

Prosodic imitation as a means of receiving and displaying a critical stance in classroom interaction

Abstract

This paper investigates (Finnish) classroom interaction and explores the displays of stance and the rules of emotion in this institutional multi-party setting. The main focus of the analysis is on teacher's imitation of students' talk. The starting point is to analyse stance as a situated practice in the sequential organization of interaction, in particular in sequences that contain criticism. Although it is quite common for teachers and students to criticise each others' activities during (pedagogic) interaction, criticism is treated more or less as a delicate issue. Participants deal with the emotional elements of criticism by using, for example, various prosodic practices, including prosodic imitation. Prosodic imitation is a frequent practice among students, but the teachers imitate students' turns quite rarely and only in specific sequential environments. Teachers repeat and imitate the prosodically marked students' answers that occur subsequent to teachers' critical comments on students' behaviour, and the students' self-selected turns that mimic teacher-talk and convey implicit criticism in their prosody. With the help of these prosodic practices the participants are able to receive and deal with a critical stance without jeopardizing the norms, frameworks and 'rules of emotion' valid in this specific institutional setting.

Key words

Classroom interaction; critical stance; prosody; imitation; rules of emotion

1. Sequential and dialogical aspects of displaying stance and affect in classroom interaction

This study focuses on classroom interaction in order to better understand the display of stance and affect in institutional multi-party settings. The institutional and asymmetric participation roles in the classroom are usually defined as a consequence of the asymmetries that arise in professional expertise and knowledge in the pedagogy of the subject to be taught and learned. These asymmetries are thought to have an impact on the interactional practices that typically occur in classroom settings (see e.g. Sinclair and Coulthard 1975; McHoul 1978; Hellermann 2003; Seedhouse 2004). However, I will argue that there are also fundamental institutional asymmetries in expressing stance and affect in classrooms. The participants in institutional settings achieve the status of a competent member of their community only after having learned the specific rules of emotion (Finemann 1993), or emotional labour (Hochschild 2003), that are valid in these settings.

By using these concepts I mean, first, that the participants need to learn what emotions and affects are appropriate in specific settings, and second, that the participants have to learn the ways in which they are allowed to express their emotions and affects in order to display their conversational and institutional competence among other participants (see also Goffman 1967). Classroom settings offer different rules of emotion to teachers as opposed to students.

Especially in educational studies, it has been common to study emotion and affect in the classroom context by interviewing students and teachers about their experiences, attitudes and views (Hargreaves 2000; Sutton and Wheatley 2003). Nevertheless, the actors' attitudes, views and hopes concerning their own behaviour do not necessarily, if at all, correlate with their actual behaviour and interactional practices (e.g. Richardson 1996). Few studies analyze in detail the construction of displays of affect and emotion in the course of interaction in educational settings (but see Sandlund 2004).

My starting point is to analyse affect and stance as situated practice in the sequential organization of interaction (Goodwin and Goodwin 2001). Although I view all activities in interaction as enacting a stance or affect more or less explicitly (cf. Schegloff 1995), I have chosen to focus on a specific practice in an attempt to explore the dimensions of affect and stance, namely that of prosodic imitation of a preceding turn in sequences that convey criticism of other participants' activities (see also Couper-Kuhlen 1996). More specifically, I focus on how and why the teachers imitate the students' turns (Tainio in press). Displaying criticism and negative evaluations in classroom interaction is indeed frequent but nevertheless an activity that violates the overall principle of maintaining social solidarity between the participants (Heritage 1984). This is because displaying criticism in multi-party settings is a face-threatening activity that requires special treatment by all participants (Goffman 1981; Brown and Levinson 1987), especially in classrooms where the

participants' social competences are always at stake on several levels of interaction. By social competences I mean that both students and teachers are evaluated by the participants according to, for example, who is clever, popular, and attractive, learns quickly, or dares to oppose authorities (Baxter 2002). The special treatment of face-threatening-acts is usually observable in the participants' verbal and non-verbal activities, for example, in the syntactic shape and content and in the prosody of the participants' turns, as well as in their non-verbal activities and embodiment, produced and interpreted in their sequential context in the framework of that institutional setting. This analysis is therefore a contribution to the studies that see the sequential perspective of exploring displays of stance and affect in interaction as significant. As I have chosen the practice of the prosodic imitation of a preceding turn as my specific focus, this study is also closely linked to the theme of dialogicality (Du Bois 2007). While analysing interactional practices and activities in their sequential contexts along the lines of ethnomethodological conversation analysis that deals with the dialogic perspective of research in the overall sense of reasoning, my specific focus on prosodic imitation also deals with dialogicality on a more concrete level: by taking into account the ways in which participants make use of the turns and activities of other participants in order to serve their own purposes of displaying stance and affect.

2. Prosody and prosodic imitation as displaying stance and affect

By prosodic imitation, I refer to a phenomenon introduced by Couper-Kuhlen under the concept prosodic repetition (1996). In the same way as her, I mean by prosodic repetitions those turns-at-talk that orient prosodically to the preceding turn(s) in terms of, for example, intonation, pitch, volume, rhythm, or voice. Usually prosodic repetitions also recycle at least some of the verbal elements (words or syntactic constructions) of the preceding source turn (Couper Kuhlen 1996). This phenomenon is referred to by Szczepek Reed (2006) under the concept prosodic orientation.

However, in my data, the prosodic repetitions and orientations contain features, such as laughter together with word repetition, as well as the careful imitation of the intonation or rhythm, that demonstrate that these practices are more than orientation, that is, the participants display the prosodic orientation as a deliberate or intentional activity (NOTE 1). These features cannot therefore be interpreted as being unintentional, but more as displaying mimicry (Couper-Kuhlen 1996). This is why I have chosen to use the term prosodic imitation.

The frequency of prosodic imitation is clearly distributed according to the participants' institutional roles. According to my earlier analysis (Tainio in press), the vast majority of these imitations are made by students; almost all of them are imitations that are initiated by students and that may be followed by other imitations by students. Moreover, boys produce imitations more frequently than girls in (Finnish) classrooms. This study focuses on the infrequent practice of teacher imitating prosodically a student's turn.

Teachers' imitations are explored in order to shed light on the asymmetries in displays of emotional labour of the teachers and students and to explore the closely related phenomenon of displaying stance and affect in interaction. Repeating the turn of the previous speaker is a powerful method of displaying the importance of a preceding turn and making it visible for the other participants (Puchta, Potter and Wolff 2004). Prosodic imitation serves several functions in interaction. First, this type of imitation can be used to display alignment (or convergence, see Du Bois 2007) with the preceding turn (or speaker). Second, it can be used to display disalignment (or divergence, see Du Bois 2007), distance, and criticism towards the preceding turn (or speaker). The prosody and the non-verbal activities of the imitations are the main cues for the different interpretations (Couper-Kuhlen 1996; Tainio in press). However, like Szczepec Reed (2006), I suggest that the prosodic imitation of a preceding turn is more obviously interpreted as showing alignment and convergence

with the preceding turn in interaction. This is also the main function of the imitations among students in classrooms. However, it seems that the main function of prosodic imitation, when used across the different institutionally asymmetric participant roles in classroom, seems to be to show disalignment and divergence. In other words, the asymmetries of displaying affect and stance also affect the interpretation of similar interactional phenomena; prosodic imitation is interpreted more often as (implicit) criticism when the teacher imitates a student's activity than when a student imitates another student's activity.

This study will also analyze in detail the prosody of the imitated source turn as well as the prosody of the imitation. My examples show that the teachers imitate those turns of students that are said in a prosodically marked way. The source turns by students may be said, for example, with increased volume or in a marked phonation or intonation, and that are produced in a sequential place of teacher-talk. By teacher-talk I refer to the kind of turns that are used to organize the structure of the lesson or pedagogic activities during the lesson, for example, to mark moves from one phase to another or to give instructions to student tasks. These kinds of turns are usually expected to be said by the teacher. When students produce teacher-talk in classroom setting they usually mark it in some ways, for example with prosody, and do it in a playful manner. In interaction, the abrupt changes in the prosody are interpreted as indicating a change in affect or stance, since prosody is usually interpreted as one of the most genuine signs of emotion in talk (Scherer, Johnstone and Klasmeyer 2003; Couper-Kuhlen 2004). This is a consequence of the physiological changes that emerge when we, for instance, get excited or angry (e.g., faster respiration, increased cardiovascular activity and muscle tension). These physical changes also affect the prosodic elements of the talk (Scherer et al. 2003). However, as full members of a community, we have learned the rules of emotion of that community. This means that although the changes in prosody may reveal the real

emotions of the speaker, these changes may also be used strategically, to serve the purpose of emotional labour in some specific situation.

3. Data and method

The data consist of video recordings of naturally occurring classroom interaction in the upper levels of Finnish comprehensive schools (students aged 13-15). The corpus contains 14 lessons in co-educational (mixed sex) classes in ordinary schools in Southern Finland. Half of the teachers are men (7 lessons), the other half women (7 lessons). In this data, 144 prosodic imitations could be found, and of these only 9 cases of a teacher imitating prosodically a student's turn (see Tainio in press). Of these nine cases, five come from the same (male) teacher (see examples 1 and 2), and four from two other male teachers and a female teacher. In all of my examples presented in this article the students are approximately 15 years old. This analysis applies ethnomethodological conversation analysis (see e.g. Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Hucby and Wooffitt 1998; for introductions to CA in educational settings, see e.g. Seedhouse 2004).

Analysing stances and affect as situated practice in the framework of ethnomethodological conversation analysis means that the researcher can focus only on the observable features of the on-going interaction and on the interpretations that the participants make available to each other during their interaction (e.g. Hucby and Wooffitt 1998). Observable displays of stance and affect are analysed in their context, as activities that are part and parcel of their multi-modal environment (Goodwin and Goodwin 2001). This starting point of analysis is currently familiar especially in the conversation analytic and ethnomethodological studies but it has its roots in Goffman's views on individuals as being presentators of their everyday lives (Goffman 1959). For example, from the point of view of expressing stance and affect, Goffman sees members of a community as trying to

avoid embarrassment during interactions; he claims that “in the popular view it is only natural to be at ease during interaction, embarrassment being a regrettable deviation from the normal state” (Goffman 1967: 97). However, during human interaction, it is impossible to fully avoid the feelings of embarrassment, to avoid “losing face” (Goffman 1967; Brown and Levinson 1987; Heath 1988). The common and mutual rituals of interaction help us to handle embarrassment in interaction – also when we are the ones who cause this embarrassment. Although we try to avoid causing it, we still do it and suffer from it; that is why we have procedures to deal delicately with embarrassment (Goffman 1967: 97–112). This also holds for educational settings and classroom interaction. For example, conveying a critical stance toward another participant in classroom interaction is a face-threatening-act (Brown and Levinson 1987), and thus potentially causes embarrassment for both the one who is criticizing and the one who is criticized. The participants are to use interactional practices that are both observable (such that the participants can recognize them) and ambiguous (such that they allow the participants to deal delicately with the situation). This makes procedures that are themselves ambiguous and dependent on contextual interpretation, such as prosody in talk-in-interaction, a useful means for the display of stance and affect. Sequential analysis can help to uncover the work that, for example, prosody does in the classroom.

4. Displaying a critical stance with prosody in classroom interaction

In all interactions and especially in institutional settings, thus also in classroom interaction, the participants negotiate and, at least to some extent agree on proceeding according to the sometimes tacit rules of the organization of interaction in that specific context (e.g. Lemke 1990). In the course of the interaction, both students and teachers negotiate about the roles and institutional aims of the interactional setting of the classroom. They orient to certain institutional, asymmetric roles, namely those of a teacher and a student. In addition, students and teachers orient to a certain organization of

interaction/discourse, for example, the special kind of turn taking system (e.g. McHoul 1978; Heritage 1998). These specific features also serve as sources of different kinds of criticism, and thus maybe even as sources of embarrassment.

The main focus of this article is to analyze the prosodic means by which teachers and students treat one of the potential face-threatening-acts frequently presented in the classroom context, namely the practice of a participant displaying a critical stance towards the preceding activity/activities. More specifically, I will focus on those instances where it is the teacher who imitates the preceding student's turn by either exaggerating its prosodic features or by producing a prosodically similar if not an identical turn. This analysis draws on Couper-Kuhlen's (1996) findings from another kind of context. She analyses calls to a phone-in program, and argues that "by imitating his caller's words and pitch, the moderator can be heard to draw attention to and indirectly criticize the [caller's] guess and/or the way it is produced" (Couper-Kuhlen 1996: 191).

In this article, I suggest that both students and teachers use prosody to deal with problematic activities. I also suggest that by using prosody in certain ways in turns-at-talk that could otherwise not be treated as problem sources within the framework of classroom interaction and its aims, the participants are able to communicate two simultaneous but distinct messages to each other. Both parties convey the institutionally acceptable content in an appropriate context in their turns, but while producing the turn in a prosodically specific way, also display their critical stance towards the on-going institutional order. That is, the otherwise appropriate turns-at-talk are uttered with an inappropriate prosody. According to previous analyses (Pirainen-Marsh and Tainio 2009; Tainio in press), those turns-at-talk that are said with a prominent or distinct prosody tend to be easily imitated by other conversationalists. This same type of imitation occurs in the present data.

The prosodically marked student turns that get imitated by the teacher seem to occur in two sequential contexts. First, the students seem to produce prosodically marked turns in contexts where they answer the teacher's question after the teacher has expressed either directly (Example 1) and/or indirectly, non-verbally (Examples 1 and 2), that s/he is not content with the ways in which the students are participating in the on-going interaction. The teacher then imitates these student turns by exaggerating the marked prosody in their own responses. Second, students may produce turns that could be produced in the sequential place of teacher-talk and formulated in a stereotypically teacher-like way in terms of the content (Example 3). When the teacher imitates these student turns, s/he does not exaggerate their marked prosody but utters the imitations with similar, if not identical, prosody. Now I turn to analyse my examples in more detail.

4.1. Teacher imitates student's answer

In the first example, the teacher imitates prosodically the student's answers. Usually imitations also contain a repetition of the verbal elements of the source turn (Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio 2009; Tainio in press), but during this sequence the imitation occurs only at the prosodic level. The extract comes from a lesson on Finnish language (L1). The agenda of the lesson is to study the early history of the Finnish language. The lesson has started with the analysis of an extract from an old gospel text written in the 16th century. The teacher had given the students the paper copies of the text earlier, and their homework had been to read this text beforehand. At the beginning of the extract, they have already analyzed the text, and the teacher has started to pick up the copies. He is now moving on to the next phase of the lesson, to his monologue where he clarifies the situation of the Finnish language at that time. Prior to this extract, the teacher has asked the students to recall what their history teacher has said about this particular historical period; he thus seems to expect that the students will easily know the answer to his questions. What happens is that for a while nobody

volunteers to answer, and he has to fish for the answer. During the extract, he moves around the classroom and picks up the handouts from the students.

Example 1.

- 01 Teacher: millanen oli Suomi. (.) tai millasta
what was Finland like. (.) or how was
- 02 täällä oli vuonna tuhat viissataa.
it here in the year thousand five hundred.
- 03 (1.0)
- 04 Teacher: voidaaks sanoa että millast oli
can we say that how was it
- 05 Suomessa vuonna tuhatviissataa.
in Finland in the year thousand five hundred.
- 06 (3.8)
- 07 Teacher: äää:? ((looks at Sari, takes a paper from her))
- 08 (2.8)
- 09 Teacher: olik_s Suomi sillo_n olemassa.
did Finland exist at that time.
- 10 (3.0) ((boys near Timo whisper; teacher turns
 to look at them))
- 11 Teacher: tyy[pit on muuttunu mykiks.
guy[s have turned mute.
- 12 [
 [((teacher turns his gaze,
 does not look at Timo;
- 13 (0.8) continues picking up the paper copies))
- 14 Timo : @JOO:::.@
 @YEA:::.@
- 15 (0.5)
- 16 Teacher: @mitä joo,@
 @what yeah,@
- 17 Timo : @o:li,@
 @it did,@
- 18 Teacher: @mikä,@
 @what,@
- 19 Timo : @olemassa,@
 @exist,@

20 Teacher: @mikä,@
 @what,@

21 (0.8)

22 Timo : Suo[mi,
 Fin[land,
 [
 23 Tero : [>Suomi kuulu Ruotsiin.<
 [>Finland was part of Sweden.<

24 Teacher: @missä,@
 @where,@

25 Timo : Ruotsi°ssa.°
 In Swe°den.°

26 (1.8)

27 Teacher: e:i ku.
 n:o but. (('I mean'))

28 (1.5)

29 Teacher: mikä oli historiallinen tilanne silloin.
 what was the historical situation.

30 Timo : soli niinku [must Ruotsissa.
 I think it [was like part of Sweden.
 [
 31 Teacher: [((looks at Timo, smiles))

In this extract, the imitation occurs at the prosodic level (NOTE 2). The beginnings of the turns on lines 14–20 as well as on lines 22 and 24–25 start from a similar pitch level; they all imitate the markedly low pitch that Timo uses when he starts his turn on line 14 (indicated in the transcription by the symbol @). In addition, Timo utters his turn with a prosody that can best be described as bored or even peevish: the vowel of the particle *joo* is lengthened, the intonation falls down, and although the turn is uttered in quite a loud voice, the articulatory force sounds weak, displaying a sort of subdued prosody (this being typical for the prosodic displays of disappointment, described by Couper-Kuhlen 2009). When the teacher imitates, he exaggerates Timo’s prosodic delivery (‘tone of voice’) but first and foremost attempts to replicate the pitch and the intonation of Timo’s turn (the intonation in all turns in the question start from a similar pitch level and drop a bit in the course

of the utterance). Moreover, the structure of the utterances is imitated (all these turns are constructed by using only one word, with the exception of the turn on line 16).

Throughout this extract, the teacher walks from one student to another and picks up the paper copies. While doing this, he asks students about the next topic. However, the students are not eager to answer their teacher's questions. The first possible sequential place for a student answer would be after line 2, where the question is syntactically complete. Nobody raises their hands nor volunteers an answer, and the teacher reformulates the question and tries to make it easier for the students to get at the right answer (lines 4–5). When even this reformulation produces no answers the teacher continues his reformulations. First he addresses the “question” to a specific student, Sari (*äää?*; line 7). This turn takes the shape of a very colloquial style; in these kind of sequential contexts, it would be typical to bid for a response by producing certain particles, such as *no* or *niin* (both meaning approximately ‘okay, go on’). Using only a vowel to mark the fishing, especially when the speaker is a teacher, can be heard as a marked turn, probably as a humorous one (the teacher gazes “too” intently at Sari while saying it). Sari does not answer, and once again the teacher addresses the reformulated question to the whole class (line 9). After this fourth reformulation, some boys begin to talk to each other in a low tone. At this point, the teacher looks at them and says: “Guys have turned mute” (line 11). This turn is also shaped in a colloquial style; the Finnish word *tyypit* (‘guys’ or ‘types’) is slightly insulting when used as an address term, since its prototypical use in colloquial Finnish is to refer to non-present persons with negative, stereotypical characteristics. This is the only time I have observed this word used as an address term in Finnish classroom settings. Also, the attribute ‘mute’ can be heard as slightly insulting, since this word is not often used to describe a present participant. In addition, this word is more often used in colloquial rather than formal registers of Finnish.

Such changes of style, or ‘code switches’, can be interpreted as signs of playful interaction (Cromdal and Aronsson 2000). After this turn, Timo answers with an acknowledgement marker *JOO* (‘yeah’, line 14) with marked prosody.

This minimal turn of Timo’s is ambiguous. First, it can be interpreted as a preferred second pair part (Schegloff and Sacks 1973) to the teacher’s question “Did Finland exist at that time” (line 9). Nevertheless, this is not the answer that the teacher is seeking. Instead, the expected answer from the teacher’s point of view is “no”, that is, Finland did not exist at all but was a part of the Swedish empire at that time. Second, Timo’s “yeah” can be interpreted as a reception of the teacher’s comment “Guys have turned mute”. Also from this point of view, Timo’s turn is “incorrect” (as mute persons are not able to speak). At least the latter option is possible to interpret in the framework of playful interaction, particularly because the prosody of Timo’s turn is marked. Yet Timo’s voice is neither notably playful nor enthusiastic but sounds a bit bored or irritated, as described earlier. In other words, although Timo seems to accept the teacher’s agenda and answers his question in a sequential place of a student-answer, Timo formulates his answer in a way that reveals that he is not very eager to answer – he might even show a critical stance towards the teacher(’s activities). This information can be detected only from his prosody (unfortunately the video camera does not catch his non-verbal behaviour at this point).

After Timo’s contribution (line 14), a pause follows; the teacher continues to pick up the papers from the students. After a short time, he initiates a repair sequence by repeating Timo’s turn and by adding an interrogative pronoun in front of it (*mitä joo* ‘what yeah’, line 16). The interrogative pronoun in the teacher’s turn is said on a similar pitch level as in Timo’s preceding turn, and the teacher now also clearly imitates Timo’s prosodic delivery.

The teacher's next turn repair initiation (NTRI, see Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977) and Timo's response to it (*oli* 'it did (exist)', line 17) is followed by several similar pairs; the teacher initiates a repair and Timo responds, and both use one-word phrases. These pairs are uttered in successive beats so that the turns on lines 16–20 constitute a rhythmical entity with recurrent beats (cf. Hellermann 2003: 88–90). However, the teacher does not display his orientation to playful interaction in any overtly observable way, as for example through gestures or facial expressions. Only after Timo answers the teacher's new question (on line 29), after the long sequence of NTRI's and responses, does the teacher look at Timo and smile at him. This reveals the underlying playfulness of the interaction, although even the persistent repair initiations and the responses to them, both conducted with marked prosody and rhythm, in themselves imply some kind of playfulness.

Yet during this sequence especially Timo's prosodic delivery changes to a more usual and everyday-like tone (lines 22 and 25). The vowels are not stretched anymore; the loudness of the voice as well as the articulatory force is normal, and there are no signs of subdued prosody. After the turns that he utters with his normal voice, the teacher also stops using a marked prosody and changes the mode of his activities, indexing this with the discourse particles *ei ku* ('no but'), which are the most typical particles used in the initiations of a self-repair in Finnish (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1022). By using these discourse particles, the teacher shows his sensitivity to the student's initiation to move from a playful mode to a more serious one.

Earlier to this extract, the teacher has expressed directly that he is not content with the students' participation. One of them answers the teacher's task-oriented question with a turn that displays critical stance. The teacher acknowledges this by repeatedly imitating that

student's subsequent answers. Finally, they both end up using unmarked prosody in their turns. The criticism by the student and by the teacher is achieved through prosody and repetition, and the pedagogic interaction may proceed.

Also in the next example (2) – which is an extract from the same lesson – the teacher imitates (line 14) the student answer that is prosodically marked (line 10–12). At this point the lesson is about to end. The teacher has just finished his lengthy monologue and asks a question about “the father of written Finnish” (lines 1-2). At this point in the lesson the answer should be obvious to everybody. The teacher stands in front of the class and looks at the students.

Example 2.

01 Teacher: MIKÄ OLI (.) MINKÄ TAKIA (.) sen
WHAT WAS (.) WHY (.) did he have to

02 piti luoda suomen kielelle [pohja.
create foundations for the [Finnish language.
 [((looks to the
 left side))

03 [mikä oli tilanne (.) tuhatviissat[aaluvun
[what was the situation (.) in the[beginning of
 [((looks at a student on the lef[t))

04 Veli : [((raises
 his hand))

05 Teacher : [alussa. (.) [@täälä.@ (.)
[the 16th century (.) [@here.@ (.)
 [((teacher looks to the left, [stands up))

06 [meillä. (.) suomalaisilla (.) >tai [meijän<
[(.) among us. (.) Finns (.) >or a [mong our<
 [((teacher looks to the left)) [((gaze to
 Veli))

07 (.) [esi-isillä ja äideillä.
[forefathers and mothers.
 [((teacher shifts his gaze to the right

08 (1.3) and then abruptly to the left side))

09 Teacher: **Veli.**

10 Veli : @ki[rjoitettua suomen kieltä=
 @wr[**itten Finnish language=**
 [
 11 Teacher: [((looks at Veli))
 12 Veli : =[ei ollut olemassa.@
 [**did not exist.**@ ((pronounces very carefully))
 [
 13 Teacher: [((raises his eyebrows, turns his head a bit,
 looks at Veli))
 14 Teacher: [ei ollut ollenkaan olemassa.@ ((pronounces
 [**it did not exist at all.**@ carefully,
 [low pitch))
 [
 [((shakes his head, looks at Veli))
 15 (1.3)
 16 Teacher: HYVÄ, (.)SIIT JATKETAAN. (.) meil on viel
 GOOD, (.)FROM THAT WE CONTINUE. (.)we still
 17 toinen tunti.
 have another lesson.

As in example (1), the teacher reformulates his question several times at the beginning of the extract. There are many appropriate sequential places for students' answers (at the end of line 2 and 7; during the pauses on lines 3, 5 and 6). While adding new syntactic elements to his question, the teacher looks around for potential answerers with raised hands. According to the video recording, only Veli raises his hand (line 3; all students cannot be seen on the tape). Although the teacher notices Veli's raised hand (line 6), he continues to add new elements to the question. During classroom interaction, teachers typically seek for more potential answerers than one student. Exceptionally, in the extract above the first one to raise his hand, Veli, is also the one who is allowed to answer (lines 9–10).

Veli answers a question that should be quite clear to everybody; it is about those matters that have been the main focus during the lesson. By answering (lines 10, 12), Veli agrees to act according to the teacher's agenda; Veli's answer is, both in content and its sequential placement, a preferred second pair part. Furthermore, as Veli talks, he looks at the teacher. However, the prosody of Veli's

turn is heavily marked: he pronounces his turn in a very careful way, in a hypercorrect style. This is displayed, first, by using words and a sentence type more typical of written, formal Finnish; second, by pronouncing carefully the final consonants *-n* and *-t* in words *suomen* and *ollut*, although in colloquial speech register these consonants tend to be dropped at the word ends; and third, by moving lips and opening mouth in an exaggerated manner while saying the words. The teacher seems to notice the marked prosody of Veli's answer: during Veli's turn he raises his eyebrows and turns his head a bit while looking at Veli (lines 11, 13). The teacher seems thus to use his facial expressions and gestures to display that he did get the ambiguous message that was conveyed by the answer. Nevertheless, he responds (line 14) to Veli's answer with a typical feedback/evaluation turn (cf. I-R-E/F sequences), by repeating the student's answer and by even adding a confirming element ('at all') to it (Hellermann 2003). But the prosody of the teacher's turn is marked. He utters his turn in a hypercorrect style, using a low pitch and a slightly nasal voice. At the same time he shakes his head vigorously, in an exaggerating manner. In other words, the teacher displays clearly that his response to Veli's prosodically marked answer is both prosodically and non-verbally a marked activity and an imitation.

Examples (1) and (2) showed that the participants in classroom interaction can find ways to handle problematic, potentially face-threatening or embarrassing activities such as displays of non-commitment or even of irritation so that they can show both their negative stances toward the ongoing activities and their agreement to proceed within that situation. In short, the participants can at the same time both follow the principles of pedagogic interaction and rise up against it. Through prosody it is possible to even convey a negative stance and affect without violating the organization of interaction as a whole. Examples (1) and (2) show that it is possible for students to communicate their critical stance and for the teacher to respond to it and even accept it in the course of the pedagogic interaction in a classroom context. Using prosody, the participants are able to display

their stances ambiguously in an institutional, multi-party interaction (Goffman 1981; Brown and Levinson 1987).

4.2. Teacher imitates student's teacher-talk

While the previous examples showed how the teacher imitates the student's prosodically marked answer, in the next example (3) the teacher imitates the student's self selected turn that mimic teacher-talk. This example comes from another school, and the male teacher is teaching mathematics. The students in this classroom do not always bother to express their non-commitment only implicitly. The lesson has started seven minutes before this extract begins. Tiia is the one who produces the utterance that is imitated by the teacher. Tiia is sitting beside Riina and Mirva, and these three girls have made sure in many ways that the teacher realizes that they do not want to learn mathematics. At first (about three minutes from the beginning of the lesson) they talk to each other and show non-verbally that they do not intend to listen to the teacher. Then Riina says to the teacher: "I can't understand ((mathematics)), I am not interested in it" and adds: "math is ridiculous". The teacher has commented on Riina's complaints but the girls display non-verbally that they do not accept his explanations about the usefulness of mathematics. To accomplish this, they lean back and look at the teacher with bored faces when he continues teaching and writing on the blackboard. Soon Riina starts singing quietly and drumming with her fingers. Meanwhile the boys in the classroom have been more actively involved with the teacher's agenda but are nevertheless also quite restless.

Example 3.

01 Teacher: [nää on ny lisätehtäväosastossa.
[**these are in the section for extra exercises.**
[((teacher writes on blackboard))

02 Ville: hä:?
wha:t?

- 03 Teacher: [°satakaks satakolme°
 [°**hundred and two hundred and three**°
 [(teacher turns to look at Ville)]
- 04 Tiia : [no [niin tehäämpäs ↑tehtäviä °nyt°.
 [so [well **let's do some** ↑**exercises** °now°.
 (pass/PL-1)
 [[(Tiia straightens up, picks up the book)]
 [
- 05 Teacher: [(looks at his book)]
- 06 Teacher: [tehkääpäs ↑tehtäviä °nyt°.
 [let's do some ↑**exercises** °now°.
 (PL-2)
 [(teacher looks at the book, points to
 the right exercises)]
- 07 (.)
- 08 Teacher: [tässä (- -).
 [**here** (- -).
 [(teacher starts to write on the blackboard)]
- 09 Ville : ↓pääs↑tääks me vähän aikasemmin. ((pleading))
 ↓**could** ↑**we get home a little bit earlier**.
- 10 Teacher: ei:.=nyt ei voi.
no:.=it is not possible.

Although the teacher has ignored most of the students' self-selected turns during this lesson, here he responds to two of them. He treats Ville's next turn repair initiation as a request for clarification (line 2; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). The teacher turns to Ville and answers his question by repeating the numbers of the exercises that he has already written on the blackboard (line 3). Then he shifts his gaze back to the textbook that he is holding in his hand. At the same time Tiia straightens up in her desk and says: "Let's do some exercises now" (line 4). This is the turn that gets imitated by the teacher (line 6).

Tiia uses the passive voice in her utterance (line 4). In Finnish, the passive voice is always the personal passive; it refers to human agency (or sometimes metaphorical human agency). In fact, this has lead researchers of Finnish to suggest that the Finnish passive voice is not at all a genuine passive voice (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1261–1263). Furthermore, probably for these reasons, the

passive voice in colloquial Finnish is frequently used to substitute for the verb forms in the first person plural. Both the passive voice and the first-person plural can be used for reference that is both inclusive as well as exclusive. This may be why teachers use the passive voice in Finnish classroom discourse when they instruct students. By using the passive, they need not specify the addressees of the directive. Furthermore, by using the passive voice (or the first person plural), they can leave it unspecified whether they themselves are included in the reference. Such an ambiguous reference makes it also possible for participants to diminish the gap between the institutional roles of a student and a teacher.

This reference, the passive voice in Tiia's turn, can be interpreted in three ways. First, it can be considered to refer to all the participants in the classroom, or second, to refer only to the other students in the classroom. Both of these references could be possible in teacher-talk, and teachers indeed use this kind of ambiguous reference in Finnish classes (see also Example 2, line 16). Third, Tiia's turn could be interpreted as addressing only the girls beside her; these three girls have been active in displaying that they are not involved in the teacher's agenda. However, Tiia looks intently at the teacher while she utters her turn and she addresses her turn primarily to the teacher. In addition to this, Tiia's verb form *tehäämpäs* includes two clitics *-pA* and *-s* (*tehääm+pä+s*); the use of these two clitics together at the end of a verb form in directives marks the directive as referring to a task that is non-problematic to the addressee. These clitics also reveal pragmatically that the speaker is more powerful in this context than the addressee (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 800–811). This means that the directives ending with the combination of clitics *-pA* and *-s* are pragmatically marked if they are not said by the teacher.

The teacher responds to Tiia's utterance by imitating its prosody carefully. Both of the turns start from a similar pitch level, stressing the first word; then the intonation glides abruptly up about five

semitones; the final word is pronounced softly, with falling intonation. The teacher's response omits the discourse particle pair at the beginning of the structure (*no niin*, line 4); he reformulates the person reference and modifies slightly the syntax in it. The teacher changes the passive voice in Tiia's utterance to the second-person plural verb form that indicates that he himself is not one of the addressees of the directive. These reformulations in the teacher's turn show that although he in general agrees with the directive, he nevertheless makes the changes noticeable and distances himself from the source turn.

In this context, Tiia's teacher-talk-turn can be interpreted as displaying a critical stance towards the teacher. Earlier, during the same lesson, Tiia's classmate Riina had openly criticized the activities of this teacher. Now Tiia continues this critical stance in a more implicit manner; she produces teacher-talk, a turn that is sequentially said in place of the teacher's possible instruction, and the content and the syntactic structure of the utterance sound like teacher instructions. Nevertheless, the teacher responds by imitating this utterance prosodically and reformulates its syntax to suit his own agenda, perhaps ignoring but even more likely acknowledging the ironic and critical stance that the source turn conveys.

The students may criticize the teacher's activities, the hierarchies of the classroom and the school, by playfully turning around the asymmetries of the institutional roles in these situations and at the same time testing the sense of humour of the other participants. In classroom communities, it is important to display social competence and to be appreciated (Baxter 2002). Taking self-selected turns is one means by which students show their own involvement, and (playfully) criticize the organization of turn taking in the classroom, and it may also be a means of having fun during institutional interaction. This practice of imitating each others' turns is characteristically a practice of students in classrooms (Tainio in press), maybe even in general of teenagers and especially boys.

The fact that the teachers make use of this practice during classroom interaction may also reveal something about their willingness to play with the asymmetries in classroom interaction. Using a practice that is more often characteristic of the young (boys) (see also Piirainen-Marsh and Tainio 2009), the teachers may display in a safe way their own critical stances towards the asymmetrical roles and institutional orders in the classroom context.

5. Discussion

According to ethnomethodological conversation analysis, maintaining institutional realities requires two processes: “(1) the routine production of actions which can be viewed in terms of the appropriate interpretative framework, and (2) the maintenance of the interpretative framework itself in the face of ‘wear and tear’ arising from deviant cases or discrepant courses of action” (Heritage 1984: 210). This means that especially through deviances and violations, the interpretative framework becomes visible and observable for the interactants; all violations and deviant cases are marked as such, for instance, through accounts. In classrooms, students and teachers are socialized into the interpretative framework of school which itself requires them to internalize the rules of emotion and the norms of emotional labor in that context (Gordon et al. 1999; Hochschild 2003). The participants in classroom interaction situate themselves as essential parts of the prevalent reality they are involved in, and through this framework they also express their stances and affects towards each other as well as towards the on-going institutional framework. In this article I have focused on the prosody in talk-in-interaction as a means of displaying those stances and affects that could be interpreted as violations of classroom norms. However, when expressed through prosody, the displays of critical stance and affect act only as practices of the “wear and tear” in the maintenance of the institutional reality of the classroom.

During classroom interaction, it is possible to display critical stances towards the teacher's or the students' activities, towards the subject or the teacher's agenda, or towards the norms of the classroom and school in general. This critical stance can be displayed in the prosody of otherwise sequentially appropriate students' turns-at-talk. In their own interactional practices, the teachers can show students that they have ignored or decided to comment – implicitly – their displays of critical stance. The teachers' imitations of the students' prosodically marked turns-at-talk that are similar to the student's turns, allow teachers to express their own critical stance and to respond to the students' critical stances and affects in ways that do not violate the participants' agreement on the norms, frameworks, and rules of emotion valid in this specific institutional setting. The prosodic imitation across the institutionally asymmetric participant roles in classroom interaction seems to be a successful way to display a critical stance and disalignment with the preceding activities without causing too much embarrassment among the participants.

NOTES

1. In this corpus the simple and straightforward Initiation-Response-Feedback sequences that are typical of classroom interaction are not included; for prosodic imitation within this sequence type, see e.g. Hellermann 2003.

2. In this study the prosodic and phonetic information of the turns-at-talk are not described with figures or illustrations gained, for example, from PRAAT. The data has constant background noise which makes it very difficult to obtain understandable graphics. Instead, the prosody will be described verbally in a detailed manner.

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