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## Teacher Revoicing in a Foreign Language Teaching Context: Social and Academic Functions

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*Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate the occurrences of teacher revoicing as a discursive move in English Language Teaching (ELT) literature classes, and to identify its social and academic functions. Teacher revoicing refers to the restatement or incorporation of previous student comments into subsequent teacher statements and/or questions to build an extended discourse based on student contribution. The analysis of more than 25 hours of recorded classroom conversation in a university level literature class has demonstrated that teacher revoicing is a very common teacher move in the college EFL literature classroom. Eight functions of teacher revoicing have been identified by the researchers. These are (a) increasing comprehension (academic), (b) keeping the discourse moving (academic), (c) keeping the students on target (academic), (d) advancing teacher's agenda (academic), (e) error correction (academic), (f) creating alignments during class discussions (social), (g) giving students authority and authorship (social) and acknowledging student contribution (social). The discussion of the functions of teacher revoicing are also included in the study.*

### Introduction

Starting with the work of socio-cognitivists (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Lave & Wenger, 1991) related to the significance of participation and later, with the important publications of Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1986), the social aspect of learning and teaching has been emphasized in different contexts. In language learning/teaching contexts, too, the dialogue between teachers and students constitutes the major part of the educational process. In this sense, what happens in the classroom and how students and teachers co-construct knowledge has become extremely important and the analysis of classroom discourse has gained popularity lately. Walsh (2011) claimed that the main aim in classroom discourse analysis was not only to describe the components of the classroom discourse, but also to ensure that participants developed the kind of interactional competence, which would lead to more engaged, dynamic classrooms with learners being more actively involved in the learning process. He argued that anyone trying to improve learning and teaching should pay attention to classroom discourse and should give importance to classroom interactional competence (CIC) (Walsh, 2011).

At this point it might be necessary to highlight the importance of classroom discourse in teacher education since teachers have significant roles in knowledge construction in the process of learning (Cazden, 2001) with the help of the classroom activities they organize. When the main aim of language teaching, which is to create communicatively competent learners, is taken into consideration, the role of classroom communication should be seriously considered since

classrooms are one of the very few contexts in which foreign language learners have the possibility of using their target language meaningfully. However, the necessity of reflecting on classroom discourse is not highlighted sufficiently in teacher education programs. Identifying a lack of interest in the study and examination of discourse in many teacher education programs, Van Dijk (1981, p.17) pointed out that “teachers have hardly been trained to set up adequate curricula for this broad kind of language, discourse and communication teaching.” In the same way, Walsh (2011, p.20) stated that “...very little time is actually spent making language teachers aware of the importance of classroom discourse.” The lack of attention to discourse might be because of two reasons: (a) the problems about grasping the importance of discourse in teaching and learning, (b) the problems about realizing different functions discourse markers might carry in the classroom. For example, teachers’ questions enable teachers to understand how well students have understood the course content, to elicit information and to control behaviour (Nunan, 2007). Similarly, code-switching, which is another discourse marker, has important functions that might be beneficial for teacher education such as facilitating grammar instruction, assisting classroom management, and establishing empathy and solidarity. If necessary attention is devoted to these, the awareness of these processes “can augment our agency to foster productive learning environments” (Hymes, 2009).

At this point, an important question arises: which aspects of classroom discourse should be analysed? A great deal of research has been carried out so far in order to analyse the components of classroom discourse (Alexander, 2004; Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Boyd, & Markarian, 2011; Cazden, 2001; Gillies & Khan, 2008; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Wells & Arauz, 2006). These studies focused mainly on the dialogic structure of classroom settings and the roles of teachers and learners and their cooperative attempts to make the classroom environment more fruitful in terms of learning/teaching goals. In addition, other studies of classroom discourse focused on different dimensions of discourse focusing on, for example, different aspects such as events, their participation structures and turn allocation (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Cazden, 2001; McCollum, 1989; Young & Miller, 2004; Waring, 2008), error treatment and repair patterns (Takimoto, 2006; Sheen, 2010), and the roles of questioning and categorizations related to teacher questions directed to students (Carlsen, 1991; Long & Sato, 1983; Nystrand, et al., 2003; van Zee & Minstrell, 1997). However, teacher revoicing, which is an important volitional move of a teacher to promote student participation and engagement in the classroom discussion, has not been focused on as frequently as the other aforementioned classroom discourse components. Consequently, this study offers a glimpse into certain aspects of teacher revoicing by classifying different functions of teacher revoicing as well as describing what teacher revoicing is.

## Literature review

### The Types of Teacher Revoicing: Restatement and Incorporation

“Teacher revoicing” refers to teachers’ *restatement* and/or *incorporation* of previous student comments and/or answers into subsequent questions or statements to build a discourse based on the contributions of students (O’Connor & Michaels, 1993; 1996). Forman et al. (1998) considered ‘teacher revoicing’ as an important feature of a teacher’s discourse, which contributed to the skilful orchestration of classroom discussion. Lawrence (2006) used ‘revoicing’ as another term for active listening in education. It involves two aspects:

Restatement (i.e., repetition, restatement or paraphrase) and incorporation (i.e., teacher uptake). Restatement may be in the form of (a) exact or partial repetition of a student’s utterance, (b) a re-utterance of a student’s statement by changing the wording but leaving the meaning intact or (c) refining of the comment by clarifying or focusing on the ideas (McKeown & Beck, 2004; Watson-Todd, 2005).

A number of benefits of restatement have been documented so far: (a) restatement in the form of repetition strengthens lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), (b) repetition in discourse displays engagement. It not only indicates, “one is engaged in discussion with others, but also indexes a history of interactions with one’s interlocutors.” (Duff, 2000; p. 111), (c) restatement provides feedback on form by drawing attention to the message, not itself. (Goldenberg, 1991), and (d) restatement helps teachers review what has been done by the students in class (Mercer, 1994). Mercer (1994) argues that many teachers often re-utter what students say in order to present it back to them in a form that is considered by the teacher to be more compatible with the current stream of educational discourse. Other teachers do it so as to reinforce what students have said and to build further on students’ statements (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; O’Connor & Michaels, 1993; 1996). Extract 1 includes an example of a restatement in which the instructor re-uttered one of her students’ words in the discourse. (Turn 48).

Symbol	Meaning
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Number of the turns
T	Teacher turns
S1, S2, S3, S4	Student turns
[ ]	Extra information
((1))	Pause (numbers indicate the number of seconds)
[	Overlapping speech
]	
[Tr.]	Utterances in Turkish
[?]	Unclear or unidentified transcription
[RESTAT]	Restatement
[INCORP]	Incorporation

Figure 1:Key to reading the transcripts

### Excerpt 1

*[This excerpt is taken from a discussion on The American Dream by Edward Albee. The classroom talk is about the plot of the play.]*

Number of the turns	Teacher/Student turns	Teacher/Student Utterances
47	S1	Mommy and daddy
48	T	Mommy and daddy story ((2)) [RESTAT] and 20 years ago what happened?
49	S1	They adopted a child.

50	T	Good ((1)) what happened to the child? [INCORP]
51	S1	Died.

Another form of teacher revoicing, *incorporation*, is defined as the integration of student responses into teachers' new questions (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996). It is also referred as teacher uptake (Nystrand, 1997), or attentive listening and contingent teacher questions (Boyd, 2012; Boyd & Rubin, 2006). To accomplish incorporation, teachers include learners' responses in their new questions or statements and build a discourse based on the contributions of students. Incorporation (i.e., teacher uptake) has been praised as a classroom discourse tool because it validates students' ideas and reflects *a high level evaluation* of student responses by putting them into the play of discussion (Nystrand, 1997). It is also documented that contingency of teacher questions yields more elaborated student talk (Boyd & Rubin, 2006). An example of incorporation is shown in Extract 1. The teacher builds her discourse based on the idea provided by the student (S1) and extends the dialogue by borrowing an idea from the student's talk (Turn 50) and presenting it in the form of a question (e.g., What happened to the child?).

### Previous Studies of Teacher Revoicing

Many previous studies related to teacher revoicing were carried out in the settings of mathematics education. Revoicing is given particular emphasis in mathematics education because it is regarded as an important component of classroom discourse in "initiating and sustaining mathematical discussions" (Enyedy, et al., 2008, p.135). Forman and Ansell (2002) studied argumentative positions in two mathematics classroom episodes and found out that both teachers and students took part in mathematical discussions by revoicing each other and they legitimated student explanations. In this way, they played complementary and similar roles. The teachers solicited arguments from students while the students explained and evaluated their classmates' explanations as a part of the classroom discourse. Park et al. (2007) studied teacher revoicing as an important discursive move in a mathematics classroom. The data in this study came from a state university classroom in the United States and various functions of revoicing were identified such as revoicing as a binder, revoicing as a springboard, and revoicing for ownership. Lawrence (2006) studied how a second grade elementary school teacher used teacher revoicing and in her study she found out that: (a) it helped students recognize what they already knew; (b) it fostered interaction among students so they could learn from one another; and (c) it encouraged students to revise their thinking without teacher intervention.

Kwon et al (2008) video-recorded mathematics classrooms in the United States in order to reveal their discursive structure. They worked on teachers' revoicing that enables students to (a) attend to critical ideas in order to generate more comprehensive mathematics knowledge by connecting diverse perspectives (binding), (b) to draw students' attention to a specific claim and to prompt the speakers to clarify and elaborate their own claims (springboard), and (c) engage in the collective construction of subject matter by course participants instead of having it given by the teacher (ownership). On the other hand, O'Connor & Michaels (1996) mentioned three basic functions of teacher revoicing: namely, (a) to position students in differing alignments and allow them to (dis)claim ownership of their position, (b) to share reformulations in ways that credit students with teachers' warranted inferences, (c) to scaffold and recast problem-solution

strategies of students whose first language is not the language of teaching. In another study, Duff (2000) listed four basic functions of teacher revoicing: namely, disciplinarian, cognitive, linguistic, and affective. According to the classification made in this study, academic functions included cognitive and linguistic domains, and social functions included the affective domain.

In addition to mathematics classrooms, thus far teacher revoicing has been mainly examined in first language learning contexts (for example, literacy instruction, science education, etc.). Teacher revoicing has been regarded as an important construct in first language settings because it (a) attributes value to students' contributions (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993; Nystrand, 1997), (b) breaks the dullness of the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequence of a discourse (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993; 1996), and (c) may increase student engagement and elaborated student talk (Boyd & Rubin, 2006).

All of these benefits of teacher revoicing can alleviate various problems of foreign or second language learners. As many would acknowledge, having an extended conversation in English is a major problem in foreign language contexts (i.e. Turkey) and learners often cannot find enough opportunities to expand their discourse skills. Teachers and students often feel frustrated because of the limited opportunities for "speak[ing], read[ing] and writ[ing] meaningfully in English in a learning situation in which there is little of substance worth talking about" (Handscombe, 1994, p. 334). Use of teacher revoicing might enrich the opportunities for meaningful participation and elaborated student talk in foreign language learning contexts. The study of this construct in second and/or foreign language contexts is limited. To the best of my knowledge, no other study in the field of second and/or foreign language contexts has addressed teacher revoicing independently in a study. There are some studies that mention revoicing while addressing other components of the classroom discourse. In one of these studies, Sullivan (2000) examined the spoken artistry in the performances of university level EFL students in Vietnam. Her main focus was on the teacher of the class who incorporated storytelling and word play into vocabulary teaching activities. Revoicing was highlighted as one of the techniques of this inspiring teacher. In another study, Duff (2000) only focused on the restatement function of revoicing (i.e., repetition), and investigated social aspects of repetition in language classrooms. Different functions of repetition such as disciplinarian, cognitive, linguistic, and affective were illustrated. Rine (2009) explored development of dialogic teaching skills of an ITA (International Teaching Assistant) and how the ITA used revoicing in her discourse was touched upon. These studies, as well as those of Verplaetse (2000), Watson-Todd (2005) used revoicing in their analyses of classroom discourse but did not concentrate upon it.

This study of teacher revoicing can, I believe, be expanded given that revoicing can have important implications for second and foreign language contexts. Teacher revoicing might be used as a pedagogical tool to expand student talk and increase the opportunities for meaningful discussion in the classroom, which would contribute to more communicative classrooms where student elaborated talk and meaningful discussions are dominantly observed. Furthermore, teachers and pre-service teachers might be informed about the contributions of teacher revoicing since they are the ones to benefit from its advantages in their teaching experiences.

#### **Functions of teacher revoicing: academic and social**

The main aim of the present study was to identify the use of teacher revoicing as a discursive tool in literary discussions and its social and academic functions. Social functions refer to the functions of teacher revoicing related to classroom dynamics. The affective function

asserted by Duff (2000) also entails the social function. On the other hand, academic functions refer to the teacher turns that focus on language and content of a course. In order to define and classify the functions of teacher revoicing, this researcher put together and tailored the functions identified by other researchers; namely, Boyd and Rubin (2006), Collins (1992), Duff (2000), Halliday and Hasan (1976), Hellerman (2003), Mercer (1994), Norrick (1987), Nystrand (1997), O'Connor and Michaels (1996), Park et al. (2007), Tannen (1989) and Watson-Todd (2005).

The first academic function, increasing comprehension, has been taken from the works of Hellerman (2003), Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Boyd and Rubin (2006). These researchers highlighted the fact that the teachers used restatement to increase the comprehension of the learners abundantly. The second academic function, keeping the discourse moving, was suggested by Norrick (1987) and Tannen (1989). The third academic function, keeping the students on target, was a part of the work of Duff (2000) and O'Connor and Michaels (1996). Advancing teachers' agendas, the next academic function, has been taken from Watson-Todd (2005) and the last one, error correction, was mentioned by Goldenberg (1991) who wrote about the significance of teachers' paraphrasing with such functions as showing their effort in trying to understand students' message or providing feedback on form.

On the other hand, the first social function, giving students authority and authorship, was mentioned by Mercer (1994), Collins (1992), Nystrand (1997), O'Connor and Michaels (1996) and Park et al. (2007). The second, creating alignments, was named as one of the functions of teacher revoicing in the works of O'Connor and Michaels (1996) and Park et al. (2007). Finally, acknowledging students' contribution has been taken from Collins (1992), Nystrand (1997), O'Connor and Michaels (1993, 1996) and Park et al. (2007).

As can be seen in the examples mentioned above, teacher revoicing has been studied mainly in mathematics and first language learning contexts. In EFL or ESL settings, it was studied as an additional component of discourse. It is believed that this study will contribute to the related literature by focusing on an EFL context.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b><u>ACADEMIC</u></b>	
<b><u>Increasing comprehension</u></b> (adapted from Boyd and Rubin, 2006; Halliday and Hasan, 1976, and Hellerman, 2003)	The teacher's main aim is to clarify the language used by the students
<b><u>Keeping the discourse moving</u></b> (Adapted from Norrick, 1987 and Tannen, 1989)	The teacher repeats students' utterances fully to create an index of interactions.
<b><u>Keeping the students on target</u></b> (Adapted from Duff, 2000 and O'Connor and Michaels, 1996)	Particular parts of the students' utterances are repeated by the teacher in order to encourage them to continue talking about the same topic. This repetition is the starting point of the rest of the conversation.

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<b><u>Advancing teacher's agenda</u></b> (adapted from Todd, 2005)	The teacher uses student utterances to meet her pre-determined goals related to the topics to focus on in that class.
<b><u>Error correction</u></b> (Adapted from Goldenberg, 1991)	When students make errors, the teacher reformulates their utterances.
<b>SOCIAL</b>	
<b><u>Creating alignments</u></b> (Adapted from O'Connor and Michaels, 1996)	The teacher helps students see the big picture by connecting them to a school of thought during the discussions. She makes an analogy between the characters and the students in the classroom, and tries to persuade students by means of this analogy. When she revoices a student's stand, she aims to create alignments and oppositions to compare and contrast different ideas.
<b><u>Giving students authority and authorship</u></b> (Adapted from Collins, 1992; Mercer, 1994; Nystrand, 1997; O'Connor and Michaels, 1996)	This function is related to reformulating student contribution by giving them authorship and authority. This usually happens by using the names of the students in the revoiced utterances.
<b><u>Acknowledging student contribution</u></b> (Adapted from Collins, 1992)	By restating the students' utterances, the instructor acknowledges the students' contribution and gives credit. Sometimes teacher turns include mere repetitions and sometimes they also include low level evaluation in the form of "very good, wonderful" etc.

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**Figure 2. Functions of Teacher Revoicing**

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What does teacher revoicing look like in a university EFL literature classroom? How often does the teacher use "teacher revoicing" as a discursive mode?
- 2) What are the academic functions of teacher revoicing in the university EFL literature classroom?
- 3) What are the social functions of teacher revoicing in the college EFL literature classroom?



## Method

### Setting and Participants

The current research was conducted in an American literature class offered in the sixth semester of an English Language Teaching (ELT) program, which is a part of the Faculty of Education, in a major state university in Turkey.

The duration of the ELT program is five years, including a year of preparatory class. All the courses in the ELT department (literature, integrated skills and methodology) are given in English except for those based on spoken and written Turkish skills. Students are expected to use English both in written and spoken assignments at school, as they are prospective teachers of English. As a part of an American literature course, the students were expected to read the works of important American playwrights and a three-hour discussion session was held each week to discuss literary elements such as plot, themes, characters, setting, examples of figurative language, etc. The one-semester course was scheduled for 14 weeks, but only 9 weeks were recorded due to some unexpected cancellations and national holidays.

Classroom discussions were based on the following plays:

- *The Case of Crushed Petunias* (Tennessee Williams)
- *The Hairy Ape* (Eugene O'Neill)
- *A Day of Absence* (Douglas Turner Ward)
- *The Death of a Salesman* (Arthur Miller)
- *Our Town* (Thornton Wilder)
- *Tea and Sympathy* (Robert Anderson)
- *The American Dream* (Edward Albee)
- *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth* (Drew Hayden Taylor)
- *Trifles* (Susan Glaspell)

The participants of the study were advanced-level third year ELT students taking the American Literature class. The researcher preferred to include these students since their level of English and background information in literature was adequate to take part in literature-based classroom discussions. In their first and second years at university, the participants had taken a survey course in English literature for two semesters, a reading course for two semesters and a speaking course for four semesters.

The number of participants varied from 25 to 32 during the recordings. This was because some students who could not attend other sessions were allowed to attend the one being observed even though they were not enrolled in that specific session. During the first week of the course, 25 students signed the consent forms and filled out student background questionnaires. Out of these 25 students, 21 were females. The participants ranged in age from 20 to 22 years, and they had been studying English for between 5 to 12 years. After the one-year long intensive preparatory education and two years of coursework in the English Language Teaching program, the researcher was able to assume that the participants in the study held an advanced level of proficiency in English, which would also mean a C1 level proficiency according to Common European Framework. The instructor of the class, Dr. Jane (a pseudonym) held a PhD in English literature from a Turkish university and she had been teaching English courses at the university level for more than ten years at the time of the study. She had also published several articles and

books related to literature and the use of literature for language teaching purposes. The materials used in this course were compatible with students' levels of English proficiency.

Throughout the semester, the classroom structure was stable and students kept the same desks for most of the time. The design of the classroom did not allow Dr. Jane to move around the classroom, so she was almost always in front of the class. In Turkey, most courses are teacher-centred. In this course, too, the amount of teacher talk was greater than the amount of student talk.

### **Procedure**

By employing qualitative data collection and qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods, this case study examined the nature of teacher revoicing in a foreign language literature class. The qualitative nature of this study was instrumental as the main purpose was to document, examine, and analyse the data occurring naturally. All class sessions in one semester (more than 25 course hours) were video-recorded by the researcher, who listened to each week's recording at least twice and identified the instances of teacher revoicing. Afterwards, classroom conversations were transcribed verbatim and coded on the basis of the research questions. All the instances of teacher revoicing were tallied to be able to reveal the academic and social implications of teacher revoicing as they emerged in this class. The researcher grouped the functions of teacher revoicing according to whether its focus was on language and content of the course (academic) or classroom dynamics (social). Video recordings made it possible to observe the subtle intricacies of academic and social dynamics during classroom discussions in a systematic, comprehensive, and thorough way. After the transcription, instances of text-based discussions were identified and accounted for approximately 7 per cent of the whole recordings. The key to the transcription conventions used is shown as Figure 1.

### **Inter-rater reliability**

The instances, types (restatement and incorporation) and functions (academic and social) of teacher revoicing were first coded by the researcher on the basis of data and existing literature. To establish the consistency and increase the reliability of the codings, two external 'raters' were asked to examine some portions of the data. Rater 1 had a PhD in Linguistics and Rater 2 had a masters in ELT. Both had had previous experience in classroom discourse. Ten per cent of the overall data were chosen randomly as a chunk and both raters were asked to identify teacher revoicing instances and classify their types and functions. A coding manual with the descriptions, definitions and two examples from each category was prepared and given to the raters.

After an initial study by the raters, this manual was reviewed with the researcher in order to clarify any potential problems. In relation to instances of teacher revoicing, there was 88 per cent consistency with Rater 1 and 91 per cent consistency with Rater 2 and in relation to the types of teacher revoicing, there was 90 per cent consistency with Rater 1 and 93 per cent consistency with Rater 2. In relation to the functions of revoicing, there were averages of 88 per cent and 90 per cent consistency, respectively.

## Findings and discussion

The first research question was about how often the teacher used “teacher revoicing” as a discursive mode in her literature classes. The initial analysis revealed that revoicing was a very common mode for this teacher. For example, out of 436 teacher turns that occurred in the first week of recordings, 248 (57 per cent) included revoicing in the form of restatement (repetition and paraphrase) and 33 (13 per cent) had teacher revoicing in the form of incorporation (teacher uptake). In other words, the instructor re-uttered or repeated 57 per cent of the student utterances in part or whole, and asked questions by incorporating 13 per cent of the student ideas. This finding alone demonstrates the significance of teacher revoicing in the discourse of this class. See Table 1 for the numbers of occurrences and percentages of teacher revoicing in each week of the semester.

Weeks	Teacher turns	Teacher turns with restatement	%	Teacher turns with incorporation	%	Teacher revoicing Total	%
1	436	248	57	33	8	281	65
2	404	236	58	32	8	268	66
3	240	109	45	9	4	118	49
4	458	260	57	32	7	292	64
5	386	204	53	21	5	225	58
6	406	210	52	20	5	230	57
7	438	224	51	26	6	250	57
8	367	198	54	19	5	217	59
9	324	146	45	9	3	155	48
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3459</b>	<b>1835</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2036</b>	<b>59</b>

**Table 1. Occurrences of teacher revoicing**

As can be seen in Table 1, there are some differences between the weeks in terms of teacher turns. The smallest numbers occurred in Week 3 (240) and Week 9 (324). When the academic calendar and the cancellations are taken into consideration, these weeks were those that were just before the midterm and final examinations. It may be that students preferred studying to participating in classroom conversations and concentrated more on the examinations; as a result, these classes included more teacher talk than the rest of the semester and also, this difference between weeks leads to differences between teacher turns with incorporation and teacher turns with restatement and incorporation.

The in-depth analyses revealed that the boundaries between academic and social functions were not clearly identified, and some instances of teacher revoicing carried both academic and social functions depending on their use. Therefore, while analysing some revoicing of the instructor, the researcher had problems in locating the exact place of a function. The eight identified functions of teacher revoicing are:

- Increasing comprehension (academic);
- Keeping the discourse moving (academic);

- Keeping the students on target (academic);
- Advancing teacher’s agenda (academic);
- Error correction (academic);
- Creating alignments during class discussions (social);
- Giving students authority and authorship (social); and
- Acknowledging student contribution (social).

Each of these functions and how it was represented in the discourse of an advanced foreign language literature class is discussed in the following section.

The second research question was about the academic functions of teacher revoicing in the EFL literature classroom (Table 2).

Academic functions of teacher revoicing	Teacher revoicing Total	Teacher turns with restatement	%	Teacher turns with incorporation	%
Increasing comprehension	355	322	90	23	10
Keeping the discourse moving	281	249	89	32	11
Keeping the students on target	242	204	85	38	15
Advancing teacher’s agenda	260	192	74	68	26
Error correction	425	407	96	18	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1563</b>	<b>1374</b>		<b>179</b>	

**Table 2. Academic functions of teacher revoicing**

Table 2 shows the occurrences of academic functions of teacher revoicing in an EFL literature context. Teachers reformulate their utterances to be able to focus on the language and content of the course. As can be seen in the table above, the academic functions having the highest number of teacher turns are “error correction” (96 per cent) and “increasing comprehension” (90 per cent). Most English teachers in Turkey focus on form in their classes no matter what the learners’ level is; therefore, this frequency of error correction function in this context is quite common. Moreover, students’ comprehension is crucial in such discussion activities. Thus, the teacher tries to clarify the statements uttered by students when she feels the need.

In this study, the second most common function of “teacher revoicing” was *increasing comprehension*. Teacher revoicing, in the form of restatement, increased cohesion both in form (language) and content (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Excerpt 2 illustrates two examples of teacher revoicing where the instructor aims to increase the comprehension of student utterances by using a more target-like language. As we can see, the instructor re-utters the students’ utterances and makes them more comprehensible for the rest of the class. In other words, the teacher “simply filters the utterance through his louder, clearer voice, putting the student’s utterance out there for the entire class to hear and react to” (Verplaatse, 2000). In Excerpt 2 Turn 1, S3 utters ‘young

man and death child’, and the instructor revoices S3’s utterance by fine-tuning its language and content (‘Yes, *the* young man and *baby*’) and making the utterance more comprehensible both phonologically and semantically. In Turn 3, the same student utters ‘American dream’ and another word or phrase, which was really difficult to hear on the recording and by the other students. In her next turn (Turn 4), the instructor starts with a suggestion ‘Let’s call it like this’ which implies that a restatement or refining is coming, and introduces her utterance ‘New American dream’ to strengthen the meaning of the student’s utterance and make it more comprehensible. By rebroadcasting the student’s contribution, the instructor makes the student’s voice louder, and enables others to comprehend it better.

**Excerpt 2**

*[This excerpt is taken from a discussion on The American Dream by Edward Albee. The discussion is about the general theme of the play.]*

<b>Number of the turns</b>	<b>Teacher/ Student turns</b>	<b>Teacher/Student Utterances</b>
11	S3	Young man and death child ((1))
12	T	Yes ((1)) the young man and baby [RESTAT] ((2)) the death baby ((2), OK, go on. What else?
13	S3	American dream and [?]
14	T	Ah, ok. Let’s call it like this. New American dream [RESTAT] ((1)) Wonderful.

Teacher revoicing also helped *keep the discourse moving*. Partial or full repetitions of the student utterances provided unity to the discourse, and kept the discourse flowing. Excerpt 3 includes an example of this function of teacher revoicing. By revoicing the student’s utterances, the instructor keeps the discourse moving in its natural flow. The instructor mostly repeats the students’ utterances in full and creates an index of interactions. In daily conversation, this function of revoicing or repetition is commonly observed, and as Duff (2000) mentions, it is also possible to observe it even in popular sitcoms such as *Seinfeld*. With this function, revoicing signals that not only is the instructor engaged in the conversation, but it also indexes a history of interactions among participants.

**Excerpt 3**

*[This excerpt is taken from a character analysis discussion on Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth by Drew Hayden Taylor. The class is discussing the main characteristics of the Ojibwa people, the tribe to which the main characters of the play belong.]*

<b>Number of the turns</b>	<b>Teacher/Student turns</b>	<b>Teacher/Student Utterances</b>
18	T	They are not discriminating, but they are discriminated when they go to the city ((2))

19	S2	They are not racist.
20	T	Ok, they are not racist [RESTAT]; they are not discriminating among people.
21	S24	They respect old people.
22	T	Wonderful, very good.
23	S24	Here old age is important
24	T	Old age is important [RESTAT], they respect the old [RESTAT], very good.
25	S2	It's a female dominated society.
26	T	Wonderful! ((2)) Matriarchal.

Another academic function of teacher revoicing is *keeping the students on target*. This occurred when the teacher repeated a particular part of the student utterance, and chose the topic to be continued. The part that was taken was the starting point for the rest of the conversation. In Excerpt 4, S11 and S12 uttered two words that were apparently similar but semantically different. To keep the students on target, the instructor first revoiced the ‘untargeted-like’ utterance and directed the students to reach the more target-like concept. In Turn 60, the expected answer was given by S8, and the instructor incorporated this statement into her turn after restating it.

**Excerpt 4**

[This excerpt is taken from a discussion about character analysis from *The Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neill. The topic revolves around the features of the main character (Yank). The students are giving examples about adjectives to describe the main character of the play. ]

Number of the turns	Teacher/Student turns	Teacher/Student Utterances
13	T	Yank, very good. Could you please tell me adjectives for Yank?
14	S3	Yankee
15	T	Not Yankee, I mean adjective. Yankee is a noun, I need an adjective, not a noun.
16	S7	Strong..... (some irrelevant lines have been deleted)
57	S11	Oppressed
58	S12	Oppressive
59	T	oppressive [RESTAT], whom does he oppress? [INCORP]
60	S8	No, he is oppressed.
61	T	He is oppressed [RESTAT], who oppresses him? [INCORP]
62	S12	We can say the upper class ((2)) the white side.
63	T	Ah the ruling class [RESTAT], let's say. Oppressive [RESTAT], huh, huh!((3))

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Oppressed [RESTAT], wonderful. In the society, there is a group that rules the society, unfortunately they oppress, indirectly but not purposefully, wonderful. For example, here there are two sides, what are these sides? The oppressed and the ((2)) oppressor ((2)). In oppression what do you have?

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The instructor also used revoicing to *advance her agenda*. On these occasions, Dr. Jane asked questions based on student utterances. Most of these instances involved the incorporation component (teacher uptake) of teacher revoicing. As demonstrated in Excerpt 5, the instructor picked up the ideas from the students (Turns 38 and 40) and used them in her questions (Turns 39 and 41). With the help of questions based on students' utterances, the teacher led the discussion according to her goals but also validated the students' contributions.

### Excerpt 5

[This excerpt is taken from a discussion on symbols from *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth* by Drew Hayden Taylor. It evolves around the meaning of the symbols in the play. The specific symbol of this excerpt is a dream catcher]

Number of the turns	Teacher/Student turns	Teacher/Student Utterances
37	T	Yes, dream catcher, wonderful. Yes, this is the gift but she could see, she died, she passed away. What else did you learn? So dream catcher is important. Tugce?
38	S6	Drink coffee
39	T	Wonderful. What kind of coffee? [INCORP]
40	S6	Hard, extra caffeine
41	T	Extra caffeine [RESTAT] so what does that show? ((2)) [INCORP] Really, what does that show? [INCORP]

A final, and most commonly used, academic function of teacher revoicing was *error correction*. The restatement component in the form of both repetition and reformulation (recast) was used for error treatment. In Excerpt 6, S11 made a lexical mistake by incorrectly making "satisfied" negative in Turn 18. The instructor corrected the mistake in the form of a restatement by giving a recast.

### Excerpt 6

[This excerpt is taken from a character analysis discussion on the characters of *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller. S1 makes a lexical mistake at the beginning of the excerpt].

Number of the turns	Teacher/ Student turns	Teacher/Student Utterances
18	S11	.....and Willy is unsatisfied.
19	T	he was dissatisfied [RESTAT] and he wants more. But he wants the things through the wrong directions. Very good! Wrong path. Very good. The second row, my silent girls. ((2)) Ok, Gokhan?
20	S4	Charlie open to innovations.

In this extract, when the student performs an error (generally phonological or lexical), the teacher reformulates the student’s utterance. This is, sometimes, in the form of a recast, as in the extract, and in some other cases, it includes other forms of error correction (clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, etc.).

The third research question was about the social functions of revoicing that appeared in the discussion of the literature. In this study, social functions refer to the functions of teacher revoicing in relation to classroom dynamics. Table 3 below illustrates the frequency of each social function of teacher revoicing.

Function	Teacher revoicing Total	Teacher turns With restatement	%	Teacher turns with incorporation	%
Creating alignments during classroom discussion	236	225	95	11	5
Giving students authority and authorship	283	269	95	14	5
Acknowledging student contribution	357	335	94	22	6
TOTAL	876	829		47	

**Table 3. Social functions of teacher revoicing**

As shown in Table 3, basic social functions identified in the data were creating alignments during classroom discussion, giving students authority and authorship, and acknowledging student contribution. Among these functions, the most frequent was “*acknowledging student contribution*”. This function includes restating students’ utterances, acknowledging their contribution, giving credit, and using low level evaluation with the help of some words and expressions such as “very good, wonderful” etc. Dr. Jane used this kind of expressions frequently as a part of her teacher talk. The reason why she uses these language items might be related to her wish to encourage her students as much as possible and create a positive language learning environment for them.



The first social function of teacher revoicing in Dr. Jane’s literature classroom was creating alignments during class discussions and helping students see the big picture by connecting them to a school of thought during the discussions. In Excerpt 7, the instructor makes an analogy between the characters and the students in the classroom, and tries to persuade S7 by means of this analogy. When she revoices S7’s stand, she aims to create alignments to compare and contrast different ideas. Here the main discussion point is about the friendship between Tom and Al. One of the students, Tugba, thinks that they are good friends and points to the example of Tom’s giving his tie to Al as a sign of their close friendship. However, the instructor feels that Tom was under pressure when he gave the tie and he was not willing to do it. By positioning Tugba at one side of the argument, the instructor is creating alignments (in this case, between the student and herself) with the help of revoicing in this excerpt.

**Excerpt 7**

*[This excerpt is taken from a discussion of Tea and Sympathy by Robert Anderson, on the theme of manliness. The story revolves around Tom and Al’s friendship. Before this extract the class was discussing the scene in which Al was offering his tie to Tom. The discussion is two-sided. A group of students, including S7, claim that Al was sincere when he offered the tie, whereas the other group (including the instructor) questions Al’s sincerity. The excerpt starts with the instructor’s example to support her view.]*

<b>Number of the turns</b>	<b>Teacher/ Student turns</b>	<b>Teacher/Student Utterances</b>
98	T	... Suppose Tugba I come to your home and I like your ((3)) or like your bracelet. What would I say? What a nice, wonderful! What will you say to me? It’s yours. No, Tugba won’t say “it’s yours” ((2))
99	S7	If you like it, take it.
100	T	If you like it [RESTAT], but I already express that I like it. You said if you like it, take it [RESTAT]. ‘No, it’s yours, take it! Do you want this?’ Yes, something like this. You see so, it’s Tom’s tie. It’s important. Do you see? He refuses, so Tugba is it clear? Do you think he is a good friend? He even doesn’t want Tom’s friendship.
101	S7	Maybe not a good friend but a friend.
102	T	Ok, good. We reached compromise. Alright.

Excerpt 8 illustrates the second social function of teacher revoicing: *giving students authority and authorship*. This function includes reformulating students’ contribution by giving them authorship and authority. This usually happens by using the names of the students in the revoiced utterances. In Extract 8, S9 introduces her opinion about the characteristics of elderly people (Turn 44) and the instructor reformulates it in the next turn (Turn 45). Later, another characteristic is introduced by another student (S18, Turn 46) but the instructor does not favour

this characteristic and she thinks that is not politically correct. Later in Turn 53, the instructor restates S9's utterance by giving her an authorship (*Ezgi's way of putting the thing into perspective is better, I guess*), which would also grant some kind of authority in the classroom discourse.

**Excerpt 8**

[This excerpt is taken from a character analysis discussion on *The American Dream* by Edward Albee.] The classroom talk before and during this excerpt is about the peculiarities of elderly people. The students are giving examples of elderly people's peculiar characteristics. It starts with S9's examples of the characteristics of her own family members]

Number of the turns	Teacher/ Student turns	Teacher/Student Utterances
42	S9	I live with my grandparents and I think they are like children.
43	T	Very good
44	S9	They are really interested in sharing their experiences. They like talking.
45	T	Wonderful and they talk too much [RESTAT], wonderful ((2)) very good, that's a very good observation.
46	S18	Because of their senility maybe, sometimes they are senile.
47	T	Really? All of them?
48	S18	No, not all of them
49	T	Let's not generalize, senility is a kind of medical problem.
50	S18	Some of them maybe but[
51	T	]But we should not use it for all. We are talking about peculiarities. It's ((2)) it's not a peculiarity of elderly. OK, some suffer from Parkinson disease, Alzheimer, but you know that these are related to brain.
52	S18	They say lots of things before the others and they are[
53	T	They talk too much [RESTAT]. Look. Your judgment is not so good. They talk too much [RESTAT] Ezgi's way of putting the thing into perspective is better, I guess. You should not ((1)) you shouldn't judge ((2)) err ((2)) your sentences include judgment, it is not good.

Teacher revoicing is also used to *acknowledge students' contribution*. By restating the students' utterances, the instructor acknowledges the students' contribution and gives credit.

Extract 9 illustrates examples of acknowledging student contribution by merely restating them (Turns 49, 52, 54, 56). Sometimes teacher turns include mere repetitions (Turn 52) and sometimes they also include low level evaluation in the form of “very good, wonderful” (Turns 49, 56). During the analysis of the discourse, the researcher noticed that when the students’ statements were not repeated by the instructor, they assumed that their utterances were not heard, and they repeated their own statements (e.g., S 23, Turns 51 and 53). This finding also highlights the frequency and power of teacher revoicing in the classroom discourse and its acceptance by the students.

**Excerpt 9**

*[This excerpt is taken from a discussion on The Case of Crushed Petunias by Tennessee Williams.] The instructor asked for three key words that would summarise the key points of the play and the students were stating the key words during this excerpt.]*

Number of the turns	Teacher/ Student turns	Teacher/Student Utterances
47	T	Live very good. Yagmur, three words?
48	S4	Sabotage
49	T	Wonderful, sabotage [RESTAT]
50	S4	Wild roses[
51	S23	]Tremendous inspiration
52	T	Wild roses [RESTAT]
53	S23	Tremendous inspiration
54	T	Tremendous inspiration [RESTAT]. Only one? Inspirations [RESTAT]?
55	S23	Dust
56	T	Dust [RESTAT], wonderful, very good ((2)) tremendous inspirations and one more ok think about it.

During the analysis, the researcher noticed that when the instructor did not re-utter the student utterances, some students thought that their utterances were unheard; for example, in Excerpt 9 S23 says “tremendous inspiration” in Line 53, but, the instructor is busy with repeating S4’s utterance (‘wild rose’). This leads S23 to repeat her utterance in the next turn (Turn 53). This finding, taken together with the abundance and frequency of teacher revoicing instances in this study, highlights the importance and acceptance of teacher revoicing by the students in this class.

This study has investigated the functions of teacher revoicing in a descriptive way and it arrived at eight basic functions, five of which are academic functions and three are social. Revoicing is a very common approach by the instructor of this class. Almost 60 per cent of the teacher turns in this study included some form of revoicing (i.e., restatement or incorporation). Because of the high frequency of teacher revoicing, when students’ utterances were re-uttered by the instructor, the students assumed that their messages had been considered. However, when the teacher did not re-utter (repeat) their messages, they repeated their own utterances assuming that they were not heard as we have observed in Excerpt 9. When the instructor did not use revoicing,

she used low-level evaluation (in the form of “very good” “wonderful” etc. (the ‘E’ in the IRE sequence) like the instructors in studies of Nystrand and his colleagues (Nystrand 1997; Nystrand et al. 2003).

On the other hand, when she used revoicing, the sequence of IRE was interrupted and new discourses were built based on the teacher revoicing, and this accords with O’Connor and Michael’s (1993, 1996) assumption that revoicing breaks the dullness of the IRE script and Boyd & Rubin’s (2006) findings about the construction of elaborated student talk in the classrooms.

The present study found out that, academically, teacher revoicing: (a) assisted students’ engagement in a dynamic way, and hence, contributed to a diverse classroom discussion, (b) enhanced both content and language learning opportunities, and (c) kept the discussions about literary texts on the right pace and track. This was similar to what was observed by Enyedy, et al.’s claims (2008) that revoicing helped initiate and maintain the talk about mathematical discussions. The most common academic functions of teacher revoicing in this EFL literature classroom were “*error correction* and *increasing comprehension*.” Since the discussions in this course were based on literary works, the teacher tried to clarify the main points discussed by the learners. Moreover, she tried to correct the students’ errors that they committed while expressing their opinions. Socially, the instructor (a) recognised the voices of individual students, (b) helped to construct a dialogical environment, and c) empowered underprivileged word choice participants in discourse by giving them authority and authorship. Moreover, as was observed in previous studies (Consolo, 2000; Duff, 2000; Verpleatse, 2000), teacher revoicing assisted learners in establishing interpersonal connections, making their perspectives known by wider audiences and increasing group solidarity (Hall, 2001/2003). This classification of functions of teacher revoicing differs from that of Duff (2000). In her study, she listed four basic functions: namely, disciplinarian, cognitive, linguistic, and affective. In the classification made in this study, “academic” included cognitive and linguistic domains and “social” included the affective domain. In this study, I did not encounter any uses of teacher revoicing for disciplinary purposes, which might be because of the fact that the participants are university level students, but like Duff, teacher revoicing in the form of repetition displayed engagement with the topic and students (Excerpt 5), and indexed a history of interactions with one’s interlocutors.

When all these functions of revoicing are taken into consideration, it is clearly a beneficial part of classroom conversations. Lawrence (2006) states that with the help of revoicing, more responsive classrooms in which learning is facilitated rather than directed, might be created. In the present study, the most frequent social function of teacher revoicing was “*acknowledging student contribution*”. The teacher used some phrases of low-level evaluation to encourage students’ contributions to classroom discussions. This is a common problem for language teachers in Turkey as students are generally shy and afraid of making mistakes.

Teacher revoicing and how it is used by teachers in the language classroom calls for attention from both researchers and teachers because it contributes to the communicative nature of the language classroom positively. As a part of a teacher education programme, Rine (2009) asserts that teachers can be shown the ways in which revoicing is used with different functions in the discourse of the classroom similar to what Walsh (2011) explained in his book. In order to draw the attention of teachers, researchers and teacher trainers, Walsh (2011) claims the existence of some important challenges for language teachers. One of them is the fact that teacher education programmes offer subject-based preparation and train prospective teachers in classroom methodology, which is not sufficient for them and he suggests forming programs dealing with interaction in the classroom as well as training teachers in subjects and classroom

methodology. In this sense, teacher revoicing and how it is applied in the classroom, if it appears as a part of teachers' CIC, can enable teachers to manage interaction and help them maximize learning opportunities. Moreover, with this discourse move, teachers can use interaction as "a tool for mediating and assisting learning" (Walsh, 2006, p.130) because with that move, they can use different discourse strategies such as "increasing learners' comprehension" by re-uttering what the students say more clearly and more loudly, "error correction" by means of repeating or recasting grammatical and lexical problems in students' utterances or "acknowledging student contribution" with the help of such words or phrases as "very good, wonderful", and "creating alignments" to compare and contrast different sides of the arguments during discussions.

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