

Adjacency Pairs, Gender, and Institutional Power in Master's Oral Examinations at Tikrit University/Iraq

Saifaldeen Thaar Jasim^{1*}, Sharon Sharmini¹, Zalina Binti Mohd Kasim¹, Lee Geok Imm¹

¹ Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Saifaldeen Thaar Jasim: Seifuddin.altikrity@gmail.com

Sharon Sharmini: sharon_sharmini@upm.edu.my

Zalina Binti Mohd Kasim: zalina_mk@upm.edu.my

Lee Geok Imm: gilee@upm.edu.my

*Corresponding author: Saifaldeen Thaar Jasim

E-mail: Seifuddin.altikrity@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT:

Oral examinations are institutionally asymmetrical encounters in which examiners possess particular rights to question, evaluate, direct, and challenge candidates. This study examines how adjacency-pair sequences contribute to the enactment of institutional power in examiners' oral feedback, with particular attention to examiner gender. Data were drawn from six video-recorded Master's viva voce examinations conducted at the Department of English, Tikrit University, Iraq, involving six candidates and 16 examiners. The study employed a qualitative discourse-analytic design combining an adjacency-pair framework adapted from Paltridge (2012) with Fairclough's (2013) three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. Five recurrent patterns were identified: question-answer, directive-response, assessment/critique-response, request/advice-response, and compliment-acknowledgement. Examiner-initiated sequences established interactional expectations for candidates to answer, justify, clarify, acknowledge, or undertake corrective action, making institutional asymmetry sequentially observable. The gender-grouped analysis revealed qualitative differences in the relative prominence of particular patterns: question-answer sequences were more prominent in female-examiner discourse, whereas directive-response sequences were more prominent in male-examiner discourse. However, both groups employed direct and mitigated forms of authority. The findings suggest that gender intersects with the discursive realisation of institutional power rather than determining examiner authority itself.

Keywords: adjacency pairs, viva voce, institutional power, gender, critical discourse analysis, examiner feedback

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1. Introduction

The viva voce examination is a distinctive form of institutional academic interaction in which candidates are required to explain, justify, and defend their research before an examining committee. Unlike ordinary conversation, viva interaction is structured by unequal institutional roles. Examiners possess the authority to question, evaluate, challenge, and require revisions, while candidates are generally expected to respond to these actions. Previous research on thesis-defence discourse has demonstrated how interrogatives, imperatives, modal expressions, and forms of address contribute to the enactment of such institutional authority (Edu-Buandoh, 2020; Mensah, 2017).

One interactional mechanism through which this asymmetry can be observed is the adjacency pair. Adjacency pairs consist of sequentially related first and second pair parts in which an initiating action makes a particular response relevant (Paltridge, 2012; Sacks et al., 1974). In viva discourse, questions may project answers or justifications, directives may project responses or subsequent action, and assessments may generate acknowledgement, clarification, or defence. Adjacency-pair analysis can therefore reveal not only how viva interaction is organised but also how interactional rights and obligations are distributed between examiners and candidates. Educational research has similarly shown that sequential organisation can reflect unequal participation rights (Fenyi & Nyarkoh, 2022), while viva research has associated questioning, commands, interruptions, and gatekeeping with academic authority (Zarrinjooei & Gheitury, 2015). Gender may add another dimension to this institutional interaction. Recent studies have identified gender-related variation in educational discourse. Saleem and Khan (2025), for example, reported greater use of strong imperatives and authority-oriented discourse among male university lecturers in their corpus, whereas female lecturers made greater use of referential questions, hedging, and dialogic strategies. Chalak and Karimi (2022) likewise identified gender-related variation in turn-taking practices. Such findings do not establish universal male or

female communication styles, but they indicate that gender may interact with institutional roles in the discursive realisation of authority.

Despite growing research on academic interaction, limited attention has been given to the intersection of adjacency-pair organisation, examiner gender, and institutional power in viva voce examinations, particularly in Iraqi higher education. The present study addresses this gap by examining examiner–candidate sequences in Master’s viva voce examinations at Tikrit University. It combines an adjacency-pair framework adapted from Paltridge (2012) with Fairclough’s (2013) three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis.

The study addresses the following questions:

1. What types of adjacency-pair sequences occur in examiners’ oral feedback during Master’s viva voce examinations?
2. How do male and female examiners differ in the discursive realisation of these adjacency-pair sequences?
3. How do adjacency-pair sequences contribute to the enactment and negotiation of institutional power between examiners and candidates?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Adjacency Pairs and Institutional Interaction

Adjacency pairs are a central concept in Conversation Analysis, referring to sequentially related actions produced by different speakers as first and second pair parts (FPP and SPP) (Sacks et al., 1974). An initiating action creates an expectation for a relevant response; for example, a question projects an answer, although recipients may also delay, clarify, resist, or modify the projected response (Paltridge, 2012). Adjacency pairs therefore provide a useful means of examining how conversational rights and obligations are sequentially organised.

Their significance becomes particularly apparent in institutional interaction, where participants do not possess equal rights to initiate conversational actions. Fenyi and Nyarkoh (2022), for example,

identified eight adjacency-pair patterns in Ghanaian classroom interaction and found that exchanges were predominantly teacher-initiated, demonstrating how sequential organisation can reflect unequal participation opportunities. Similarly, Nurhayati et al. (2020), using a Paltridge-based framework, identified question–answer and assessment–agreement sequences in interview discourse. Although these studies demonstrate the organisational importance of adjacency pairs, the viva differs because it is a high-stakes evaluative encounter in which examiner and candidate roles are institutionally unequal.

2.2 Viva Voce Discourse and Institutional Power

Institutional power is particularly relevant to viva voce interaction because examiners possess formal authority to question candidates, evaluate their research, and identify required revisions. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a useful perspective for examining this relationship by connecting linguistic choices with broader discursive and social structures (Fairclough, 2013).

Mensah (2017) found that thesis-defence panel members enacted authority through interrogatives, imperatives, modal auxiliaries, and address forms, while candidates employed hedging and deferential forms associated with their comparatively subordinate position. Similarly, Edu-Buandoh (2020) demonstrated that questioning in thesis-defence discourse can reproduce unequal relations rather than functioning simply as neutral information seeking.

More directly relevant to viva interaction, Zarrinjooei and Gheitury (2015) identified verbal and non-verbal commands, interruptions, and gatekeeping over time and knowledge as manifestations of coercive power in M.A. viva sessions. Together, these studies demonstrate that examiner authority is realised through control over both discourse and candidates' expected actions. However, institutional asymmetry does not necessarily eliminate candidate agency. Candidates may clarify, justify,

or defend their academic decisions within the interactional opportunities available to them. Adjacency-pair analysis can therefore reveal both the constraints created by examiner-initiated actions and the ways candidates negotiate those constraints.

2.3 Gender and the Discursive Realisation of Authority

Gender may further shape how institutional authority is discursively realised. Rather than assuming inherently different male and female communication styles, gender can be examined as one dimension interacting with institutional role and communicative context.

Recent evidence supports such a contextual approach. Saleem and Khan (2025), examining university classroom discourse, reported greater use of strong imperatives and authority-oriented discourse among male lecturers, whereas female lecturers made greater use of referential questions, hedging, and dialogic strategies. Chalak and Karimi (2022) likewise identified gender-related variation in turn-taking practices in EFL academic interaction. These findings suggest that gender can be associated with different interactional strategies, although such tendencies remain context-dependent rather than universal.

Despite these developments, the intersection of adjacency-pair organisation, examiner gender, and institutional power in viva voce examinations remains underexplored, particularly in Iraqi higher education. Existing research establishes that viva discourse is institutionally asymmetrical and that gender may be associated with variation in academic interaction; however, less is known about how these dimensions operate together at the sequential level. The present study addresses this gap by examining adjacency pairs as interactional sites through which examiner authority is enacted, mitigated, and negotiated.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Context

This study adopted a qualitative discourse-analytic design combining adjacency-pair analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Adjacency-pair analysis examined the sequential organisation of examiner–candidate interaction, while Fairclough’s (2013) three-dimensional framework was used to interpret how linguistic and sequential choices related to institutional power. Examiner gender was treated as a comparative analytical dimension rather than a predetermined explanation of communicative behaviour.

The data comprised six video-recorded Master’s viva voce examinations conducted between 2017 and 2019 at the Department of English, College of Education for Humanities, Tikrit University, Iraq. Three candidates were male and three female; three vivas were in Linguistics and three in Methods of Teaching. Each examination lasted approximately two to three hours. Across the six vivas, 16 unique examiners participated: nine male and seven female, with some participating in more than one examination.

Each viva committee comprised a chairperson, an internal examiner, and an external examiner, in addition to the candidate’s supervisor. Although supervisors could intervene during the examination, their discourse was excluded because the study focused specifically on feedback produced by the three examining members and candidates’ sequentially related responses.

The recordings were purposively selected from the College Media Department archive according to completeness, audio quality, balanced candidate-gender representation, representation of the two specialisations, and avoidance, where possible, of excessive repetition of the same examiners.

3.2 Transcription and Analytical Procedure

TurboScribe was used to generate initial transcripts, which were manually checked against the original recordings. Naturally occurring grammatical irregularities, repetitions, and incomplete constructions were retained. The transcription was informed by Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004), but detailed timing, pauses, gestures, facial expressions, and

other non-verbal features were not systematically transcribed because the analysis focused on verbal and sequential organisation. English was the principal language of the vivas. Occasional Arabic expressions occurring within otherwise English exchanges were retained but were not analysed as code-switching.

Adjacency-pair classification was adapted from Paltridge (2012) to reflect the institutional functions observed in the corpus. Categories not occurring or not relevant to examiner feedback, such as offers and invitations, were excluded, while recurrent institutional actions were relabelled where necessary. The resulting categories were question–answer, directive–response, assessment/critique–response, request/advice–response, and compliment–acknowledgement. Classification was determined by the sequential function of an utterance rather than grammatical form alone.

Potential sequences were initially retrieved through Microsoft Word searches using cues such as question marks, acknowledgement expressions (e.g., *thank you*), and imperative verbs (e.g., *go*). These searches served only as retrieval aids; each occurrence was manually examined in its surrounding context to determine whether the examiner’s turn constituted a first pair part (FPP) and whether the candidate’s subsequent turn functioned as a relevant second pair part (SPP).

Confirmed sequences were classified by adjacency-pair type and examiner gender. Descriptive counts were used during coding to identify the relative prominence of the five patterns and to guide the subsequent qualitative comparison; they were not treated as inferential statistical evidence of population-level gender differences. Representative sequences were then analysed through Fairclough’s (2013) three dimensions: textual features such as interrogatives, imperatives, evaluation, mitigation, and address forms; their functions within the discursive practice of viva feedback; and their relationship to the broader social practice of institutional hierarchy.

3.3 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Transcription accuracy was strengthened through manual verification against the recordings. The coding framework, category classifications, examples, and interpretations were subsequently reviewed with the researcher's supervisor, an expert in discourse analysis, and category labels were refined following this feedback. This procedure constituted expert review rather than formal inter-coder reliability; no inter-coder reliability coefficient was calculated.

Access to the archived recordings was obtained through written permission from the Dean of the College of Education for Humanities, after which the Media Department provided the recordings for research purposes. Participant identities were removed from the transcripts. Examiners were coded ME (male examiner) and FE (female examiner), while candidates were coded MC (male candidate) and FC (female candidate), followed by identification numbers.

4. Analysis and Findings

Five recurrent adjacency-pair patterns were identified in examiners' oral feedback: question–answer, directive–response, assessment/critique–response, request/advice–response, and compliment–acknowledgement. Following Fairclough's (2013) framework, the analysis considers the linguistic construction of these sequences, their functions within viva discourse, and their relationship to the institutional hierarchy between examiner and candidate. The gender comparison is interpreted as qualitative patterning within this corpus rather than as a statistically generalisable difference.

4.1 Question–Answer: Elicitation and Accountability

Question–answer sequences enable examiners to initiate topics and make candidates accountable for their academic decisions. Such sequences were comparatively prominent in the female-examiner data. Consider the following exchange:

FE5: Don't you think the notion of proverbs should go before these points?

FC2: Dr., I have addressed the theoretical background in two parts. The first part is associated with sociolinguistics concepts, and the

second part is with pure proverbs. You notice here that after 2.0.2, all these notes are solely about proverbs, but if you look at before 2.1.2, it is concerned with sociolinguistics.

The negative interrogative "*Don't you think...?*" does more than request information: it embeds an evaluation of the thesis organisation and projects a preferred position—that the discussion of proverbs should occur earlier. Nevertheless, its interrogative form provides interactional space for the candidate to respond. FC2 uses this opportunity not simply to agree but to justify the existing organisation of the chapter. The sequence therefore illustrates institutional asymmetry alongside limited candidate agency: the examiner determines what becomes accountable, while the candidate retains an opportunity to defend her academic decision.

A male examiner's sequence illustrates a more direct form of accountability:

ME8: Point number four in the aims shows situations where animal proverbs are successfully and appropriately used without showing offence. Did you do that?

MC2: It was my aim at the beginning.

ME8: Yes.

MC2: I could not achieve it. I changed to account why there is a relation.

The direct interrogative "*Did you do that?*" projects confirmation or disconfirmation and requires the candidate to account for whether a stated research aim was achieved. The candidate initially contextualises the issue before acknowledging that it was not accomplished. ME8's intervening "*Yes*" further demonstrates the examiner's involvement in managing the developing response.

Both exchanges therefore enact the examiner's institutional right to determine which aspects of the thesis require explanation. Their different formulations also demonstrate that questioning may range from indirectly evaluative elicitation to explicit demands for accountability.

4.2 Directive–Response: Prescriptive Authority

Directive–response sequences make institutional authority especially visible because the examiner’s initiating action projects a candidate response or subsequent action. Directives were comparatively prominent in the male-examiner data:

ME4: I mentioned something about the bibliography. Go to the bibliography. It should be written in capital letters. I make for you an example of a book with one author, a book for two authors, a published thesis or dissertation, and a published essay. Try to follow these notes, please.

FC2: Ok, Dr., Inshallah [God willing].

ME4 moves from identifying a problem to prescribing corrective action. The imperative “Go to the bibliography” controls the candidate’s immediate action, while “It should be written in capital letters” presents the correction as an expected standard. “Try to follow these notes” extends this authority to subsequent revision of the thesis. Although “please” mitigates the interpersonal force of the directive, it does not remove its prescriptive function.

FC2’s “Ok, Dr.” acknowledges the instruction and indexes the examiner’s institutional status. The exchange consequently illustrates how examiner authority extends beyond control of the conversational floor to control over expected revisions to the academic text. Its occurrence within the male-examiner data contributes to the broader qualitative pattern in which directives were more prominent among male examiners, without implying that directive use is inherently masculine.

4.3 Assessment/Critique–Response: Evaluative Authority

Assessment/critique sequences position examiners as authorised evaluators of candidates’ academic work. A female examiner demonstrates this role in the following extract:

FE6: Look at scoring. Is it enough to say only these three lines? And the title is Scoring Scheme?... For example, here, Item validity, test validity is correct; test reliability—something is

missing here and there. You should have a title and then write under this title. Final administration of the achievement test, and the last point: where are your statistical tools? You do not have any statistical tools in your analysis. It is an important title.

MC3: Ok, understood.

FE6 combines directives (“Look at scoring”), interrogatives (“Is it enough...?”), negative evaluation (“something is missing”), and obligation (“You should...”). These linguistic resources construct a strongly evaluative turn in which the examiner identifies deficiencies and specifies corrective expectations. MC3’s minimal “Ok, understood” acknowledges the critique without defending the thesis, producing a marked contrast between the examiner’s extended evaluative turn and the candidate’s restricted response.

A male examiner similarly exercises evaluative authority:

ME7: I do not know why the paragraphs’ sentences are full of subordinators and very long sentences. For example, on page 39, the sentence starts with “indicates of”; have you found it?

MC1: Which one?

ME7: Page 39, the paragraph which starts with “cut it short...”

MC1: Yes.

Here, “I do not know why” introduces a negative evaluation, but the candidate does not immediately acknowledge the criticism. Instead, “Which one?” initiates an intervening clarification sequence. The examiner then identifies the relevant passage before acknowledgement becomes possible. Candidate responses to assessment therefore cannot always be reduced to simple agreement: clarification may interrupt or delay completion of the projected sequence.

These extracts also demonstrate why examiner authority should not be equated directly with gender. FE6 employs highly explicit evaluative and prescriptive language, while ME7’s assessment develops through negotiation of the referent. Institutional authority is available to both groups, although its sequential realisation varies.

4.4 Request/Advice–Response: Mitigated Authority

Examiner authority may also be expressed through conventionally polite or indirect formulations:

ME2: Can you please briefly state the problem of your study?

FC2: Okay. Our problem is that these words are used mainly in almost all the situations that we are attracted to. We do not have any studies that used these words in the situation that we deal with.

Although grammatically interrogative, “*Can you please...*” functions interactionally as a request for a specific academic action. “*Briefly*” constrains the expected scope of the response, while “*please*” mitigates the imposition. FC2 initially accepts the requested action with “*Okay*” and then fulfils it by explaining the research problem.

The exchange demonstrates that institutional control need not be expressed through an imperative. The examiner retains the right to determine both the topic and expected form of the candidate’s contribution while packaging that authority through politeness. Power in viva discourse can therefore operate through mitigated as well as explicit forms.

4.5 Compliment–Acknowledgement: Positive Evaluation and Gender

Compliments represent a more affiliative form of examiner–candidate interaction but remain evaluative actions:

ME2: So, I do believe that working on such a topic requires a brave researcher. So, I do thank you and your supervisor. This topic is not an easy one to deal with, especially by a woman.

FC1: Thank you so much, Dr.

The expressions “*brave researcher*” and “*I do thank you*” positively evaluate the candidate, while “*Thank you so much*” provides the expected acknowledgement. However, “*especially by a woman*” simultaneously introduces a gendered assumption by constructing the candidate’s gender as relevant to the difficulty of undertaking the research.

Importantly, FC1’s acknowledgement should not be interpreted as agreement with this gendered assumption. Sequentially, “*Thank you so much, Dr.*” primarily responds to the compliment. The exchange illustrates how positive evaluation, institutional authority, and gender positioning can coexist within a single adjacency-pair sequence.

4.6 Gender and the Realisation of Institutional Power

Across the coded sequences, question–answer patterns were comparatively more prominent in female-examiner discourse, whereas directive–response sequences were more prominent in male-examiner discourse. These tendencies indicate different discursive realisations of shared institutional authority rather than differences in the possession of power.

The extracts also caution against a simple opposition between “collaborative” female discourse and “authoritative” male discourse. FE6 employed direct criticism, directives, and obligation, whereas ME2 realised authority through the mitigated request “*Can you please...*”. Both examiner groups therefore drew on direct and mitigated resources according to the developing interaction.

Candidate responses further demonstrate that viva power is asymmetrical but not entirely one-directional. Candidates acknowledged assessments and accepted directives, but they also requested clarification and defended academic decisions. Institutional roles constrain the range of interactional possibilities without rendering candidates completely passive.

Viewed through Fairclough’s (2013) three-dimensional framework, these local linguistic and sequential choices constitute the discursive practice of academic evaluation and connect with the broader social practice of institutional hierarchy. Adjacency pairs consequently function not simply as organisational structures but as interactional sites through which academic authority is enacted, mitigated, acknowledged, and sometimes negotiated.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that adjacency pairs in *viva voce* feedback function not only as mechanisms of conversational organisation but also as interactional resources through which institutional authority becomes observable. Across question–answer, directive–response, assessment/critique–response, request/advice–response, and compliment–acknowledgement sequences, examiners typically occupied the initiating position and established the action to which candidates were expected to respond. From Fairclough’s (2013) perspective, these local sequential relations connect with the broader institutional structure of the *viva*, in which examiners possess formally sanctioned rights to question, evaluate, and prescribe revisions.

This finding supports Mensah (2017), who showed that thesis-defence panel members enact authority through interrogatives, imperatives, modal auxiliaries, and forms of address. The present study extends this argument by demonstrating the sequential consequences of these linguistic resources. An examiner’s question, directive, or assessment functions as a first pair part that makes a restricted range of candidate responses conditionally relevant. Similarly, Edu-Buandoh (2020) demonstrated that questioning in thesis-defence discourse can reproduce institutional inequality rather than functioning solely as neutral information seeking. The present findings show how such inequality becomes interactionally visible when examiner questions make candidates accountable for particular research decisions. Directive–response sequences provide an especially explicit example of this asymmetry. This finding corresponds closely with Zarrinjooei and Gheitury’s (2015) identification of commands, interruptions, and gatekeeping as manifestations of power in M.A. *viva* interactions. The present analysis nevertheless demonstrates that examiner control exists on a continuum. Direct imperatives prescribe candidate action explicitly, whereas formulations such as “Can you please...” mitigate the interpersonal force of control while preserving the examiner’s institutional right to determine the topic and expected response.

The findings also complicate an interpretation of candidates as entirely passive. Although candidates frequently orient to the response projected by examiners, they may clarify, justify, or defend their academic decisions. This extends the findings of Nurhayati et al. (2020), whose Paltridge-based analysis identified assessment–agreement sequences. In the present *viva* data, assessment does not necessarily project straightforward agreement; the candidate may initiate clarification or provide justification before the sequence is resolved. Institutional asymmetry therefore constrains candidate participation without eliminating interactional agency.

The gender-grouped analysis revealed a further pattern: question–answer sequences were comparatively more prominent in female-examiner discourse, whereas directive–response sequences were more prominent among male examiners. This finding is broadly consistent with Saleem and Khan (2025), who reported greater use of strong imperatives and authority-oriented discourse among male university lecturers and greater use of referential questions and dialogic strategies among female lecturers. Chalak and Karimi’s (2022) findings likewise demonstrate that gender can be associated with variation in interactional practices in academic settings.

However, the present findings caution against interpreting these patterns as fixed gendered communication styles. Female examiners also produced direct criticism and prescriptive feedback, while male examiners employed mitigated requests and positive evaluations. Both groups possessed the same formal examiner authority. Gender therefore appears to intersect with the discursive realisation of institutional role rather than independently determining the presence or degree of power. Overall, the study brings together three dimensions that have rarely been examined simultaneously in *viva* research: sequential organisation, examiner gender, and institutional power. Adjacency-pair analysis identifies how interactional obligations are produced locally, while CDA connects these exchanges to the broader institutional hierarchy of postgraduate assessment. The main source of

asymmetry consequently remains the examiner–candidate institutional relationship, with gender operating as a context-dependent dimension in how that authority is discursively realised.

6. Implications of the Study

The findings have implications for both viva practice and examiner awareness. Examiner questions, directives, assessments, and requests do more than convey feedback; they shape the interactional opportunities available to candidates. While direct directives may efficiently communicate required revisions, questions and mitigated requests can provide greater space for candidates to explain or justify their research decisions. Examiner training may therefore benefit from greater awareness of how different feedback formulations influence candidate participation.

The gender-related findings also require cautious application. The observed differences represent corpus-specific tendencies rather than universal characteristics of male and female examiners. Both groups exercised the same institutional authority through direct and mitigated strategies. The practical objective should therefore not be to prescribe gender-specific communication styles but to encourage feedback practices that combine rigorous academic evaluation with sufficient interactional space for candidates to demonstrate and defend their knowledge.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

The study is limited to six Master's viva voce examinations from one department at Tikrit University; consequently, its findings are context-specific rather than statistically generalisable. Although male and female examiners and candidates were represented, the analysis compared examiner gender and did not investigate individual examiner–candidate gender combinations. Furthermore, coding was conducted by the researcher with expert supervisory review but without a formal inter-coder reliability coefficient.

Future research could examine larger corpora across Iraqi universities, disciplines, and degree levels to determine whether similar patterns recur

in other institutional contexts. Examiner–candidate gender combinations and interactional phenomena such as interruption, repair, turn allocation, and multimodal behaviour also warrant systematic investigation.

8. Conclusion

This study examined how adjacency-pair sequences contribute to the enactment and negotiation of institutional power in Master's viva voce examinations at Tikrit University, with particular attention to examiner gender. Drawing on an adjacency-pair framework adapted from Paltridge (2012) and Fairclough's (2013) three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, five recurrent patterns were identified: question–answer, directive–response, assessment/critique–response, request/advice–response, and compliment–acknowledgement.

The findings demonstrate that adjacency pairs perform both organisational and institutional functions. By initiating questions, directives, assessments, and requests, examiners establish expectations regarding what candidates should answer, explain, acknowledge, or act upon. Nevertheless, candidates retain limited interactional agency through clarification, justification, and defence, indicating that viva power is asymmetrical but locally negotiable.

The gender-grouped analysis further suggests different discursive realisations of shared institutional authority. Question–answer sequences were comparatively more prominent in female-examiner discourse, whereas directive–response sequences were more prominent among male examiners. These patterns represent context-specific tendencies rather than fixed characteristics of male and female communication, since both groups employed direct and mitigated forms of authority.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the limited research on Iraqi viva voce discourse by connecting conversational sequence, gender, and institutional power. It demonstrates that adjacency pairs are not merely structural units of interaction but important discursive sites through which academic authority is enacted, responded to, and negotiated.

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