.

In the cases found in our database, 60 hours of video recordings collected in a Brazilian primary school classroom, a similar phenomenon takes place: a student initiative or parallel activity is held up by the teacher as it co-occurs with an ongoing classroom activity or course of action. Following Waring (2011), we use the term *learner initiatives* to refer to contributions that are not invited by the teacher at a particular point in the interaction (e.g. when a student speaks right after another student has been selected as the next speaker). As for *parallel activities*, we refer to them as moments during the lesson when students display orientation to matters other than the central activity (Koole 2007; Ishino 2017).

We have labelled the package of conversational practices employed by the teacher to deal with students' actions in these moments *hold-ups*. Hold-ups are triggered by students' actions that fail to display engagement or that do not comply with the turn-taking system. In classroom settings, action coordination is highly dependent on the infrastructure of the pedagogical project, i.e., "a

course of action through which institutional goals are enacted in the form of multi-party interaction"<sup>1</sup> (Kimura et al. 2018: 9). Therefore, what seems to be oriented to as an interruption by the student to the pursuit of the pedagogical project is a *potentially disruptive activity* (Ishino 2017) that may impair its progressivity. Ishino suggests this term when investigating parallel activities students engage in, which can put their own learning opportunities at stake:

as teachers are in charge of creating students' learning opportunities [...], they are obliged to put an end to such students' departures from the two-party speech exchange system because of its potential disruptiveness of the institutional goal. (2017: 42)

In his paper, Ishino analyses one specific practice to deal with potentially disruptive activities, which involves asking an "exam question" to a student who is engaged in a parallel activity. This interactional move ultimately brings the parallel activity to a halt.

The practice of dealing with potentially disruptive activities that the present paper reports involves accomplishing two actions simultaneously. Hold-ups constitute multiactivity: simultaneous courses of activities that are coordinated by means of embodied actions and vocal conduct (Mondada 2011; Haddington et al.. 2014). Therefore, this study contributes detailed multimodal analyses of how students' actions are dealt with when a main classroom activity is taking place. It adds to the literature on "the embodied work of teaching" (Hall & Looney 2019) by unpacking the range of simultaneous vocal and bodily resources teachers employ in managing students' participations that do not align with an ongoing classroom activity.

## 2. Turn-taking and multiactivity in multi-party classroom interaction

Two aspects of multi-party classroom interaction are particularly important for this paper: turn-taking and multiactivity. Turn-taking encompasses the various means by which teachers and students take, hold on to, and yield the interactional floor to others. The complexity of turn-taking during teacher-led classroom interaction has been majorly described along the canonical three-part action sequence known as Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback (IRE/F) (Mehan 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard 1975; Wells 1993; Hall 1998; Hellermann 2005; Margutti 2006; Waring 2009; Molinari et al.. 2013; Margutti & Drew 2014; Li 2019)<sup>2</sup>. Within the IRE/F sequence, the teacher is in charge of allocating turns. He or she determines whether students are to wait to be called on or are free to respond at will (McHoul 1978; Mehan 1979; Cazden 1988;

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the paper, we use *pedagogical project* when referring to the broader pedagogical goals the teacher pursues, which can only be observed in retrospect. *Classroom activity* is used specifically to refer to an ongoing activity within this larger project.

<sup>2</sup> The first action is a teacher *initiation* (I) (a question or directive), and projects a second action, a student *response* (R). This action displays the student's understanding of what he or she is expected to do and/or know. The student's response projects a third action, the teacher's *evaluation or feedback* (E/F), addressing the adequacy of the student's response.



Koole & Berenst 2008; Sert & Walsh 2013). Students' turns are allocated by the teacher via a range of verbal and multimodal resources, such as student-naming, finger-pointing and gazes. For their part, students raise their hands, look at the teacher, and position their bodies towards him or her in ways that indicate their readiness to participate (Kääntä 2012; Mortensen 2009; Mortensen & Hazel 2011; Sahlström 2002).

More recently, a number of interactional studies have argued that breaks in the tightly constrained structure of the IRE/F<sup>3</sup> create "tactical moments of student agency" (Jacknick 2011: 51). Likewise, ceding the interactional floor to the students when they initiate turns is said to create learning opportunities (Oyler 1996; Waring 2011; Jacknick 2011; Box 2015). Oyler (1996), for instance, argued that, by taking up student initiations during read-aloud activities in a first-grade classroom, a teacher had access to students' personal stories and understandings and, therefore, encouraged students to be producers, "not just consumers of knowledge" (1996: 152). Similarly, Waring (2011) claimed that when learners initiated turns, they acted beyond simply responding to the teacher's questions and projected themselves as language users, as opposed to mere learners. In her study, the actions initiated by the learners' initiatives accomplished actions such as informing or persuading, which are more clearly related to learning how to participate in social contexts beyond the classroom.

In classroom interaction with young learners, teachers face the dual challenge of managing students' participation (bids for the floor and the types of contribution they make) while also socialising students into the classroom turn-taking systems. In these contexts, socialisation into turn-taking procedures is a locally joint interactional achievement that is part of the pedagogical agenda (Jung & Gonzales 2009; Lave & Wenger 1991; Ohta 1999; Cekaite 2007; Moore 2008; Ochs & Schieffelin 2011). Notably, participation management and socialisation into multi-party classroom turn-taking practices take place in the midst of teachers' need to constantly monitor students' attention and interactional engagement. From an interactional perspective, being engaged is closely linked to "being actively involved in the conversation" (Greer 2019: 160). Attention has to do with the organisation of children's body in space – the creation of alignment of children's attention and the shift of their attention from competing activities (Tulbert & Goodwin 2011; Waring & Carpenter 2019). In the case of classroom teaching, the spatial-orientational arrangement of most classrooms allow the teacher to monitor student's attention and participation through students' embodied displays of (dis)engagement in central activities (Waring & Carpenter 2019).

Managing turn-taking and monitoring engagement while also socialising young learners into appropriate ways to participate is thus an integral part of primary

<sup>3</sup> The IRE/F is one among several types of turn-taking systems observed in classroom settings. Waring (2013) provides a review of other systems.

school teaching. This fact makes primary school classrooms particularly suitable for teachers to carry out multiple activities simultaneously, in which they have to organise their conduct and distribute multimodal resources when managing concurring orientations (Mondada 2014). However, little is known about how this work gets done from an interactional perspective and more research is needed.

Haddington et al.. (2014: 3) define multiactivity as "the different ways in which two or more activities can be intertwined and made co-relevant in social interaction". They suggest that favouring the term *multiactivity* over *multitasking* accounts for the fact that a *task* usually involves expected conducts or specific goals and could even be *verbalised* in a work environment. Conversely, although an *activity* could be "formulated in so many words", they "are often *implemented* rather than *verbalised*" (2014: 11). Therefore, through conversation analytical lenses, multiactivity *emerges* when interactants face overlapping demands in conducting simultaneous multiple courses of actions (activities), which makes them display mobilisation and coordination of verbal and embodied resources in ways that deal with the requirements and the contingencies of a situated context. When "engaging in multiple courses of action, participants have to choose which resources they mobilise for which line of action" (Mondada 2014: 151), which is not randomly achieved, rather, it is performed through specific collaborative and intersubjective work among interactants. This emergence is a pervasive element of teachers' work, yet still underestimated (Hall 2019; Hall & Looney 2019) in the context of teachers' training or continuing education programmes.

Since classroom conversational management has to do with the progressivity (Schegloff 2007) of both the interactional sequences as well as of the current pedagogical project, multiactivity may impact on the progressivity of the interaction. In this respect, Keisanen, Rauniomaa and Haddington (2014) have investigated how items such as "wait" or "hang on", followed by some account or reallocation of activities, form a multi-unit suspension turn. The design and temporality of this multi-unit suspension turn displays incompatible activities going on in a given sequence and support an ordering of the actions that is "consecutive" rather than "simultaneous" (2014: 109). Similarly, Schegloff (1998) had previously documented body torque as an element of "postural configurations" which constitutes interactions since "it can impinge on the conduct of the participants and shape the way they interactively produce the talk" (1998: 536). Schegloff explains that orientations to different courses of action can be displayed by divergent positions of a person's body segments – such as their trunk, neck, head, eyes, and legs – , projecting a shift in alignment from one activity to another. Additionally, these divergent positions can reflect the management of priorities in trajectories of actions.

In the excerpts we are going to analyse, the ongoing activities do not become incompatible nor do they need suspension. Rather, they are simultaneously

performed and timed, without major disruptions in progressivity, reflecting the management of priorities in trajectories of actions, as Schegloff pointed out. A similar analysis was done by Kääntä (2012) in the context of upper elementary and high school language teaching. Through multimodal analyses of teachers' embodied allocations during whole-class instructional interaction, Kääntä unpacked the "division of labour" between vocal and embodied resources for allocating turns. Although the terminology *multiactivity* was not used in the paper, it was precisely such that her analyses unveiled: the multimodal turn allocations that teachers performed through bodily-visual resources, such as eye gazes, pointing and nodding, and the ongoing talk that was doing actions unrelated to turn allocation were produced at the same time.

The present paper builds on Kääntä's study by further investigating the simultaneity of teachers' activities: managing participation while advancing the pedagogical project. The fact that the students in our data are still being socialised into classroom norms poses major extra challenges to the teacher in terms of participation management. Furthermore, differently from Kääntä, our focus is not on how students are invited to contribute to classroom talk, but on how students' actions are overridden so that the classroom main activity and the current actions within it may continue. Due to the nature of our data, we argue that hold-ups are a rich semiotic toolkit that supports both action accomplishment and student socialisation into the rules of classroom participation.

### 3. Data and methods

Our data come from a larger corpus of 60 hours of classroom interaction involving the teaching of Portuguese as a first language, video-recorded in eight public primary schools in Brazil from 2011 to 2014. The recordings were generated for a project focused on the planning and development of Didactic Projects of Genres (DPG)<sup>4</sup> (Guimarães & Kersch 2012), a methodology for teaching Portuguese in which teachers and students decide on a genre to be worked on in several workshops. For the present article, our analyses are based on a collection of 12 cases (five hours and fifteen minutes in total), in a class of 24 first-graders aged six and seven. In this group, a written self-portrait was selected as the genre to be studied. Since most of the students are not literate yet, the teacher sits with them and they tell her what to write. This written self-portrait, along with drawings and other related productions, were to form a personal portfolio, which each student would later give to their parents as a gift.

The cases were selected under the following criteria, which emerged from repeated observation of the data: 1) they contain students' initiatives or parallel activities that are oriented to by the teacher as potentially disruptive; and 2)

<sup>4</sup> Research project supported by the Observatory of Education program (Capes/Inep, Edital #038/2010).

multiactivity is observed, i.e., students' actions are dealt with (attempted to be held up) at the same time that the ongoing classroom activity is carried out by the teacher. All the cases in our collection come from whole-class activities, in sequences of storytelling and instruction giving, and occur in two different interactional environments within a sequence: following a student's initiative or parallel activity.

Transcriptions are based on the Jefferson's system (2004) and on Mondada's conventions<sup>5</sup> to capture bodily conduct. The first line of each excerpt shows the original interaction in Portuguese, below which a translation into English is provided. All names are pseudonyms.

#### 4. Analyses

The analyses focus on the package of conversational practices through which students' initiatives or parallel activities are held up by the teacher as they concur with the main classroom activity. In order to show how different aspects of the teacher's conduct engender moments of multiactivity we are referring to as hold-ups, we have separated vocal conduct from bodily conduct. Together, both work to hold up students' initiatives or parallel activities, as follows:

Turn<sup>6</sup> 1: An action (initiated by the teacher) is being carried out

Turn 2: An action is initiated by one (or more) student(s) / a parallel activity is carried out by one (or more) student(s)

Turn 3 (vocal conduct): The prior action taking place in turn 1 is carried out by the teacher and thus overrides the action projected in turn 2

Turn 3 (bodily conduct): The teacher attempts to hold up students' action

In our collection, pervasive characteristic of both potential disruptive activities is that they are produced at moments when attention from the students is required by the teacher. This becomes evident if we look at pedagogical project in retrospect and if we pay attention to the use of turn-initial discourse particles in Portuguese, such as "então" and "tá" (in English, similar forms would be "so", "well" or "okay", or sometimes "look"), which relate to the teacher's instruction giving, and call for students' attention (Christodoulidou 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Current version (2016) available at [https://franz.unibas.ch/fileadmin/franz/user\\_upload/redaktion/Mondada\\_conv\\_multimodality.pdf](https://franz.unibas.ch/fileadmin/franz/user_upload/redaktion/Mondada_conv_multimodality.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> By *turn* we mean one's time to speak. A turn is made of at least one unit-type, such as "sentential, clausal, phrasal or lexical constructions" (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974: 702). We also align with Keevalik (2013) in understanding "unit" as a multimodal one, or, as she suggests, a "syntactic-bodily unit" (2013: 2), since we consider that parallel activities by students get the valence of turns when the teacher orients to them as potentially disruptive and attempts to hold them up. We have numbered the described turns in order to indicate the position the utterance occupies within the sequence.



### 4.1 Hold-ups triggered by students' initiatives

In this section, we describe the hold-ups triggered by students' initiatives. While Excerpt 1 features a student's initiative that is immediately held up by the teacher, Excerpt 2 shows initiatives that face some resistance from the students. We are going to show that, when facing resistance from the students, the teacher resorts to vocal conduct to address students' potentially disruptive activity without any major impact on progressivity.

Excerpt 1 follows a classroom activity of drawing a self-portrait based on a photograph of each of the students. At this point, the teacher is summarising the key points of the activity they have just finished. She is eliciting students' contributions about their physical features in order to raise their awareness of people's physical characteristics, as this will be relevant for the other activities within the project on self-portraits. Right before this excerpt (interaction not shown), the teacher asked an open question "what can you notice about one's hair, for example?", without selecting a specific student, which led to the interactional problem of all students self-selecting and volunteering answers at the same time. Then, the teacher reformulates her turn by selecting specific students (naming and gazing at each of them). We join the interaction when a third student is selected to speak. The teacher formulates her turn with "what else", to indicate that the same question is still the topic of the interaction, and allocates Ada as the next speaker (line 1). However, it is Bia (line 2) who offers a turn.

#### Excerpt (1) - What else [0012\_00:25:31-00:25:42]

```

01 TEA      que mais *ã:h *ada +jana+  *=
             what else uh  ada jana
                        *points to ada*
                        *gazes at ada--->1.4
bia
             + -1-+

02 BIA      =#↑sora °sora°*#xx
             teacher teacher
tea
             *moves RA to the side of body, opens palm with
             stretched out fingers, LA on waist--->
fig
             #fig. 1      #fig. 2 ((zoom at fig. 3))

03 ADA      °ãh (.) se o cabelo era: (.) cacheado°
             uh      if the hair was      curly

04 TEA      se* cabelo era cacheado é pra ver se ele era liso ou cre**spo
             if the hair was curly is to see if it was straight or curly
             -->*moves RH to the left and to the right repeatedly-----*
             -->*.

05          ã:: evan
             u::h evan

1 moves raised hand

```





Fig. 1

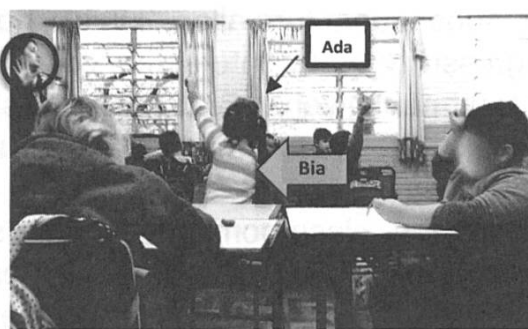


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

When the teacher is finishing uttering the name "Ada Jana", Bia (line 1), who had already raised her hand before the teacher selected Ada, moves her raised hand towards the teacher right before calling her twice ("teacher teacher", line 2). Bia's bid for the floor at this moment, when the turn had already been allocated to Ada, disaligns with the current action and is thus blocked. Bia does not align with the display of a divergent orientation of the teacher's body (Schegloff 1998), which is positioned towards Ada when the teacher allocates this pupil to speak. The management of Bia's turn involves a complex set of interactional resources from the teacher's part. First and foremost, the teacher maintains her gaze to Ada (line 2), displaying availability to receive her response and disaligning with Bia's initiation, which then overrides Bia's turn. This action is further highlighted by the teacher's gesture, which involves holding up her right hand towards her right side (towards Bia), with her palm facing that side of the class, in a stop fashion (Fig. 3). The bodily resources that are used by the teacher to hold up Bia's turn are contingently linked to the spatiality of that situation: the configuration of participants' bodies in that space at that very moment allows the teacher to continue engaging solely with Ada (looking at her and waiting for her response), while blocking Bia's initiative. The fact that Bia is sitting on the teacher's right side gives her full access to the teacher's body positioning and visual field. The teacher is able to hold up Bia's turn by positioning her right hand towards Bia; simultaneously, the teacher maintains an orientation to the production of Ada's allocated contribution by keeping her entire body turned to Ada's direction. And indeed, the teacher is successful in securing Ada's slot to speak (line 3) without any insistence on Bia's part. Ada's

contribution is followed by the teacher's assessment of her answer (line 4) and by a subsequent turn allocation to another student (line 5). Besides maintaining progressivity of the interaction and of the ongoing classroom activity, through the treatment given to Bia's initiative, she and the other children in the classroom are being presented with the local rules of how and when to self-select. One could even claim that the rules they are being socialised into in this case go beyond the classroom turn-taking system. After all, a noticeable rule of conversation in general is that a current speaker may select a next one (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). Subverting that rule by taking the turn when another person has been selected requires a solid account or context-specific elements which could allow it to happen.

Excerpt 2<sup>7</sup> is an example in which the teacher's resources to hold up students' initiatives face resistance from the students. The current activity consists in a read-aloud, which is part of the pedagogical project of drawing students' attention to the differences between similar graphemes. The words whose graphemes the teacher introduces in this lesson are "wolf" and "cake", which, in Portuguese, are respectively "lobo" /lobu/ and "bolo" /bolu/, differing only in syllabic order (the stress of both words is on their first syllables). Before beginning the read-aloud activity, the teacher requests that students remain in silence to listen to a story about a wolf. As the teacher ends her extended turn, she turns the open book to the students, giving them access to the illustrations in the pages that she has just read (line 4). She moves the book slowly from left to right so that all students can view it (Fig. 4).

**Excerpt (2) – The wolf [410\_00:08:59-00:09:45]**

01	TEA	mesmo assim a ↑chapeuzinho tinha even so Little Yellow Riding Hood had
02		ma::is medo (.) <de medo do medo do medo> more fear of fearing the fear of the fear
03		de um dia encontra:r, (.) o lo:::bo::: of one day finding the wo::l:::f
04		um ↑lobo que não exis*tia*•# a ↑wolf who didn't exist *...*turns open book to students *begins to move open book slowly from left to right so that students can view it--->l.12 #fig. 4
fig		
05	ST1	eu não tenho medo de lobo. i'm not afraid of wolves (.)
06	ST1	nenh[um medo not al all

<sup>7</sup> Since we cannot see the students in this excerpt, we have used the abbreviation ST plus a number in the corresponding students' slots of the transcription.

07 ST2                   [o: pro[fe  
                          hey teacher

08 ST3                   [nem eu\*  
                          me neither  
tea                        \*gazes at student, eyes wide open-->

09 ST4                   (#Δtô aqu[i)  
                          ( i'm here)

10 TEA                   [sh::[::: ((shushes students))  
tea                       Δmoves one finger towards mouth-->  
fig                       #fig. 5

11 ST2                   [PROfe]=  
                          TEAcher

12 ST5                   =>eu \*tenho uma cachorra\*•-<  
                          i have one female dog-  
tea                       -->\*looks at some sts \*  
tea                       -->•

13 TEA                   \*sh::- agora é hora de:  
                          sh::- now it's time to:  
                          \*sustains eye gaze--->  
                          (.)

14 ST5                   °fechar >a boca<°  
                          close one's mouth

15                        (.) #\*Δ(0.2)Δ\*#  
tea                       -->Δ--1--Δ  
fig                       #Fig. 6  
tea                       -->\*.....\*turns open book to herself to continue  
                          storytelling  
fig                       #Fig.7

1 moves finger to bottom of book page again



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

After that, several other comments emerge from the cohort (lines 6-9). This sparking turn (a self-assessment in a first TCU upgraded by a second TCU) displays affiliation with the stance made available through the story (one should not fear a wolf, differently from the main character), but disaligns with the teacher's course of action, since it invites the other students to produce turns as well. Note that the student's turn is placed right when the teacher stops reading from the book and starts showing the images. This indicates that the students treat the breach in the vocal part of the storytelling as a suspension in the progressivity of the story and of talk itself (e.g. a transition-relevance place<sup>8</sup>) and thus, as a candidate slot to contribute a turn. One of the initiatives that follow (line 7) is a bid for the floor, given its summons-like format, employing a category address term (Lerner 2003), and the other (line 8) aligns with the previous student's self-assessment regarding one's fear of wolves. Although students' turns are not off-topic (at least not the ones from ST1 and ST3) and display their engagement with the story being told, their placement and the personal topics that they carry may be a threat to the alignment required for the ongoing activity. The activity itself involves a moment of silence, when the students are supposed to look at the images in the book quietly. Besides that, by producing those turns, students are not complying with the silence required by the teacher right before the beginning of the activity. This understanding is displayed by the teacher in the subsequent turns, as she gazes in the direction of the students who self-selected (line 8). In the meantime, she carries on with the ongoing action – showing the pictures in the book – by slowly moving the book to the right. The teacher's multiactivity – the gaze and the continuation of the image showing – is attempting to hold up students' initiatives. Possibly pre-empting some resistance from the group, and indeed a fourth student produces "I'm here" (line 9), the teacher moves her index finger towards her mouth and resources to a shushing sound (Fig. 5). Nevertheless, students produce more initiatives: ST2 insists in gaining the teacher's attention in overlap with the shushing (line 11), visibly not aligning with the teacher's request for silence, and ST5 produces a possible story preface (Sacks 1974; Lerner 1992) ("i have a female dog", line 12). At this moment, the teacher gazes at them, attempting to put an end to the disruption. When she finishes moving the book from one side to the other, the teacher shushes students again and reminds them to behave according to the proposed activity by producing the designedly incomplete utterance (Koshik 2002; Margutti 2010) "*now it's time to:*" (line 13). It is worth noticing that gazing at and shushing the students (lines 10 and 13) are resources the teacher uses when aligning with the course of action of holding up students' initiatives while being with hands and trunk constrained by the movement of the book (Schegloff 1998). She does not interrupt the moving of the book in order to deal with

<sup>8</sup> Transition-relevance places are points in the interaction that conversational partners identify as a possible end of the turn of the current speaker, where they may initiate their own turn without interrupting one another (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974).



students' initiatives or orchestrate their attention, thus avoiding a halt in the progressivity of both the current action and of the classroom activity. Instead, she uses other body resources (eye gaze, index finger to lips and shushing) to continue the lesson: showing the book's illustrations to the students. By not speaking, the teacher multimodally makes a call for (displays it to students through her conduct) the silence needed at that particular moment.

Let us now turn to the objects and the spatiality of that moment as well as to the contingencies linked to the holding up of the initiatives from the students. The teacher only explicitly shows the students that they were misbehaving when the movement of showing the images in the book reached its completion. This overt reminding the students of their expected conduct (line 13) and the following students' completion of the teacher's turn (line 14) temporally emerge once the teacher is done moving the book. These turns occur right before the teacher turns the book to herself again (line 15, Fig. 7) to continue the read-aloud activity.

This example shows how the teacher is able to progress with the ongoing classroom activity despite students' disruption. Interestingly, students seem to orient to basic rules of turn-taking here, producing their turns at TRPs or moments when there is silence from the teacher. Another socialising action that is being supported in the example refers to the fact that not all silences from the teacher mean it is students' turn to speak. The complexity of turn-taking socialisation is reflected by these different layers, in which TRPs are observed, but there is more to social action than vocal conduct. Students are also to learn that there is an action taking place despite the teacher's silence, i.e., there is one part of the activity happening through her bodily conduct. They are, therefore, being socialised into how to recognise a classroom activity on course.

#### *4.2 Hold-ups triggered by students' parallel activities*

In this section, we describe the hold-ups brought about by a student activity that runs in parallel to the teacher's activity. Excerpts 3 and 4 show two students' parallel activities that are held up by the teacher. Excerpt 5 is an example in which the resources employed to hold up a student's parallel activity face resistance from the student and escalate into vocal ones.

Excerpt 3 is taken from a lesson that followed the activity of drawing self-portraits (mentioned in Excerpt 1). Students are sitting in a circle and the classroom activity consists in eliciting words that can be used to describe one's own physical and psychological characteristics. The excerpt features a transition within this activity, when the teacher is giving instructions on what students are supposed to do next: contribute with one adjective at a time, following the order in which students are seated. The teacher produces two particles, "okay" (in Portuguese, "ta", line 1) and "so" ("então", line 2) which



index a call for students' readiness and improved attention to what follows (the instructions).

**Excerpt (3) – Each one [391\_00:13:38-00:13:53]**

```

01 TEA      ta.
             okay

02 TEA      *+.hh#entã*o <a*go::ra|**,>
             so      now
             *-----1-----2-*---3---*
             *eyes down at pencil case
eri         +....+turns to right and talks to classmate--->1.4
fig         #fig. 8

03          (.) ((low-volume parallel conversations can be heard))

04 TEA      <*ca:d*+a& +*t~Δu::#:m*~Δ>
             each      one of you
             *....*turns head to right--->
             *-----4-----*
             ~nods to eric~
eri         -->+...+turns to the teacher
             †looks at the teacher--->
eri         Δ---5---Δ
rob         &looks quickly at teacher and then at pencil case
fig         #fig. 9

05 TEA      *εnta *su:a@ ve#:z@†
             on each time
             @---6---@
eri         -->*....*looks down at pencil case
rob         &tilts head to the side--->>
fig         #Fig. 10

1 turns head and left arm backwards to get pencil case
2 moves head back to the centre
3 brings pencil case to lap
4 sustains eye gaze at Eric
5 nods slightly to tea
6 grabs and holds pen
7 looks at pencil case

```

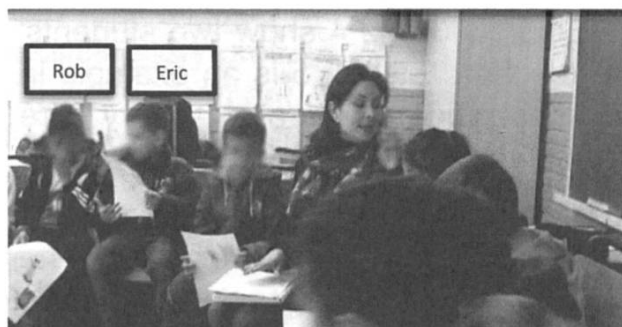


Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

While the teacher prefaces the instructions that she is about to give the students with "so now" (line 2), she moves her head and left arm backwards to get her pencil case (Fig. 8). By the end of this turn, she has already put the pencil case on her lap and moved her head back to the centre. The trajectory of this movement is produced in coordination with her verbal conduct, and she finishes vocalising the word 'now' while she looks at the pencil case on her lap. During the teacher's production, Eric turns his gaze to his right and talks to his classmate Rob. Parallel conversations can be heard (line 3) and, although we do not know for sure if the voices are truly Eric's and Rob's, the teacher turns her head to that side (line 4, Fig. 9), displaying orientation to what they are doing while she continues speaking to the class. When Eric turns to the teacher and looks at her, she sustains eye gaze with Eric while also nodding slowly. The trajectory of this nod is coordinated with the elongated pronunciation of the word "um" (*one*, in English) and, almost simultaneously, Eric also slightly nods in response to the teacher, coordinating thus with her head movement. While Eric turns to the teacher (line 4), Rob looks quickly at her and then to the pencil case on her lap. After having successfully held up the parallel activity from Eric and Rob, drawing their attention back to the central activity, the teacher goes back to the exact point where she was before noticing the parallel activity: she looks down to the pencil case and, this time, grabs a pen (line 5, Fig. 10).

The grounds for arguing that the teacher is orienting to a parallel activity are based on participants' body conduct, which makes available their disalignment with the central classroom activity: although their bodies are still in a sitting position, ready for the main activity, their heads – mainly Eric's – are displaying a divergent orientation; also, Eric's trunk is slightly turned to his classmate's side (Fig. 8), which is opposed to the teacher's (Schegloff 1998). Altogether (and possibly through their voice as well) these elements display a different orientation from what students were supposed to be doing at that moment (displaying listenership and readiness), with the current central classroom activity. After the described body conduct of the teacher (head movement, eye gaze and nodding, accompanying the marked prosody of the word *one* while nodding), the students indeed shift their body conduct, displaying a (re)orientation to the collective activity and to the teacher's current actions. In



Subsequently, the teacher (line 4) aligns with students' answers and prefaces (notice the use of "okay"—in Portuguese, *ta*—and "then"—*então*) the formulation of what she is going to do next (explain the word to them). During this prefacing, Liam (line 4) starts to shake his body fast (Fig. 11), with the head going up and down. During the actual explanation of the word to the class (line 6), the teacher's bodily conduct holds up Liam's from continuing to move (Fig. 12). She turns her head to the left side and looks at him and even moves her trunk towards him, bending a little while pronouncing the word "characteristics" in a prosodically marked manner. Through the duration of the teacher's body postures – looking at the class as a whole when producing an explanation or looking and turning specifically to Liam – the priority between those courses of action is displayed (Schegloff 1998). This conduct shows she is requiring his attention and engagement. Halfway through the teacher's delivery of this lexical item, Liam complies with her requirement: he has already stopped shaking his head and body. Nonetheless, Liam's name is uttered at the end of the teacher's turn ("Liam Gilberto", line 6). By stopping Liam from continuing to shake his body at that moment, the teacher's hold-up also prevents his actions from distracting other students, who could orient to Liam's unusual body movement thus straying away from the central activity. Regarding Liam's behaviour, right before the word "characteristics" is uttered by the teacher, he quickly glances at the her but avoids maintaining eye contact. He does the same when he hears his name. Liam complies with the teacher's requirement, but does not engage through eye gaze with the teacher (Fig. 12). Note that the pupil's activity does not produce noises that could disturb the classroom, but the parallel activity of shaking his body evidences disengagement with the central activity. The hold-up, in this case, suggests that the teacher is doing interactional work to ensure that Liam is engaged in the current activity.

In excerpt 5, the resources employed by the teacher encounter resistance from the student and then escalate into vocal ones. The teacher selects Ada (line 1) to present her drawings in front of the class. The sequence has a specific participation framework: students are called one at a time and occupy a prominent position in the classroom, presenting their drawings to the others. The students have to secure the floor to the classmate who is presenting by being silent and looking at him/her without initiating turns. In doing that, they display their engagement (as listeners) in the activity. As the teacher questions Ada about what makes her sad, one of the students, Ray, is playing with a plastic bottle. He has placed it upside down and is now shaking his desk and, consequently, the bottle (Fig. 13). Observe that the bottle Ray is playing with gets dropped and produces a disruptive noise to the central activity (line 3).

**Excerpt (5) – What makes you happy [M2U0018\_00:06:48-00:07:04]**

- 1 TEA           o que te dei#xa triste ada  
                  **what makes you sad ada**  
ray             Δshakes table with both hands, water bottle  
                  standing upside down on the desk--->1.3  
fig             #fig. 13
- 02 ADA           que a minha mãe vai embora  
                  **that my mom goes away**
- 03 TEA           que a mãe dela vai embora muito Δbem  
                  **that her mom goes away very well**  
ray             -->Δbottle falls on ray's lap  
                  and makes noise
- 04 TEA           e o que \*te dei\*x a +fe+li:z+----->  
                  **and what makes you happy**  
                  \*.....\*turns and gazes at ray---> (1.6)  
ray             +...+--1--+
- 05               (0.3) •  
tea             \*extends LA to the left, palm facing up--->
- 06 ADA           \*a chuva  
                  **the rain**  
tea             -->\*turns and looks at ada--->
- 07 TEA           @†\*a \*+chu#::va:†  
                  **the rain**  
                  ->\*..\*turns and gazes at ray--->  
st3             @looks at teacher's hand--->  
ada             †looks at the bottle--->  
ray             +-----2-----+moves bottle towards tea's hand--->  
fig             #fig. 14
- 08               pode me emprestar•† @obri\*gada  
                  **can you lend me thank you**  
tea             \*holds bottle and puts it on her desk--->  
                  -->\*  
ray             -->†eyes down, crosses arms  
st3             -->@
- 09               • (.)•†  
tea             -->\*.....\*turns to ada again  
ada             -->†
- 10 TEA           então ta pode me dar teu trabalho,  
                  **okay then you can give me your drawing**
- 11               agora o evan vem aqui no cantinho,  
                  **now evan will come here to the corner**

1 gazes at tea with a closed-lip smile

2 looks at teacher's hand, holds bottle





Fig. 13

Fig. 14

It is important to highlight that before questioning Ada, the teacher had already looked towards Ray and his bottle, although the bottle was standing in its upright position on his desk and he was not playing with it then. Ada answers the question asked by the teacher and shares her drawing with the whole group (line 2). The teacher repeats it, adding an assessment ("very well" – in Portuguese,  *muito bem* ) of Ada's turn (line 3). This is the moment when Ray's bottle falls onto the desk and then onto his lap, producing noise. As the teacher turns to Ray (line 4), he looks at her with a closed-lip smile.

The multiactivity here relies on the teacher's continuing the interaction with Ada (line 4) while looking at Ray and extending her left arm in a gesture projected to be understood as requiring the object in his hands, therefore holding up his parallel activity. Since Ada has lost contact with the teacher's eye gaze (line 4), Ada delays her response a bit (line 5), answering only when the teacher turns her gaze back to her (line 6). After Ada delivers her response, the teacher repeats it while looking back at Ray (line 7), who resists complying by not handing the bottle to the teacher. At the same time, Ada and another student are also oriented to the teacher's extended arm towards Ray (Fig. 14). At the end of the teacher's repetition of Ada's turn, Ray starts the trajectory of handing the bottle to the teacher, and this movement reaches its peak while the teacher escalates to the use of verbal resources, explicitly asking for the bottle and then grabbing it (line 8).

Note that the teacher designs her bodily conduct in coordination with her voice, therefore maintaining the interaction with Ada – the central activity here. The teacher displays divergent orientations by means of two different body postures: one in which the course of the action is dealing with a parallel activity from a student, and the other in which the course of the action is questioning, displaying reciprocity and validating Ada's contribution. However, the fact that the teacher does not move her entire body or at least all its upper part above the waist towards Ray's direction displays that addressing Ada's answer has priority (Schegloff 1998) over holding up Ray's parallel activity. This speaks for the teacher's orientation towards the progressivity of the ongoing activity.

Although the focus of this paper is to describe the teacher's multiactivity, which is an integral part of her doing being a first-grade teacher, the multiactivity is also seen on the conduct of her students. Students, at this early age, also coordinate their initiatives and parallel activities amid the implementation of the classroom activities by orienting to multimodal resources. Not only do they orient to what the teacher is saying, but also (and even mainly) to her eye gaze, trunk, head movements, and prosody. As our cases show, the children themselves while chatting with a classmate, for example, use hearing as a practical resource to orient to the time of ceasing a parallel activity, either by orienting to the teacher's marked prosody (Excerpt 3), or when her voice sounds as produced from a closer point (Excerpt 4).

In this section we showed how the multiactivity of holding up students' actions while also furthering the current classroom activity is accomplished by the teacher. Through her voice, the teacher carries out the main sequence, i.e., the ongoing classroom activity. At the same time, she uses bodily resources to show the students that the main sequence cannot be breached at that specific interactional slot. On a more general level, hold-up sequences allow for the interactional project to be advanced, assure classroom interaction progressivity, and support the socialisation of young learners into the classroom's turn-taking system and into the need to display engagement with the ongoing classroom activity.

## 5. Discussion

The empirical analyses developed in this paper have focused on hold-ups, an interactional practice for managing students' participation in whole-class instruction. Hold-ups work to impede students' initiatives or parallel activities as they concur with the main classroom activity (normatively oriented to the pedagogical project). The orientation to students' initiatives or parallel activities in these moments is twofold. Through vocal conduct, the ongoing classroom activity is advanced and through the interplay between bodily resources, surrounding objects and talk, students' potentially disruptive actions are dealt with.

In exploring a small but significant collection of Brazilian classroom interactions, we focused on the various embodied ways through which hold-ups are accomplished. Simultaneously, the teacher uses hand gestures and movements, body positioning, gaze, head, eye and object movements, and prosody to show the students that the side sequences that their turns call for or the parallel activities they are engaged in do not align with the ongoing classroom activity at that point. In general, this coordination of resources does not halt the progressivity of the sequence. However, we have also analysed hold-ups that initially encounter resistance from the students. The resources mobilised in these cases escalate into the use of the teacher's voice explicitly

addressing students' lack of alignment with the current local actions. Interestingly, the teacher's vocal conduct is designed and positioned in a way that maximises progressivity. For instance, in excerpt 2, the teacher's turn "agora é hora de:" (*now it's time to:*) (line 13) occurs right after she finishes showing the book to the students. And in excerpt 5, the teacher does not deal with the potential disruption that the student's playing with the bottle may cause until Ada's answer is produced and assessed. That is, the teacher skillfully produces her vocal sanction at the end of the current sequence within the larger classroom activity.

Understanding this package of conversational practices and the multimodality involved in it can shed light on the complex interactional work done by primary-school teachers. As it was shown, this work involves a great deal of multiactivity. This has to do with the fact that, in order to carry out a pedagogical project, teachers have to deal with the contingencies of interacting with young learners, who may have trouble navigating the speech exchange systems of institutions. They need to manage students' participation (as in other educational settings) while also ensuring students' increased familiarity with the constraints involved in accessing the floor, displaying engagement, and so on.

At this point, we return to Jacknick's (2011) findings. In her study, she showed that students insert their contributions at *activity* transition points, not TRPs. We have noticed that, in contrast with her findings, the students in our collection do not orient to such points. Therefore, it seems that the hold-up sequences may contribute to students' socialisation by helping these young learners recognise classroom activities as a coherent whole course of action that is underway – one that cannot be simply breached at any point (whether it be a TRP or not). This is because the hold-ups identified in our collection seem to be closely connected to the fact that students are not yet fully competent to measure the extent to which their conduct aligns or not with an ongoing classroom activity. As excerpt 2 more clearly illustrates, students are yet to understand the teacher's bodily conduct (and her silence while performing it) as part of an ongoing action they are expected to align with. Given that learners' repeated participation in specific communicative events plays a crucial role in building their knowledge about the overall structural organisation, interactional practices, and cultural expectations of such events (Grusec & Hastings 2007; Nguyen 2012), we suggest that the hold-ups described in this article support students' development of the interactional competence needed to successfully participate in whole-class interaction.

This study sheds light on "the embodied work of teaching" (Hall & Looney 2019) while also adding to the small body of studies that investigate classroom interactions in Portuguese through multimodality lenses. The systematic descriptions of classroom interactional sequences it offers could be used to support evidence-based reflection and training for teachers. Within the Brazilian

context of early years education as well as L1 (Portuguese) or additional language teaching, such awareness about elements of social interaction has not yet been contemplated by in-service or pre-service teacher education national programmes (Bulla & Schulz 2018; Guimaraes & De Souza 2018). By focusing exclusively on broader aspects involved in primary-school instruction, such programmes end up overlooking the constitutive role of social interaction, and more specifically teachers' embodied actions, in managing instructional encounters and in socialising young learners into the norms and expectations of classroom interaction.

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