
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Clarification Requests as a Resource for Developing Student Responses in Classroom Interaction

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| ABSTRACT

Classroom interaction provides opportunities for teachers and students to collaboratively develop meaning through talk. This study examines clarification requests as an interactional resource for developing student responses in classroom interaction. Drawing on Conversation Analysis (CA), the study analyses naturally occurring teacher–student interaction in classroom discourse, focusing on how participants address unclear or insufficiently specified contributions and negotiate meaning. The analysis identifies clarification requests that initiate further explanation, specify the meaning of classroom concepts, and support the development of student contributions. The findings indicate that clarification requests are used to make meanings explicit and create opportunities for students to elaborate, reformulate, and clarify their responses. The analysis also highlights instances in which students initiate clarification to seek further understanding of classroom concepts. These interactional practices demonstrate how teachers and students collaboratively develop understanding through the sequential organisation of classroom talk. The study contributes to research on classroom interaction and Conversation Analysis by highlighting clarification requests as a resource for the development of student responses and the negotiation of meaning in educational settings.

| KEYWORDS

Conversation Analysis; clarification request; classroom discourse; teacher-student interaction

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Classroom interaction is central for the development of knowledge, understanding and participation (Dahmani et al., 2025). Through classroom interaction, teachers and students as the primary interlocutors do not merely exchange information; they collaboratively construct meanings, negotiate understandings and develop responses to instructional activities (Mori & Zuengler, 2008). The ways in which teachers respond to student contributions are therefore important for understanding how learning is accomplished through interaction. In particular, teachers' responses to unclear, incomplete or insufficiently elaborated answers may provide students with opportunities to clarify their intended meanings and develop their contributions (Copur-Gencturk & Cho, 2026). As such, it is evident that classroom interaction is one of the factors that contributes to learners' academic achievement (Liu et al., 2025).

Given classroom interaction is not necessarily smooth or the possibilities for breakdown to occur (Bukari et al., 2026), one interactional practice through which teachers manage unclear or problematic contributions is the clarification request. Clarification requests may occur when a student's response is difficult to hear, incomplete, ambiguous, or insufficiently specific (Donald, 2022). This is consistent to Schegloff et al. (1977) that suggested factors leading to communication breakdowns are troubles in speaking, hearing or comprehension. To ensure intelligibility is accomplished, these breakdowns need to be addressed through conversational repair (Jariah & Saad, 2018). But in classroom interaction, a teacher may ask the student to repeat, specify, explain or elaborate on what has been said rather than immediately evaluating the response as correct or incorrect. According to Mifka-Profozic (2020), clarification requests aim at eliciting a correction or clarification of the learner's

preceding utterance by indicating that something was unclear or incorrect in that utterance. Such requests can make an interactional problem visible and invite the student to produce a further response. In this way, clarification requests may contribute to the progressive development of student talk and the negotiation of meaning in classroom interaction (Al-Smadi et al., 2023).

From the perspective of Conversation Analysis (CA), clarification requests are examined not simply as isolated teacher questions but as actions situated within a sequence of turns (Kääntä & Kasper, 2018). Schegloff (2007) used the notion of sequence organization to describe how turns in interaction are systematically arranged into coherent and orderly sequences of actions, often through adjacent pairs, such as a request for information followed by an answer. Their interactional significance can be understood by examining what precedes the request, how the request is designed and how the student responds to it (Lindwall & Mondada, 2025). For example, a clarification request may follow an incomplete answer and lead to an elaborated response. It may also be used to specify the meaning of a particular term or concept, after which the teacher or student provides an explanation. The subsequent turns are therefore important for identifying how clarification requests operate as resources for developing classroom discourse (Solem, 2016).

Previous studies of classroom interaction have examined practices such as teacher questioning, repair, feedback, elicitation, and scaffolding. For instance, Bukari et al. (2025) has examined repair initiation in Ghanaian ESL classrooms using CA, based on 52 hours of recorded classroom interaction across 26 classrooms. The study identifies four verbal repair initiation practices—open-class initiators, understanding checks, partial repeats with WH-questions, and requests for repetition—and two non-verbal practices, namely leaning forward and cupping the hand behind the ear. The authors show that these practices are used to address problems of hearing, comprehension, and meaning, thereby supporting clarification, disambiguation, participation, and the maintenance of intersubjectivity in classroom interaction. In a more focused-CA study, Gosen et al. (2024) explored students' 'oh'-prefaced utterances during one-to-one explanation activities. Through detailed turn-by-turn analysis of video recordings and transcripts, the study examined how teachers and students display and negotiate knowledge during explanations, providing insights into students' learning processes and the interactional practices used by teachers. This demonstrates how CA can reveal the sequential organization of classroom interaction and the ways participants collaboratively develop understanding.

Sunarto and Wijaya (2024) on the other hand looks into the relationship between affective, cognitive and linguistic dimensions of classroom feedback. Their discussion highlights how teachers' management of repair may influence learners' willingness to participate and their confidence in producing language. From this perspective, feedback is not only viewed as a mechanism for addressing linguistic accuracy but also an interactional practice that can shape classroom rapport and learner engagement. When correction is managed in ways that maintain students' emotional comfort and willingness to speak, learners may be more prepared to engage with complex linguistic forms. These studies demonstrate that teachers' questions may perform different interactional functions depending on their sequential position and design. However, not every teacher question should automatically be treated as a clarification request. From a CA perspective, the analysis needs to establish whether the preceding contribution creates an identifiable problem and whether the subsequent question addresses that problem. In other words, clarification request is primarily identified when the next turn presents repair initiation such as "huh?" (Myrendal, 2025). This sequential approach makes it possible to distinguish clarification requests from other practices, such as testing questions, information-seeking questions, or requests for further elaboration.

The classroom data examined in the present study contain several instances in which clarification requests are followed by the development of student responses. In one sequence, the lecturer asks the student to clarify an unclear contribution, after which the student continues and provides a more specific answer. In another sequence, the lecturer requests clarification of a reason or concept and subsequently offers an explanation that enables the student to confirm or repeat the relevant term. Other sequences involve the clarification of educational concepts, including the meaning of a "good khalifah" and the principles associated with maqasid syariah. These examples suggest that clarification requests may be used not only to resolve problems of understanding but also to support the expansion and specification of classroom contributions. Nevertheless, the interactional functions of these practices need to be examined through detailed sequential analysis rather than assumed from the grammatical form of the questions alone.

Against this background, the present study investigates clarification requests as an interactional resource in teacher–student classroom interaction. It specifically focuses on how clarification requests are initiated, how students respond to them, and how the ensuing turns contribute to the development of student responses and the negotiation of meaning. By framing the study within the methodological framework of CA, the study seeks to demonstrate how understanding is collaboratively developed through the organisation of classroom talk. The study is guided by the following research question: How are clarification requests used as a resource for developing student responses in classroom interaction?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design informed by Conversation Analysis (CA) to examine how clarification requests are used as a resource for developing student responses in classroom interaction. CA is particularly appropriate for investigating the sequential organisation of naturally occurring talk and the ways in which participants accomplish social actions through successive turns.

The present study is a focused re-analysis of a previously collected classroom interaction corpus. The earlier study examined repair practices in synchronous online university classrooms more broadly, whereas the present study focuses specifically on clarification requests and their contribution to the development of student responses. Thus, the current analysis addresses a different research question and analytical focus by examining how clarification requests are initiated, how students respond to them and how the subsequent turns contribute to the elaboration, specification or reformulation of student contributions.

Clarification requests are not identified solely on the basis of their grammatical form. Instead, they are examined in relation to the preceding contribution and the interactional problem to which the request responds. This approach makes it possible to distinguish clarification requests from other classroom questions, such as questions designed primarily to test knowledge, elicit an answer or introduce a new instructional topic.

2.2 Data Collection

The data were drawn from naturally occurring synchronous online classroom interaction recorded through Zoom at a Malaysian public university. The corpus consisted of approximately four and a half hours of interaction from three online lectures conducted by two lecturers teaching linguistics, sociology and education-related courses. Each lecture lasted approximately one and a half hours. The recorded sessions included lecturer explanations, question-and-answer sequences, student responses and whole-class discussions. These activities provided opportunities for examining how clarification requests emerged during ordinary teaching and learning interaction.

The recordings were originally collected with the consent of the lecturers and students. For the purposes of the present study, the data were re-examined with a specific focus on sequences involving clarification requests. The analysis therefore concentrates on selected extracts in which a lecturer or student displays a problem of understanding and clarification is subsequently initiated.

2.3 Transcription

The recorded interaction was transcribed using Jeffersonian transcription conventions. This system enables the representation of interactionally significant features, including pauses, overlaps, sound prolongation, cut-offs, emphasis and intonation. Such details are important in CA because the meaning and function of an utterance may depend on how it is produced and positioned within the sequence. For the present analysis, the transcripts were reviewed to identify the precise wording, timing, and sequential position of clarification requests. Only transcription symbols relevant to the analysis are retained in the extracts presented in the findings section in order to maintain readability.

2.4 Data Analysis

The analysis followed the principles of Conversation Analysis and proceeded through several stages. First, the recordings were repeatedly reviewed alongside the transcripts to develop familiarity with the organisation of the classroom interaction. Second, sequences containing possible clarification requests were identified. These included questions or other practices through which participants sought to address unclear, incomplete, ambiguous, or insufficiently specified contributions.

Third, each selected sequence was analysed turn by turn. Attention was given to:

- a) the student contribution that preceded the clarification request;
- b) the interactional problem displayed by that contribution;
- c) the design and sequential position of the clarification request;
- d) the student's subsequent response; and
- e) the way the sequence progressed towards elaboration, specification, reformulation, or the continuation of the instructional activity.

A question was treated as a clarification request only when its position in the sequence indicated that it was responding to a problem of speaking, hearing, understanding or an insufficiently developed contribution. This approach helped distinguish

clarification requests from other classroom questions, such as questions designed primarily to test knowledge, elicit an answer or initiate a new instructional topic.

Finally, the selected sequences were compared to identify recurring interactional patterns. The analysis particularly examined whether clarification requests enabled students to produce fuller explanations, clarify referents, specify meanings, or develop their responses through subsequent turns. Consistent with CA, the interpretation was based on participants' displayed orientations to the interaction rather than on assumptions about their internal intentions or learning outcomes.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The data were originally collected with permission from the lecturers and students involved in the recorded classroom sessions. To protect participants' privacy, all names and identifying information were removed or replaced with pseudonyms. The extracts presented in this paper are anonymised and the data are used solely for research purposes.

3. Findings

The analysis identified three recurring ways in which clarification requests were used in classroom interaction: (1) inviting students to elaborate incomplete responses, (2) requesting greater specification of unclear meanings or references and (3) clarifying instructional concepts and task requirements. In these sequences, clarification requests did not simply signal that a student response was problematic. They also created opportunities for students to produce more explicit, detailed or contextually appropriate contributions.

3.1 Clarification Requests as Invitations for Elaboration

The first pattern concerns clarification requests that invite students to develop responses that are recognisable but insufficiently elaborated. In these cases, students produce a brief or general answer, after which the lecturer requests further explanation. The request makes additional talk relevant without immediately rejecting the student's contribution.

Extract 1

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 1 | L | can you think of any other examples other than this one? |
| 2 | | probably my examples ver- not very (.) not very (.) kind of poor examples .hhh |
| 3 | | or maybe you have other examples |
| 4 | | (0.6) |
| 5 | S1 | how about cooking books |
| 6 | L | again afifa? |
| 7 | | (0.2) |
| 8 | S1 | <a::h (.) genre for cooking books> |
| 9 | L | okay cooking books |
| 10 | | (0.1) |
| 11 | | can you can you a::h |
| 12 | | (0.1) |
| 13 | | a::h be more specific |
| 14 | | (0.1) |
| 15 | S1 | li::ke you have to have the: first the ingredients and then have to have the .hhh
instructions step by step how to do i:t (.) like that |
| 16 | L | [um okay] |

In Extract 1, the lecturer (L) initially invites students to provide alternative examples. After a pause, Student 1 (S1) offers "cooking books" (line 6). Although this contribution is relevant to the ongoing discussion, it remains relatively general. The lecturer first acknowledges the answer by repeating "cooking books" (line 10), but then produces the clarification request "be more specific" (lines 12–14).

The clarification request does not treat the student's answer as incorrect. Instead, it indicates that the response is not yet sufficiently developed for the instructional activity. The student responds by expanding the example through a description of the contents of a cooking book, including "ingredients" and "instructions step by step" (lines 16–18). The response is consequently transformed from a short nominal answer into a fuller explanation. The lecturer's "um okay" (line 19) displays acceptance and brings the sequence to a possible close.

This sequence demonstrates that clarification requests can function as a resource for response expansion. The lecturer does not supply the required explanation but prompts the student to produce it. The student's subsequent response displays how a clarification request can create interactional space for a more developed contribution.

Extract 2

- 1 L so what is it a:h aifa?
 2 (0.1)
 3 S6 a:h language device
 4 L =language device (.) what is actually language device?
 5 (0.1)
 6 S6 a:h (.) the: (.) our brtain (.) 'isn't it?'
 7 L =huh? our br[ain
 8 S6 [<the system in our brain>
 9 L okay (.) that's number one
 10 another one is (.) who else?
 11 (.)
 12 S7 the environment

In Extract 2, Student 6 (S6) initially responds to the lecturer's question by repeating the term "language device" (line 3). Although the answer is related to the topic, it does not provide an explanation of the concept. The lecturer (L) repeats the term and asks, "what is actually language device?" (line 4). The design of this question treats the student's first response as relevant but incomplete and invites a more explanatory answer. The student first produces "our brain" (line 6), which is subsequently reformulated as "the system in our brain" (line 8). This progression shows the student moving from a brief and general formulation towards a more explicit response. Importantly, the lecturer does not immediately provide the answer. Instead, the lecturer allows the student to continue developing the contribution before accepting it with "okay, that's number one" (line 9).

The sequence illustrates how clarification requests can support the gradual development of conceptual responses. The request makes an elaborated explanation relevant, while the student's successive turns display an emerging effort to formulate the intended meaning more precisely.

3.2 Clarification Requests as Resources for Specifying Meaning

The second pattern involves clarification requests that address ambiguity in a student's formulation. These requests may target an unclear referent, an incomplete explanation or an expression whose intended meaning is not yet sufficiently specified. In such cases, the lecturer narrows the interactional problem and invites the student to identify or explain the intended meaning.

Extract 3

- 1 L [anyone want to say something?
 2 S12 [sir
 3 L y:es
 4 S12 a:h i think a:h they (.) they play their each one their each (word)
 5 (.)
 6 L if you [what?
 7 S12 [i mean
 8 (0.2)
 9 S12 they have thei::r own (rules)
 10 (.)
 11 L who have their own role?
 12 (.)
 13 S12 a:h nature and nurture (.) we [cannot depends to (word) one
 14 L [o:h (.) okay
 15 S12 only one side
 16 (.)
 17 L okay so meaning that (it) is not (.) either <nature or nurture>
 (it) is both of it actually (words) to be considered
 18 S12 [°right° (.) a:h yes (.) both (.) yes

In Extract 3, Student 12 (S12) begins with a fragmented explanation containing the unclear expression “they play their each one” (lines 4–5). The lecturer (L) responds with “if you what?” (line 7), which displays difficulty in interpreting the student’s formulation and invites the student to reformulate it. The student responds with “I mean” (line 8), followed by “they have their own” (line 10). However, the pronoun “they” remains unspecified. The lecturer therefore produces a second clarification request, “who have their own role?” (line 12). This request targets a more specific problem: the identification of the referent of “they.” In response, the student identifies “nature and nurture” (line 14) and continues by explaining that the discussion cannot depend on only one side (line 16).

The lecturer then acknowledges the response and reformulates the student’s contribution as involving both nature and nurture (lines 18–20). The sequence shows that clarification requests may occur in successive stages. The first request addresses an incomplete formulation, while the second addresses referential ambiguity. Through these progressively focused requests, the student’s response becomes more explicit and the lecturer is able to produce a coherent summary.

Extract 4

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | L | and number four to maintain maqasid al shariah |
| 2 | | (0.2) |
| 3 | | what do you mean by to maintain maqasid shariah |
| 4 | | (0.2) |
| 5 | | meaning to save my (.) religion |
| 6 | | to save life (.) to save nasl lineage (.) to save aql (.) intellect and to save mal (.) the property
or wealth |
| 7 | | so to save these maqasid shariah (.) we must be educated |

In Extract 4, the lecturer uses a clarification request to specify the meaning of an abstract instructional concept. After stating that one objective of Islamic education is “to maintain maqasid al shariah” (line 1), the lecturer asks, “what do you mean by to maintain maqasid shariah” (line 3). This question targets the meaning of the expression rather than requesting a repetition of the previous answer. The lecturer then expands the concept by referring to the protection of religion, life, lineage, intellect and property (lines 5–7). The sequence demonstrates how a clarification request can develop an initially general formulation into a more explicit and detailed explanation. In this way, clarification functions as a resource for specifying meaning and making an abstract instructional concept more accessible to students.

The sequence demonstrates that clarification requests can support the movement from a general or everyday formulation towards a more precise explanation. The student’s contribution is not dismissed; instead, it becomes the basis for further conceptual development.

3.3 Clarification Requests for Clarifying Instructional Concepts and Task Requirements

The third pattern concerns clarification requests related to instructional content and classroom tasks. These sequences may be initiated by students who display difficulty understanding a concept, abbreviation, or assignment instruction. The lecturer responds by confirming, explaining, or expanding the relevant information. Unlike the previous findings, the clarification request in these cases may be student-initiated.

Extract 5

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 1 | L | what’s the relationship between islam and education and how .hhh islam as religion is
looking at education |
| 2 | | okay (.) to understand the <u>role</u> of islam in education we need to es- understand the islamic
philosophy |
| 3 | | and slamic islam a:h purpose in this life |
| 4 | | as muslims we <u>have</u> our philosophy in this life (.) and we said (.) we have two things |
| 5 | | our philosophy in this life and our role in this life is two things |
| 6 | | the first one is a’bd (.) this is our relationship with allah subhana wata’la |
| 7 | | and this one can be fulfilled through what (.) through doing worship (.) to allah |
| 8 | | to reach the state of taqwa |
| 9 | | (0.1) |
| 10 | | [(words)] |
| 11 | S2 | [ah sorry doctor] |
| 12 | L | sorry |
| 13 | S2 | sorry ah doctor ah abd is it stand for ibadah or what |

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- 14 (.)
 15 L yes (.) the abd yeah the abd is is standing for ibadah (.) this one .hhh the practice of salah
 a:h fasting siyam (.) pilgrimage the hajj all of these practices of ibadah is (.) a:h in our role as
 abd
 16 S2 [°okay thank you doctor°
 17 L [(words)
 18 we have another duty (.) what is the other duty is the khalifa
 19 what's the difference between the abd and khalifa?
 20 khalifa is when we are taking care of others and a:h taking of this a:h environment

In Extract 5, Student 2 (S2) initiates clarification by asking whether “abd” stands for ibadah (line 1). The student’s question explicitly displays uncertainty about the meaning of a term used in the lesson. The lecturer (L) confirms the interpretation with “yes” and provides an explanation involving practices such as prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage (lines 3–6). The student then produces “okay, thank you doctor” (line 7), displaying that the clarification has been received. The lecturer subsequently resumes the instructional sequence by introducing the related concept of khalifa (line 9). The clarification request therefore temporarily suspends the progression of the lesson, but once the term has been explained, the lecturer returns to the planned instructional activity.

This sequence demonstrates that clarification requests can serve as a resource for maintaining conceptual understanding during the progression of a lesson. The lecturer’s response resolves the student’s displayed uncertainty and enables the interaction to move forward.

Extract 6

- 1 L try to do it (.) and you don't need to write that much
 2 you can just write a short paragraph
 3 but when it comes to the topic today i need to be a video
 4 so you (know) you try to be creative in your e portfolio
 5 (.)
 6 because (.) there is no specific ah guideline to do it but i leave it for your creativity
 7 are you [(word)
 8 S1 [ah
 9 L are you planning to use a:h (word) or wix or what
 10 you can use whatever
 11 (0.1)
 12 S1 sir i don't understand about the video that's mean we need to record ourself talking about
 the topic or:
 13 L exactly exactly
 14 S1 oh
 15 L you record yourself (while) talking about (.) explaining (.) your understanding of the
 perspective of a:h different (.) muslim scholars

In Extract 6, the lecturer (L) provides instructions concerning an e-portfolio task and states that the students need to produce a video (lines 1–6). Student 1 (S1) subsequently initiates clarification by stating, “sir I don’t understand about the video” and asking whether the students need to record themselves talking about the topic (lines 10–12). The lecturer confirms the student’s interpretation with “exactly exactly” (line 13) and then expands the instruction by explaining that the students should record themselves explaining their understanding of different Muslim scholars’ perspectives (lines 15–17). The student’s “oh” (line 14) displays a change in understanding following the lecturer’s clarification.

Unlike the teacher-initiated sequences in the earlier extracts, this example shows that students also use clarification requests to manage their understanding of classroom tasks. The lecturer’s response does not merely confirm the answer but provides additional details that make the assignment requirements more explicit. Clarification thus functions as a resource for ensuring that the student can identify the expected action and continue with the instructional activity.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that clarification requests function as a sequential resource through which lecturers and students collaboratively develop classroom contributions. Rather than operating simply as signals that a response is incorrect or

inadequate, clarification requests make further talk relevant and provide students with opportunities to elaborate, specify, reformulate, or complete their contributions. This finding is consistent with a Conversation Analytic view of classroom interaction in which the meaning and function of a turn are understood in relation to the turns surrounding it (Mori & Zuengler, 2008; Schegloff, 2007). The findings therefore suggest that the interactional value of clarification requests lies not only in identifying a problem of understanding, but also in how the subsequent sequence provides a space for the student to develop the problematic contribution.

The first pattern, involving requests for elaboration, shows that clarification can be used when a student's contribution is recognisable but insufficiently developed. In the cooking-book sequence, for example, the student's brief response is not treated as incorrect. Instead, the lecturer's request to "be more specific" makes a more elaborated response relevant. The student's subsequent reference to ingredients and step-by-step instructions demonstrates an expansion of the original contribution. This is important from a CA perspective because the development of the response is observable in the sequential relationship between the lecturer's request and the student's next turn. Rather than supplying the missing information herself, the lecturer keeps the student's contribution active and provides an opportunity for the student to produce the elaboration. Clarification therefore operates here as a means of pursuing a more complete contribution while maintaining the student's participation in the ongoing sequence.

The findings also show that clarification requests can progressively narrow an interactional problem. This is particularly evident in the sequence involving "they have their own," where the lecturer first asks "if you what?" and subsequently asks "who have their own role?" The two requests address different aspects of the student's emerging contribution. The first displays difficulty in understanding the student's formulation, while the second targets the unspecified referent of "they." The student's eventual identification of "nature and nurture" demonstrates how successive clarification requests can progressively make an initially difficult-to-interpret contribution more explicit. Such sequences are consistent with the broader CA understanding of repair as an organised practice for managing problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding (Schegloff et al., 1977; Jariah & Saad, 2018). However, the present findings further indicate that, in classroom interaction, such repair can also contribute to the development of the student's ongoing response rather than simply restoring mutual understanding.

A related pattern concerns the clarification of concepts and expressions whose meanings are too general or insufficiently specified for the immediate instructional activity. The sequence involving "language device" illustrates this process. The lecturer's question, "what is actually language device?", prompts the student to move from "our brain" to the more specific formulation "the system in our brain." Similarly, the clarification of "maqasid syariah" moves from a broad expression towards a more detailed account involving religion, life, lineage, intellect, and property. These sequences demonstrate that clarification can make an abstract or underspecified formulation the focus of further interaction. This is consistent with research showing that clarification requests can be used to pursue understanding and address problems of meaning in educational interaction (Kääntä & Kasper, 2018; Mifka-Profozic, 2020). The present analysis extends this observation by showing how the clarification sequence can result in a more explicit formulation of the classroom contribution.

The findings also support the view that clarification requests should be identified through their sequential position rather than through their grammatical form alone. A question such as "what do you mean...?" may function as a clarification request when it follows a contribution that creates an identifiable problem of understanding, but similar interrogative forms may perform other classroom actions, such as testing knowledge or eliciting an expected answer. The extracts demonstrate that it is the relationship between the preceding contribution, the clarification request, and the subsequent response that establishes the interactional function of the question. This reflects the CA principle of sequence organization, in which turns are understood in relation to the actions they make relevant and the responses that follow (Schegloff, 2007). It also supports previous CA research showing that clarification and repair practices are shaped by the sequential environment in which they occur (Kääntä & Kasper, 2018; Myrendal, 2025).

An additional finding concerns student-initiated clarification. The video-task sequence shows that clarification is not exclusively a lecturer-controlled practice. The student's statement, "sir I don't understand about the video," followed by a question about whether they need to record themselves, explicitly displays a problem of understanding. The lecturer confirms the student's interpretation and then provides a more detailed description of what the video should contain. The student's subsequent "oh" provides an observable display of a change in understanding. Similarly, the student's question about whether "abd" refers to "ibadah" makes uncertainty about a classroom term explicit, after which the lecturer confirms and expands the meaning. These sequences demonstrate that clarification can work in both directions: lecturers may pursue further development of student responses, while students may initiate clarification to establish their understanding of instructional content or requirements. This bidirectional character is important because it presents clarification as a collaboratively managed practice rather than simply a teacher-led corrective technique.

Taken together, the findings suggest that clarification requests occupy an intermediate position between repair and instructional development. Their immediate interactional function is to address a problem in understanding, formulation, specificity, or task interpretation. However, the subsequent turns show that resolving such problems can also produce more developed classroom contributions. In this respect, the findings complement previous research on repair initiation in classroom interaction, which has demonstrated how practices such as understanding checks, partial repeats, and requests for repetition address problems of hearing, comprehension, and meaning (Bukari et al., 2025). The present study draws attention to what happens after clarification is initiated, particularly how students' subsequent turns may become more explicit, specific, or elaborated. Clarification is therefore not treated here as an outcome in itself, but as a sequential resource through which further classroom talk is generated.

At the same time, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that clarification requests automatically produce learning or lasting improvements in students' knowledge. The analysis demonstrates interactional developments that are publicly available in the talk: students produce fuller explanations, more specific formulations, clarified referents, or more explicit understandings of task requirements following clarification. These developments provide evidence of the immediate interactional consequences of clarification, but they do not by themselves establish long-term learning outcomes. This distinction is consistent with the CA orientation of examining participants' displayed orientations and observable actions rather than inferring unobservable cognitive states or learning effects.

Overall, the study contributes to research on classroom interaction by showing that clarification requests are not merely mechanisms for identifying and resolving problems of understanding. They can also function as resources for developing student responses through the sequential organisation of talk. Their contribution lies in making further student talk relevant while allowing lecturers to pursue greater elaboration, specification, or clarification without immediately replacing the student's contribution with their own. The findings consequently highlight the importance of examining clarification requests as situated interactional practices whose significance emerges from the relationship between the problematic contribution, the clarification request, and the response that follows.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how clarification requests are used as a resource for developing student responses in classroom interaction. The findings show that clarification requests serve several related functions. They invite students to elaborate on brief answers, encourage them to specify vague or general meanings, support the completion of unclear responses, and clarify instructional concepts and task requirements. These practices enable students to maintain their participation while making their contributions more explicit and relevant to the ongoing classroom activity.

The study highlights that clarification is not simply a strategy for identifying misunderstanding. It is also a collaborative interactional resource through which lecturers and students work together to develop classroom talk. Lecturers' clarification requests create opportunities for students to expand, refine, and reformulate their responses, while students' subsequent turns demonstrate how they interpret and respond to these requests. The analysis therefore emphasises the importance of examining clarification requests as sequential practices rather than as isolated questions.

Pedagogically, the findings suggest that lecturers may use clarification requests to encourage student participation and support the development of more complete responses without immediately taking over the conversational floor. Nevertheless, the study focuses on the interactional development of responses and does not claim to measure long-term learning outcomes. Further research could examine clarification practices across different subjects, classroom levels, and instructional settings, including online and multilingual classrooms.

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