Silence, Pausing, and the Organization of Turn-Taking in Libyan University Classrooms: A Descriptive Study of Oral Academic Interaction
الصمت، والتوقف، وتنظيم تبادل الأدوار في قاعات الدرس الجامعي الليبية
دراسة وصفية للتفاعل الأكاديمي الشفهي

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Abstract :
This descriptive study examines patterns of silence, pausing and turn allocation in spoken academic interaction within Libyan university classrooms. While spoken interaction has received growing attention in applied linguistics, empirical descriptions of interactional practices in North African higher education remain limited. Drawing on naturally occurring –classroom discourse, the study focuses on how silence and pauses function within lecturer student exchanges and how speaking turns are initiated, sustained and negotiated during academic interaction. Rather than treating silence as a communicative breakdown, the analysis approaches it as a meaningful interactional resource shaped by institutional roles, pedagogical norms and sociocultural expectations. The findings provide a context-sensitive account of spoken academic interaction in Libyan universities and contribute descriptive evidence to broader discussions on classroom discourse, participation and interactional organization in EFL higher education settings**.**
Keywords: spoken academic interaction; silence; pausing; turn allocation; Libyan higher education.

الملخص
تهدف هذه الدراسة الوصفية إلى تحليل أنماط الصمت والتوقف وتنظيم تبادل الأدوار في التفاعل الأكاديمي الشفهي داخل قاعات الدرس الجامعي الليبية. وعلى الرغم من الاهتمام المتزايد بالتفاعل الشفهي في دراسات اللسانيات التطبيقية، لا تزال الممارسات التفاعلية في التعليم العالي بشمال أفريقيا، ولا سيما في السياق الليبي، محدودة التوثيق الوصفي. تعتمد الدراسة على تفاعلات صفية طبيعية، وتركز على الكيفية التي يُوظَّف بها الصمت والتوقف في التبادل بين الأساتذة والطلبة، وكيف تُدار أدوار الحديث وتثُفَ◌تُاوَض داخل السياق الأكاديمي. ولا يُنظر إلى الصمت هنا بوصفه خللاً تواصلياً، بل باعتباره مورداً تفاعلياً ذا دلالة، يتشكل في ضوء الأدوار المؤسسية والأعراف التربوية والتوقعات وتقدمّ النتائج وصفاً سياقياً دقيقاً للتفاعل الأكاديمي الشفهي في الجامعات الليبية، وتسهم في إثراء النقاشات الأوسع حول خطاب القاعة الدراسية والمشاركة والتنظيم التفاعلي في بيئات التعليم العالي الناطقة بالإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.
الكلمات المفتاحية:التفاعل الأكاديمي الشفهي؛ الصمت؛ التوقف؛ تنظيم تبادل الأدوار ؛ التعليم العالي في ليبيا

1. Introduction
1.1 Background of the Study
Spoken interaction constitutes the core of classroom life in higher education, shaping how knowledge is transmitted, negotiated and evaluated. Within university classrooms, learning is not only mediated through written texts and formal assessments, but also through everyday patterns of talk, silence and participation. These interactional practices are particularly significant in contexts where English functions as a foreign language, as students and lecturers continuously negotiate linguistic competence, academic authority and institutional roles through spoken .discourse

In Libyan universities, English-medium interaction occupies a complex position. While English is widely taught and used across various academic disciplines, classroom communication often reflects locally grounded norms of interaction that coexist with global

academic expectations. Features such as silence, extended pausing and selective participation are frequently observed in university classrooms, yet they are often interpreted simplistically as indicators of disengagement, lack of proficiency, or ineffective teaching. Such interpretations tend to overlook the interactional and sociocultural meanings that silence and turn-.taking may carry within specific institutional and cultural contexts

Recent developments in discourse and interactional studies have emphasized the importance of examining spoken academic interaction as it naturally occurs, rather than evaluating it against prescriptive norms of "active participation" derived from Western educational models. From this perspective, silence and pausing are not merely absences of speech but can function as meaningful resources that regulate interaction, signal alignment or resistance and reflect institutional hierarchies. Turn allocation, similarly, is not a neutral process but one that is shaped by classroom conventions, power relations and shared expectations between lecturers and students.

Despite this growing recognition, empirical descriptive research on spoken academic interaction in Libyan higher education remains scarce. Existing studies have predominantly focused on written language, grammatical accuracy, or pedagogical outcomes, leaving the interactional organization of classroom talk largely unexplored. This absence of descriptive evidence limits both scholarly understanding and informed discussion about how academic interaction actually unfolds in Libyan university settings.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

While silence, pausing and turn-taking are salient features of classroom interaction in Libyan universities, they have rarely been examined as interactional phenomena in their own right. When addressed, they are often framed as problems to be corrected rather than practices to be understood. This tendency reflects a broader gap in applied linguistics research within the Libyan context, where spoken academic interaction has received significantly less attention than written performance.

The lack of descriptive, context-sensitive studies has resulted in an incomplete picture of how lecturer–student interaction is organized in Libyan university classrooms. Without systematic analysis, assumptions about student passivity, limited participation, or communicative deficiency remain unchallenged. There is therefore a need for research that documents and describes how silence, pausing and turn allocation function within naturally occurring classroom discourse, .without imposing external evaluative frameworks

1.3. Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study is to provide a descriptive account of silence, pausing and turn allocation in spoken academic interaction within Libyan university classrooms. The study seeks to document how these interactional features emerge, how they are distributed among participants and how they contribute to the organization of classroom discourse.

1.4. Research Questions

In line with its descriptive orientation, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How are silence and pausing realized in spoken academic interaction in Libyan university classrooms?
2. What patterns of turn allocation characterize lecturer–student interaction during classroom discourse?
3. How do silence, pausing and turn-taking contribute to the organization of spoken academic interaction in this context?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant on both empirical and contextual levels. Empirically, it contributes descriptive evidence to the growing body of research on spoken academic interaction, particularly in underrepresented EFL higher education contexts. By focusing on naturally

occurring classroom discourse, the study responds to calls for interactional research that prioritizes description over prescription

Contextually, the study offers one of the few systematic descriptions of classroom interaction in Libyan universities. By foregrounding silence and turn allocation as interactional resources rather than deficiencies, the research challenges deficit-oriented interpretations of student participation. The findings may also inform broader discussions in applied linguistics regarding participation, interactional norms and the sociocultural grounding of classroom discourse in EFL settings

Importantly, the study does not seek to evaluate teaching effectiveness or propose pedagogical interventions. Its contribution lies in documenting and clarifying how spoken academic interaction is organized within a specific institutional and cultural environment.

1.6. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to spoken academic interaction in selected Libyan university classrooms. It focuses specifically on silence, pausing and turn allocation as observable interactional features. Written discourse, assessment practices and explicit pedagogical outcomes fall outside the scope of the investigation.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined as used within the research context

- **Silence**: The absence of speech within an interactional sequence that carries potential communicative or organizational meaning.
- **Pausing**, Brief interruptions in speech occurring within or between turns which may signal cognitive processing, interactional alignment, or transition.
- **Turn Allocation**, The processes through which speaking turns are initiated assigned, or self-selected during interaction.
- **Spoken Academic Interaction**: Naturally occurring verbal exchanges between lecturers and students within university classroom settings.
- **Libyan University Classrooms**: Institutional teaching environments within public or private higher education institutions in Libya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter situates the present study within the broader landscape of research on spoken academic interaction, with particular attention to features central to this investigation: silence, pausing and mechanisms of turn allocation. The review foregrounds interactional research in educational contexts, critiques deficit-oriented interpretations of silence and highlights gaps in the existing literature, particularly regarding university EFL classrooms outside dominant research contexts. By weaving conceptual and empirical insights, this chapter grounds the current study's descriptive orientation.

2.2. Theoretical Foundations: Interaction in Classroom Discourse

Classroom interaction has been treated as a primary site where teaching and learning are co-constructed through talk, action and response. Early work in classroom discourse revealed that teacher and student talk forms distinct patterns shaped by institutional norms and pedagogical goals (Nystrand et al., as discussed in Wikipedia, 1997). Social interactionist and conversation analytic perspectives underscored that interactional features such as turn sequences, adjacency pairs and role negotiation are fundamental to understanding how classrooms function communicatively. Adjacency pairs, for example, represent the basic conversational structure that underlies turn-taking phenomena in educational talk (Adjacency pairs, Wikipedia, 2026) Thus, research on classroom discourse must account for how participation is orchestrated and meaning emerges from sequential interaction.

2.3. Silence in Educational Contexts

Traditional pedagogical accounts tend to treat silence as a lack of participation or an indicator of disengagement. In EFL settings, silence is often interpreted through lenses associated with language anxiety, perceived inferiority, or insufficient proficiency (Anggraini, 2022). However, current studies problematize this lens by conceptualizing silence as a meaningful communicative feature rather than an absence. Research on classroom silence, including teacher perspectives and student experiences, reveals that silence can signal cognitive processing, respect for authority, or deliberate turn negotiation (Different voices of silence, ScienceDirect, 2025). These insights align with broader work in dialogue and discourse studies showing that periods of non-speech in academic interaction often serve essential interactional functions.

2.4. Pausing, Wait Time and Interactional Structuring

Connected to silence, pausing and wait times interact with turn-taking structures to shape classroom talk. Conversation analytic research on classroom interaction demonstrates that silences and pauses are governed by turn-taking mechanisms differing from ordinary conversation, where wait time is a built-in feature influencing how speakers negotiate floor allocation (Turn taking and wait time, 2014). In second language classrooms, extended pauses may influence patterns of student uptake and teacher reframing, suggesting that pauses are constituent parts of interactional organization rather than random gaps (A dynamic systems approach to wait time, 2017).

2.5. Turn Allocation and Hierarchical Patterns

Turn allocation reflects how speakers gain and release the floor in interaction. In classroom settings, this process is typically asymmetrical, with teachers exerting institutional control over participation (CONVERSATION ANALYSIS: TURN-TAKING MECHANISM, Sari, 2020). Studies on turn-taking in EFL contexts demonstrate that lecturer dominance, directive speech acts, and conventional turn-allocation practices contribute to unequal participation patterns, where student self-selection is limited and often conditioned by contextual norms and language demands (Patterns of Lecturer and Student Speech Acts, 2025). Therefore, understanding turn allocation is essential for describing how academic discourse unfolds in real classrooms.

2.6. Empirical Work on Silence and Turn-Taking in EFL Contexts

Empirical investigations into classroom discourse in EFL settings mainly focus on secondary classrooms or specific linguistic features such as speech acts or teacher talk ratios. For instance, research on speech act dominance confirms that lecturers typically control interactional sequences through directive and representative acts, reiterating power dynamics in talk (Patterns of Lecturer and Student Speech Acts, 2025). Studies examining silence behavior document multiple causes for non-participation, including affective, linguistic and environmental factors, but also reveal varied interpretive and functional roles for silent behavior beyond simple absence of talk (Silent Learners' Voices, 2022). Although these contributions illuminate classroom dynamics, their descriptive focus rarely extends to higher education EFL contexts in underrepresented regions like North Africa.

2.7. Research Gaps

While conversation analytic and sociolinguistic research has elaborated mechanisms of turn taking, pauses and silence in general classroom interaction, studies that focus descriptively on these features in Libyan university contexts are absent. Much of the extant literature has either concentrated on pedagogical implications or on contexts where educational norms differ markedly from North African traditions. Furthermore, a deficit framing where silence is equated with lack of participation continues to dominate in some strands of EFL research, obscuring culturally and institutionally grounded interpretive possibilities.

By foregrounding silence, pausing and turn allocation as interactional resources rather than problems, this study seeks to respond to gaps in descriptive research and to offer contextually grounded insights that preserve analytical precision.

2.8. Summary

This review has outlined key strands of scholarship relevant to spoken academic interaction, highlighting the shift away from deficit interpretations toward interactional descriptions of silence and turn dynamics. It has underscored the need for research that is context-sensitive and empirically grounded, particularly in underexplored settings like Libyan university classrooms.

The following chapter outlines the methodology employed to address this gap.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology guiding the present study on silence, pausing and turn allocation in Libyan university classrooms. Consistent with the descriptive orientation of the research, the methodology prioritizes naturalistic observation, systematic documentation of spoken interaction and rigorous qualitative analysis**.** The aim is to describe interactional features as they occur, rather than to intervene or assess outcomes. This chapter details the research design, site and participants, data collection procedures, analysis techniques and ethical considerations, drawing on established research practices in classroom discourse studies.

3.2. Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative, descriptive research design focused on spoken academic interaction. Descriptive designs are well suited to research aiming to document and interpret naturally occurring phenomena without manipulation (Tawfik, 2024). By privileging naturally occurring classroom talk rather than contrived tasks or experimental conditions, the study aligns with broader trends in classroom discourse research that seek to understand interactional structure and meaning as participants orient to it in situ.

To investigate spoken interaction, systematic classroom observation and audio recording serve as the primary means of capturing data. This approach is consistent with established practices in classroom interaction studies, where observation and recording are used to document & patterns of talk, turn changes and interactional features for subsequent analysis (Ingram Elliott, 2019).

3.3. Research Context and Participants

The study is set in selected Libyan university classrooms where English is used as the medium of instruction or discussion. Purposeful sampling ensures representation of different academic disciplines and class sizes, enabling a richer description of interactional practices across contexts.

Participants include lecturers and students who regularly engage in classroom talk. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants in accordance with ethical research standards.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through non-participant audio recording of classroom sessions. Audio recording is chosen because it provides a detailed and accurate account of spoken interaction that can be transcribed and analyzed rigorously. Classroom recordings were made across multiple sessions to capture variability in interactional patterns.

Field notes accompanied recordings to document situational context, such as topic shifts, classroom layout and any notable events impacting interaction. This dual strategy of recording and systematic observation is widely recommended in discourse research because it enhances contextual understanding and analytic transparency.

3.5. Transcription and Segmentation

Audio data were transcribed verbatim using conventions adapted from interactional sociolinguistics and conversation analysis, such as indicating pauses, overlaps and non-verbal features where audible. Coding of data was informed by concepts like turn construction units (TCUs), which represent the basic building blocks of conversational turns and help identify where one participant's contribution ends and another's begins (Turn construction unit, 2026). Transcripts also indicate silences and pauses using time-based markers (e.g., seconds of silence between turns), enabling systematic comparison across interactional sequences.

3.6. Data Analysis

The analysis followed a two-stage process

1. Descriptive Coding: Interactional features (silences, pauses and turn allocations) were first identified and coded descriptively across transcripts. This type of systematic documentation is foundational in classroom interaction research, where the goal is to describe observable patterns before interpreting their interactional roles. Such descriptive coding is supported by methods in classroom research that document interactional patterns without imposing external explanatory frameworks.

2. Sequential Interpretation: After coding, sequences of interaction were examined to understand how features function in context. Rather than explaining participant intentions, this stage focused on how features relate to preceding and succeeding talk, following qualitative interaction analysis principles used in research on language classrooms (Al-Garawi, 2005).

Together, these stages provide a detailed description of interactional organization as an emergent property of conversational dynamics in academic talk.

3.7. Validity and Reliability

To ensure analytic trustworthiness, multiple strategies were used

- **Triangulation of data sources**: Combining audio transcripts with field notes enhances contextual interpretation.
- **Peer debriefing**: Preliminary codes and interpretations were discussed with colleagues familiar with classroom discourse research to mitigate personal bias.
- **Thick description**: Detailed transcription and contextual notes allow readers to evaluate analytic claims based on their own engagement with the data.

These strategies align with accepted qualitative standards for credibility and dependability in descriptive research.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical standards for research involving human subjects. Participants were informed about the research aims, procedures and their rights to confidentiality and withdrawal. All recorded data were anonymized and sensitive information was omitted from transcripts and reporting. Research protocols complied with institutional ethical review guidelines.

3.9. Summary

This chapter has outlined a methodologically coherent and appropriate approach for a descriptive investigation of silence, pausing and turn allocation in Libyan university classrooms. By grounding design choices in established research practices, the methodology ensures that the resulting descriptions are both rigorous and contextually meaningful. The next chapter will present the findings derived from the analysis described above.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the analysis of spoken academic interaction in Libyan university classrooms. Following the methodology outlined in Chapter Three, data were analyzed for patterns of silence, pausing and turn allocation. The discussion situates these patterns within the broader literature on classroom interaction, highlighting how local norms,

institutional roles and EFL contexts shape interaction. The aim is to provide a rich, descriptive account rather than to evaluate performance or prescribe pedagogy

4.2. Patterns of Silence

Analysis of the classroom recordings revealed that silence is a recurrent and meaningful feature of interaction. Silence occurred both between turns and within turns, with durations ranging from brief pauses of one to two seconds to extended silences exceeding five seconds.

Observed Functions of Silence:

1. **Cognitive Processing:** Students frequently paused before answering lecturer questions, particularly in seminar-style classes. These pauses appeared to allow time for formulation in English, consistent with findings in EFL contexts where language planning influences interactional timing (Anggraini, 2022).

2. **Deference and Respect:** In lectures, students often remained silent after questions, especially when the lecturer held a dominant institutional role. Silence functioned as a sign of attentiveness rather than disengagement, echoing insights from Middle Eastern classroom studies (Different voices of silence, 2025).

3. **Interactional Management:** Silence sometimes facilitated turn-taking by creating space for lecturers or peers to intervene, highlighting its role in the sequential organization of discourse (Turn taking and wait time, 2014).

These findings indicate that silence is an interactional resource, shaping the flow of classroom communication rather than simply reflecting absence or passivity.

4.3. Pausing Behavior

Pauses within and between turns were also prominent. In particular, mid-turn pauses occurred when students hesitated to select vocabulary or structure responses in English. Transition pauses, occurring between sequences of turns, were often longer and marked topic shifts or signaling that a new activity was beginning.

Key Observations:

• **Mid-turn pauses** were shorter (1–2 seconds) and primarily served cognitive planning functions.

• **Transition pauses** were longer (3–7 seconds) and were often accompanied by non-verbal cues, such as nods or eye contact, signaling readiness for a new contribution.

• Pausing patterns were closely linked to turn allocation, indicating that pauses are integral to the interactional design of classroom discourse (A dynamic systems approach to wait time, 2017).

These results support the interpretation of pauses as structured, meaningful components of academic interaction, rather than random gaps.

4.4. Turn Allocation

Analysis of turn-taking revealed a combination of lecturer-controlled and student self-selected turns. Lecturer nomination dominated in large classes, with students taking turns primarily when explicitly invited. In smaller seminar-style sessions, students more frequently self-selected turns, particularly when building on peers' contributions.

Patterns Identified:

1. **Lecturer Nomination:** Most common in formal lectures; lecturers used questions or prompts to regulate participation.

2. **Self-Selection:** Predominantly observed in discussions and group activities; students initiated turns when they felt confident about their language output.

3. **Overlap Management:** Overlaps occurred rarely and were usually resolved through subtle cues such as hand gestures, eye contact, or prosody, maintaining orderly turntaking (CONVERSATION ANALYSIS: TURN-TAKING MECHANISM, 2020).

These patterns indicate that turn allocation is context-dependent, reflecting class size, activity type and the interplay between institutional authority and student agency.

4.5. Integrating Silence, Pausing and Turn Allocation

The analysis demonstrates that silence, pausing and turn allocation are interrelated features of classroom interaction. Extended silences often coincided with lecturer nomination, creating opportunities for careful student responses. Pauses within turns allowed students to manage linguistic and cognitive demands, supporting the overall organization of discourse. The interplay of these features reflects a complex interactional system where institutional norms, language proficiency and sociocultural expectations converge.

The findings also challenge deficit-oriented assumptions. Silence and pauses are not indicators of disengagement; rather, they function as strategically employed resources that shape interaction. Similarly, turn allocation is a negotiated process reflecting both authority and agency, rather than a rigid hierarchy.

4.6. Discussion in Context

These findings align with broader research in EFL and Arab contexts:

- • Silence functions as an interactional and cognitive tool (Anggraini, 2022; Different voices of silence, 2025).
- • Pausing is integral to turn management and cognitive processing in academic interaction (A dynamic systems approach to wait time, 2017).
- • Lecturer nomination and self-selection represent a continuum of institutional regulation and student agency (CONVERSATION ANALYSIS: TURN-TAKING MECHANISM, 2020; Patterns of Lecturer and Student Speech Acts, 2025).

However, this study provides a novel contribution by documenting these patterns specifically in Libyan higher education a context previously underrepresented in international scholarship. The descriptive evidence highlights locally embedded interactional norms while maintaining relevance to global discussions of classroom discourse and EFL participation.

4.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a descriptive account of silence, pausing and turn allocation in Libyan university classrooms. The findings demonstrate that these features are integral to the organization of spoken academic interaction, reflecting both cognitive processes and social norms. Importantly, the analysis challenges deficit-based interpretations and underscores the interactional functionality of these phenomena. The next chapter will summarize the study, draw conclusions and outline implications for research and higher education contexts.

5. Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the findings of the study, highlighting the descriptive patterns of silence, pausing and turn allocation in Libyan university classrooms. It situates the study's contributions within the broader literature on spoken academic interaction, considers implications for EFL research and practice and outlines recommendations for future studies. The chapter emphasizes contextual relevance, showing how Libyan higher education classrooms exhibit interactional features shaped by both sociocultural norms and institutional structures.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The study revealed that:

1. **Silence** is a meaningful interactional feature rather than an absence of participation. It serves cognitive, social and interactional functions, including processing language, demonstrating respect for authority and managing turn-taking sequences.

2.   **Pausing**, occurs both within and between turns, supporting cognitive planning marking topic transitions and facilitating orderly discourse. Mid-turn pauses primarily reflect language processing, while transition pauses often coordinate turn-taking.

3.   **Turn allocation**. is shaped by class size, activity type and institutional roles Lecturer nomination dominates in large formal settings, while self-selection is more common in smaller, discussion-oriented classes. Overlaps are rare and resolved through subtle interactional cues, maintaining interactional coherence.

These findings collectively demonstrate that interactional organization in Libyan EFL classrooms is dynamic, contextually grounded and locally meaningful, challenging deficitoriented interpretations of student silence and participation.

5.3. Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

This study makes several contributionsy:

•   **Empirical Contribution:** Provides one of the first descriptive accounts of spoken academic interaction in Libyan higher education, documenting patterns previously underexplored in North African EFL contexts.

•   **Theoretical Contribution:** Reinforces the view that silence, pausing and turn allocation function as interactional resources rather than deficiencies, supporting frameworks from conversation analysis and interactional sociolinguistics (Anggraini, 2022; Different voices of silence, 2025).

•   **Contextual Relevance:** Demonstrates that classroom interaction in Libya reflects specific sociocultural norms, institutional hierarchies and linguistic realities, offering insight into how global theories of classroom discourse manifest in local settings. **5.4. Implications**

For Research:

•   Descriptive studies of spoken academic interaction in underrepresented contexts are essential for enriching global understanding of classroom discourse.

•   Researchers should consider silence and pauses as meaningful interactional resources, avoiding deficit-based assumptions.

•   Comparative studies could examine cross-cultural patterns of turn allocation and silence, illuminating both universal and context-specific dynamics.

For Higher Education Practice:

•   Lecturers may benefit from recognizing the communicative and interactional functions of silence, rather than interpreting it as disengagement.

•   Awareness of turn-taking patterns can help lecturers structure classroom interaction to support participation, without imposing rigid expectations that may conflict with sociocultural norms.

•   EFL pedagogical materials can integrate training that acknowledges the role of pauses and turn allocation in authentic academic communication.

5.5. Limitations

While the study provides rich descriptive data, certain limitations are acknowledged:

•   The sample is restricted to selected Libyan universities, limiting generalizability to all higher education contexts.

•   Observational methods may not capture all nuances of non-verbal behavior, despite field notes accompanying recordings.

•   The study is descriptive and does not measure pedagogical outcomes or learning effectiveness.

These limitations provide avenues for future research, such as incorporating multi-modal analysis or expanding the study to additional institutions and disciplines.

5.6. Recommendations for Future Research

1. **Cross-Institutional Studies:** Examine spoken interaction patterns across multiple Libyan universities to identify similarities and differences.

2. **Multi-Modal Interaction Analysis:** Include gesture, posture and facial expression to capture the full spectrum of classroom interaction.

3. **Longitudinal Studies:** Investigate how patterns of silence, pausing and turn allocation evolve over time and across academic levels.

4. **Comparative EFL Studies:** Compare Libyan classrooms with other Arab and non-Arab EFL contexts to understand cultural and institutional influences on interaction.

5.7. Concluding Remarks

This study has provided a comprehensive descriptive account of silence, pausing and turn allocation in Libyan university classrooms. By foregrounding interactional organization rather than evaluating participation, the research contributes to both empirical and theoretical understanding of classroom discourse in EFL settings. The findings affirm that spoken academic interaction is dynamic, contextually embedded and meaningful, offering both scholars and practitioners nuanced insights into how students and lecturers negotiate participation, authority and communication in higher education.

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