Taking, begging, or waiting for the floor: students' social backgrounds, entitlement and agency in classroom discourse

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an ethnographic study analyzing the influence of students' social backgrounds on students' entitlement and agency in relation to floor rights. Classroom interactions were video-recorded, and interviews were conducted in a socially diverse fifth-grade in Israel. Descriptive statistics and micro-analyses of participation patterns reveal a discursive mechanism whereby students from more privileged backgrounds, endowed with higher senses of entitlement and agency, use floor obtaining strategies, such as calling out and begging, which increase their learning opportunities, often at the expense of their less privileged peers. The research contributes to expanding our understanding of the mechanisms of educational injustice, advancing us towards their rectification. As such, the study may be of interest to both educational researchers as well as practitioners.

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Introduction

In 1992, in a seminal article on inequality in schools, Mehan argued that inequality in schools cannot be fully understood without 'opening the black box of schooling' (p. 2) and investigating the 'constitutive practices' (p. 11) through which social inequality is reproduced. Although some three decades have passed since then, social inequality is still plaguing educational systems around the world. The current study focuses on one such mechanism contributing to social stratification: obtaining floor rights in classroom interaction. Integrating the analytical frameworks of social reproduction and sociocultural theory, we present a linguistic ethnography analyzing the influence of students' social backgrounds on students' entitlement (Lareau, 2003) and agency (Clarke, Howley, Resnick, & Rosé, 2016) in relation to floor rights. This study thus enhances our understanding of mechanisms of educational injustice, advancing us towards their rectification. As such, the study may be of interest to both educational researchers as well as practitioners.

Students' social backgrounds and schooling

According to social reproduction theory, children's educational experiences are mediated by their cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Middle-class children come to school equipped with a set of cultural and linguistic practices closely matching school expectations (Black, 2004; Calarco, 2011; Lareau, 2003; Miller & Sperry, 2012; Nelson & Schutz, 2007; Streib, 2018). According to Lareau (2003), middle-class parents typically raise their children via 'concerted cultivation', developing a 'sense of entitlement' in their children, whereas working-class parents practise a child-rearing pattern of 'accomplishment of natural growth', leading to children's 'sense of constraint'. Following Lareau, Golann and Darling-Aduana (2020) define sense of entitlement as 'understanding the institutional rules of the game and knowing how to bend these rules to one's advantage' (p. 3). They further explain that children with a sense of entitlement 'presume they have a right to pursue their own preferences and customize interactions to their own benefit' (p. 3). Applying Lareau's theoretical framework to school, Calarco (2011, 2018) demonstrates a certain 'ease' and 'fluency' through which middle-class children seek help, facilitating the extent and immediacy at which these children's needs are met compared to working-class children. Streib (2011) demonstrates that these patterns are present already in pre-school children, with middle-class

children calling out regularly, asking questions, interjecting comments, and complaining.

Studies of social reproduction have mainly focused on children's social class. However, 'class always intersects with a long list of identity dimensions, such as gender, ethnicity, race, nationality, language and so on' (Block & Corona, 2014, p. 35). Numerous studies of immigrant and language-minority students provide evidence that schooling experiences are indeed mediated by an array of identity dimensions (Johnson, 2014; Koole, 2003; Losey, 1995; Rismark, 1996). Due to the home–school mismatch in language and interactional practices, minority students' intellectual abilities are often misrecognized (Miller & Sperry, 2012), with long-lasting, detrimental effects on the students' academic trajectories.

Furthermore, a recurring finding since the 1970s is that students' gender likewise influences their learning experiences (e.g. Aukrust, 2008; Berekashvili, 2012; Brophy & Good, 1970; Sadker & Zittleman, 2016; Swann & Graddol, 1988; Younger, Warrington, & Williams, 1999). These studies indicate that boys are called-on more frequently, the questions directed to boys are typically more challenging, and boys are also praised more often than are girls. This 'unequal distribution of talk is seen as normal. In particular, girls seem to have learnt to expect a lower participation level than boys, and boys seem to have learned that their fair share is a larger one' (Swann & Graddol, 1988, p. 63). This seems like an indicator of a higher sense of entitlement among boys than among girls, although this body of literature did not explicitly refer to Lareau's (2003) analytical framework.

Another factor influencing students' schooling experiences is how the teacher perceives their learning abilities (Snell & Lefstein, 2018). Teachers' implicit biases influence their expectations of their students (Adair, Colegrove, & McManus, 2017; Black, 2004), leading to differential learning opportunities (Adair et al., 2017; Snell & Lefstein, 2018). However, students may be proactive actors in this process, enacting agency (Clarke et al., 2016) and securing learning opportunities for themselves (Calarco, 2011).

Students' verbal engagement, agency, and learning

Studies of classroom interaction drawing on sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) stress students' active participation as a necessary component for fostering learning opportunities (e.g. Black, 2004; Jurik, Gröschner, & Seidel, 2014; Reeve & Tseng, 2011; Snell & Lefstein, 2018) and increasing learning outcomes (e.g. Asterhan & Schwarz, 2009; Howe, Hennessy, Mercer, Vrikki, & Wheatley, 2019; O'Connor, Michaels, & Chapin, 2015). Applying this lens, and in line with previous gender studies (discussed above), Jurik et al. (2014) found that the frequency and duration of boys' participation was significantly higher than that of girls. However, these apparently gendered patterns were mediated by students' motivational and cognitive characteristics, with motivationally and cognitively 'strong' girls demonstrating – contrary to expectations – high levels of verbal engagement.

Others examine participation by focusing on discourse moves and their productivity for learning (Black, 2004; Sedova & Navratilova, 2020). Black (2004) demonstrates that whereas middle-class children typically participated in productive interactions in which they played an active role, working-class children mainly participated in non-productive, teacher-controlled interactions, playing a passive role, which contributed to these children's marginalization and their positioning as non-participants in the learning community.

Clarke et al. (2016) examine participation in classroom discussions through the lens of student agency, which they conceptualize as 'the intention and capability to take action with respect to one's learning in learning activities, in order to change the trajectory of theirs and their peers' learning' (p. 30). Following Rainio (2008), the authors distinguish between students' 'sense of agency' and 'enacted agency'. Sense of agency was determined via students' expressions of 'self-appraisals, intentions to act, and social structures that shaped those intentions' (Clarke et al., 2016, p. 31). Enacted agency was operationalized via students' participation in verbal interactions, with unsolicited turns indicating agentive engagement, and solicited responses indicating non-agentive engagement (p. 31). (For further discussion of agentive engagement, see also Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Clarke et al.'s (2016) findings suggest that whereas high contributors' sense of agency was intrinsic, related to the contents of learning and to the students' desire to learn, low contributors' sense of agency was driven by external social structures, e.g. earning the teacher's approval or avoiding peer ridicule.

Sense of entitlement revisited

As noted earlier, drawing on social reproduction theory, and specifically on Lareau's (2003) analytical framework,

several studies have argued that middle-class students' sense of entitlement facilitated their school interactions, allowing their needs to be met more fully and immediately in comparison to their working-class peers. These studies, however, have mainly focused on social class and to a lesser extent on other dimensions (e.g. ethnicity, gender, learning ability, etc.). In addition, sociological research of sense of entitlement has mainly been applied in educational settings within the US (e.g. Calarco, 2018; Streib, 2011). The current study is located in Israel. Although Israel, like the US, is a democratic, neo-liberal country, there are nevertheless sociocultural differences (see e.g. Katriel's, 2016 discussion of speaking 'dugri' i.e. 'straight' in Israeli Hebrew and doing 'musayra' in Arabic), which may influence the ways in which sense of entitlement is played out in classroom interactions in Israel.

Drawing on sociocultural theory, studies of classroom interaction, in their turn, focused on the quantity and quality of students' participation in verbal interactions, inter alia investigating how students' verbal engagement was related to agency. These studies, however, have typically investigated verbal engagement through the lens of students' motivational and ability profiles, often glossing over students' cultural backgrounds. The current research bridges the gap between these schools of thought, examining classroom participation from a sociologically multidimensional perspective in order to answer the following questions:

- How do students' social backgrounds (social class, nationality, ethnicity, language, gender, and perceived learning ability) influence their sense of entitlement and sense of agency?
- How do students' social backgrounds and senses of entitlement and agency influence their enacted entitlement and agency via taking, begging, or waiting for floor rights?
- What are the implications of recurrent patterns of obtaining floor rights for students' opportunities to learn?

Careful readers may have noticed the similarity between the constructs of 'sense of agency' and 'sense of entitlement'. However, despite this similarity, the two constructs are not synonymous. Sense of agency is related to the 'student's conception of his [or her] own *powers*' (Rainio, 2008, p. 115, our emphasis), i.e. what the student thinks he/she can do for himself/herself. Sense of entitlement, on the other hand, is related to the student's conception of his/her *rights* (Golann & Darling-Aduana, 2020, our emphasis), along with a feeling that these rights *should* be met. However, students do not necessarily have the agency to pursue what they see as their rights. Under such circumstances, they may feel that their rights have been infringed.

In the current study, we operationalize agency and entitlement through the strategies students use to obtain the floor (i.e. to participate in classroom discussions). Data analysis yielded five floor obtaining strategies: (1) hand-raising; (2) begging; (3) calling out; (4) teacher allocation; and (5) follow-up. Hand-raising refers to cases in which students request floor rights in an orderly fashion by raising their hands and speaking only after having received the teacher's permission. In begging, rather than raising one's hand, while quietly and patiently waiting for permission to speak, the student verbally begs for the floor (e.g. 'Can I? Can I?'), thus in effect taking the floor, while at the same time withholding the actual content of his/her contribution. In calling out, the student takes the floor, rather than asking for and then waiting to be given permission to speak. In teacher allocation, the teacher solicits a response from a specific student, although this student has not displayed any signs indicating that s/he wishes to participate. Finally, follow-up is when a student has held the floor in the previous turn, and the teacher continues probing him/her via follow-up questions/comments.

As noted above, Clarke et al. (2016) differentiated between solicited and unsolicited responses as indicators of low and high student agency (respectively). In the current study we add to this matrix, by offering a more nuanced examination of unsolicited responses, identifying three different types of unsolicited participation patterns: hand-raising, begging, and calling-out, indicating increasing levels of agency (respectively). Note, however, that there may be a discrepancy between agency and entitlement. For example, when a student begs for the floor, s/he feels highly entitled, but at the same time realizes s/he has only limited agency.

Data and method

This study is part of a large-scale intervention project conducted in 21 Israeli Hebrew-speaking secular state schools, designed to promote academically productive talk in classrooms (Barak, Lefstein, Kaner-Furman, & Shem-Tov, 2020). The study is also part of a related, smaller-scale project conducted in two of the schools participating in the larger project. The aim of this smaller project is to investigate the ideologies and practices whereby students' social

backgrounds influence their educational experiences and learning.

The current study was conducted in one of the schools participating in these two projects. The school is located in a mixed Arab-Jewish city in the center of Israel, with a middle-low socioeconomic status.[1] The data for the current study were collected during the 2019–2020 school year, which was the school's first year in the program. Data were collected from a fifth grade classroom of 24 students, aged 10–11 years and their language arts teacher, Sarit (pseudonym, as are all participant names mentioned in the article). The teacher, parents, and students all gave informed consent.

The study is based on linguistic ethnographic methods (Rampton, Maybin, & Roberts, 2015), combining holistic ethnographic descriptions subject to fine-grained, systematic linguistic analysis. As part of ethnographic fieldwork, the first author immersed herself in the field, attending Sarit's classes on a regular basis, observing, taking fieldnotes, and collecting students' written products. Data were also gathered via documentation of the researcher's informal interactions with Sarit and the students during school breaks. The researcher also formally interviewed the teacher and 15 students.

Data analysis is based on a subsample of eight lessons that were observed and videotaped before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel in March 2020 (after which teaching was mostly online). These eight lessons were transcribed in full. Data also include approximately five hours of audio recordings of semi-structured interviews with the students and another hour of interview with the teacher (all transcribed in full).

Participants and setting

Sarit is a Hebrew language arts teacher who has been teaching in this school for ten years. This was, however, her first year with this specific class. The class was composed of 24 students: 15 boys and 9 girls, from middle-low socioeconomic backgrounds. Four of the students were Arabs, which was out of the ordinary in the otherwise monolithic Hebrew- vs Arabic-speaking schooling sectors in Israel. This was the Arab students' first year in this school, which they joined after because their previous school was closed down and its students dispersed between the different Hebrew-speaking state schools in the city. The 20 Jewish students came from diverse backgrounds, including two students from Ethiopian family background, one from Bukharan background, and the majority from families from North Africa and the Middle East (*Mizrahim*).

Five focal students were selected for the current study (Table 1). The five focal students were selected due to their diverse backgrounds and perceived learning abilities, in an attempt to try and capture the diversity of the class under investigation. The students' socioeconomic class was determined through information regarding parents' occupation gathered through student interviews, and based on the International Socio-Economic Index (Ganzeboom, 2010). Eventually students were classified as either middle-class or working-class. Students' perceived learning ability was determined through teacher assessments on a four-level scale (high; medium; low; very low).

Table 1 : Focal students' social backgrounds and perceived learning abilities (Table view)

Name	Gender	Nationality	Home Language	Ethnicity	Social Class	Perceived Learning Ability
Itay	M	Jewish	Hebrew	Bukharan	Working-class	High
Shachar	M	Jewish	Hebrew	Mizrahi	Middle-class	Low
Ronnie	F	Jewish	Hebrew	Mizrahi	Middle-class	High
Tal	F	Jewish	Hebrew	Ethiopian	Working-class	Very low
Rabi'a	M	Arab	Arabic	Arab	Middle-class	Low

A quantitative analysis of students' social backgrounds and floor rights

Table 2 presents the average frequency per session of each floor obtaining strategy by the different dimensions of social background at the class level.[2] Table 3 presents these frequencies for our five focal students.

Table 2 : Average frequency per session of strategies for obtaining the floor at the class level (Table view)

Social Background	Average No. of students[a]	Hand-raising	Calling out	Begging	Teacher allocation	Follow-up	Total

Social Background	Average No. of students[a]	Hand-raising	Calling out	Begging	Teacher allocation	Follow-up	Total
Gender	Boy (N=14.13)	1.09 (12.6%)	5.13 (59.5%)	0.58 (6.7%)	0.07 (0.8%)	1.76 (20.4%)	8.63 (100%)
	Girl (N=7.5)	0.48 (17.1%)	1.63 (57.6%)	0.23 (8.2%)	0.08 (2.9%)	0.40 (14.1%)	2.83 (100%)
Nationality	Jewish (N=17.7)	0.94 (12.3%)	4.63 (60.2%)	0.56 (7.2%)	0.08 (1.0%)	1.49 (19.3%)	7.70 (100%)
	Arab (N=3.88)	0.58 (34.6%)	0.64 (38.5%)	0.00 (0.0%)	0.06 (3.8%)	0.39 (23.1%)	1.68 (100%)
Social Class[b]	Middle-class (N=8.25)	0.70 (13.1%)	3.09 (58.1%)	0.48 (9.1%)	0.08 (1.4%)	0.97 (18.2%)	5.32 (100%)
	Working-class (N=5.38)	1.05 (14.0%)	4.74 (63.6%)	0.23 (3.1%)	0.07 (0.9%)	1.37 (18.4%)	7.47 (100%)
Perceived Learning Ability	High-medium (N=11.6)	1.15 (12.5%)	5.52 (59.7%)	0.57 (6.2%)	0.06 (0.7%)	1.94 (21.0%)	9.25 (100%)
	Low-very low (N=10)	0.56 (15.7%)	2.08 (57.8%)	0.33 (9.1%)	0.09 (2.4%)	0.54 (15.0%)	3.59 (100%)
Total for Class	Average per student per session	0.88	3.92	0.46	0.08	1.29	6.63
	%	13.28%	59.21%	6.90%	1.14%	19.48%	100%

[a] The class included 24 students, but students were sometimes absent.
[b] SES was obtained for 15 students.

Table 3 : Average frequency per session of strategies for obtaining the floor for focal students (Table view)

Student name (Gender, Nationality, Ethnicity, Class, Ability)	Hand-raising	Calling out	Begging	Teacher allocation	Follow-up	Total
Itay (Male, Jewish, Bukharan, Working Class, High)	3.63	17.25	0.63	0.13	4.38	26.00
	13.94%	66.35%	2.40%	0.48%	16.83%	100.00%
Shachar (Male, Jewish, Mizrahi, Middle Class, Low)	1.38	12.63	2.50	0.13	3.00	19.63
	7.01%	64.33%	12.74%	0.64%	15.29%	100.00%
Ronnie (Female, Jewish, Mizrahi, Middle Class, High)	1.83	11.17	1.83	0.17	3.33	18.33
	10.00%	60.91%	10.00%	0.91%	18.18%	100.00%
Tal (Female, Jewish, Ethiopian, Working Class, Very Low)	0.4	0	0	0	0	0.4
	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Rabi'a (Male, Arab, Middle Class, Low)	1.88	1.38	0	0	1.00	4.25
	44.12%	32.35%	0%	0%	23.53%	100.00%
Total for Class	0.88	3.92	0.46	0.08	1.29	6.63
	13.28%	59.21%	6.90%	1.14%	19.48%	100.00%

The frequencies by social background reveal recurring patterns that characterize students from dominant and non-dominant social groups: students from dominant backgrounds (boys, Jews) and students perceived as having higher learning abilities participate more compared to their peers from non-dominant backgrounds (girls, Arabs) and students perceived as having low academic abilities. These dominant students do so by calling out and begging, securing themselves more discourse rights compared to their less dominant peers, who persist in hand-raising, showing less sense of entitlement and enacting less agency. Additionally, through follow-up questions, the teacher developed answers offered by boys and students perceived as having high academic abilities more than she developed answers offered by girls and students perceived as having low academic abilities.

Comparing the focal students to the class average, we see that the two Jewish boys (Itay and Shachar) as well as one Jewish girl (Ronnie) each had many more turns than the average student. In contrast, Tal, a Jewish girl with

Ethiopian family background and Rabi'a, an Arab boy, both had notably fewer turns than the class average. These frequencies are in line with the general patterns observed for the different social groups (see Table 2).

Moreover, we see that Itay, Shachar, and Ronnie mainly took the floor by calling out, whereas Rabi'a mainly raised his hand and called out less often, and Tal did not call out at all. In fact, in the five sessions she attended, Tal participated only twice – in both instances after having raised her hand. In addition, while Shachar and Ronnie begged for the floor above average, and Itay below average, again, Tal and Rabi'a stand out, never having begged for the floor.

We take the strategy of calling out as an indicator of high levels of both entitlement and agency, and begging as an indicator of a high sense of entitlement but limited agency. In contrast, a student who sits quietly and patiently with her/his hand raised, waiting to be given the floor enacts less agency and is also driven by a 'sense of constraint', rather than entitlement. Examining our data through this lens, we see that whereas Itay, Shachar, and Ronnie have a high sense of entitlement and enact agency above average, Tal and Rabi'a feel much less entitled to obtain the floor and indeed enact less agency in obtaining it. We next turn to our qualitative micro-analysis to get a clearer picture of how these patterns unfold.

Micro-analysis of students' social backgrounds, entitlement and agency in obtaining floor rights

In this section we present and analyze excerpts from classroom interactions in which our focal students took part, triangulated with interview data. In Excerpt 1, two focal students, Rabi'a and Itay, take part. (The following symbols are used to mark floor obtaining strategies: hand-raising=↑; calling out=→; begging=∪; turn allocation=⊕; follow-up=≈. For full transcription conventions, see appendix).

Excerpt 1: Rabi'a: Waiting and sighing; Itay: Calling out

518	Sarit:	Wait, what do you say about his behavior?	Itay, Rabi'a, and Yarden raise their hands
519	Rabi'a↑:	[{sighs with his hand raised}	
520	El'ad→:	[pig	
521	Itay→:	[I have something about what he did.	
522	Sarit:	Wait a second, e::hm, actually we see here, one second, before you raise your hand Rabi'a.	Rabi'a, Itay, and Yarden take their hands down.
523		We have here, […] we see that he does something […] how does it look to us?	Rabi'a, Yarden and Itay raise their hands. Itay is the last to raise his hand.
524	Rabi'a↑:	[{sighs with his hand raised}	
525	Sarit:	[Itay, what do you say? How does it [look to us?	Rabi'a and Yarden take their hands down.
526	Itay↑:	[Bad, [bad.	
527	Sarit:	[Bad, why?	
528	Itay≈:	Because, because he told him to be sick and ate all his straw, […] so they made him work ruthlessly, harder than the ox, and in the end, [the-	
529	Sarit:	[Were the donkey's intentions good in the beginning or [not?	
530	Itay→:	[no.	
Lines 531–548 deleted for brevity			
548	Sarit:	Yes, what do you say, Yarden?	Rabi'a still has his hand raised. Yarden raises his hand.
549	Yarden↑:	I say he made this offer only to get something later on.	
550	Sarit:	You're saying, the donkey acted e::h we can call it cunningly?	
551	Yarden≈:	Yes.	
552	Sarit:	when he e:h [did all this,	
553	Itay→:	[reverse psychology.	

554	Sarit:	and he made this offer, so that in the end he could eat the straw. e:h what, what do you think, Itay, what do you say?	
555	Itay≈:	Like reverse psychology.	
556	Sarit:	What do you mean reverse psychology? Explain.	
557	Itay≈:	He told him something, that, that he would do and he did, a:nd tha:t and afterwards he got [what he did.	Rabi'a takes his hand down
558	Yarden→:	[That's what I [said.	
559	Sarit:	[one second, one second.	
560	Itay≈:	It's like reversed, the ox worked ruthlessly and then suddenly rested, a:nd then the donkey is the one who was resting and then suddenly he worked harder.	
561	Sarit:	Okay, you're saying this was the crime and punishment, that actually someone does something, and then also gets punished for it.	
562		e::h,	Rabi'a raises his hand
563		one second, let's get going one minute, just one second and I'll let you talk {to Rabi'a},	Rabi'a takes his hand down
564		I want to get going with the story.	
565	Rabi'a:	{Sighs quietly and puts his head down.}	

Excerpt 1 is 02:40 min long. During much of this time, Rabi'a has his hand raised. He also sighs three times, but does not get to say a word. In the meantime, different students are calling out, often earning follow-up questions that allow them to continue holding the floor. In 523, Rabi'a, Yarden, and Itay have their hands raised. Although Itay is the last to raise his hand, Sarit allocates him and subsequently adds a follow-up question (527), which allows him to continue his turn and elaborate his thoughts. Similarly, in 553, although Itay calls out, interrupting Sarit in her explanation, Sarit nevertheless follows up on his contribution, asking him to explain what he meant.

Note that Sarit is not oblivious to the fact that Rabi'a has his hand raised. Indeed, the excerpt begins with Sarit explicitly asking Rabi'a to take his hand down. The excerpt ends with Sarit promising Rabi'a that she will let him speak, but not now, as she wants 'to get going with the story' (564). At this point, Rabi'a looks rather crushed.

Sighing repeatedly, Rabia does express frustration. Nevertheless, he does not complain. This, we argue, indicates Rabi'a's low sense of entitlement, which also came up in his interview. When asked if he feels that he is given the floor, Rabi'a replied:

> Sometimes she [Sarit] doesn't ask me to answer, when there are many children, I'm not the only one who needs to answer …
> Sometimes when I ask [for permission to speak], Sarit gives [the floor to] someone else, but that's fine.

Thus, Rabi'a has no complaints. Later on, Rabi'a adds:

> My mom tells me to participate. That I need to listen more … If I don't write like I don't learn, I'm not connected with them and then when I'm big, I won't understand what people are saying.

Rabi'a's limited sense of entitlement is thus reinforced at home. Like Rabi'a, his mother does not have any complaints either. Instead she places full responsibility for participation and for learning in general on Rabi'a's shoulders, absolving others (e.g. teachers and classmates) of responsibility.

This pattern is very different from that witnessed in the case of most of the Jewish boys and girls. Consider Excerpt 2, in which Shachar begs for the floor and then complains and blames the teacher for not meeting his request soon enough:

Excerpt 2: Shachar: Begging and blaming (the teacher)

456	Sarit:	Yes, what do you say? {to Yael}	Shir, Shachar, and Itay have their hands raised. Yael raises her hand too and is immediately given the floor.
457	Yael↑:	That he does not eat.	
458	Erez∪:	Can I?	

459	Sarit:	That he does not eat. I want you to also look for it [in the passage, Erez.	Shachar, Erez and Shir raise their hands.
460	Shachar∪:	[Can I?	
461	Erez↑:	He lay on the floor and did not eat anything […]	
462	Sarit:	So the donkey actually [we feel that-	
463	Shachar→:	[You're not letting me! Come on Sarit! Here, it's written in the text.	
464	Sarit:	Let's hear.	
465	Shachar≈:	'Lay down and pretend you are sick […]'	
466	Sarit:	Nice, the ox liked the advice […]. What you said is very right.	

In 458 Erez begs for the floor. Then (460), Shachar overlaps with Sarit, likewise begging for the floor. Next, Erez, who has been given permission to speak, provides his answer, which earns Sarit's feedback. However, Shachar again interrupts Sarit, complaining and blaming her for not giving him floor rights (463). Sarit accedes (464) and gives Shachar the next turn. Shachar then reads from the text and receives positive feedback. It thus follows from Excerpt 2 that begging is worthwhile, yielding explicit benefits to those who beg. Shachar's discontent also came up during his interview:

> I always raise my hand, but she [Sarit] doesn't choose me. She doesn't even look at my row [in class] she doesn't look.

In other words, Shachar feels highly entitled to the floor. He feels, however, somewhat limited in his agency, realizing that control over floor rights is ultimately up to the teacher. He thus blames the teacher when his sense of entitlement is not fully and immediately met.

In Excerpt 1, we have seen Rabi'a, an Arab boy from a middle-class family and with low perceived learning ability, raise his hand for long periods of time, but to no avail. We have also seen that Rabi'a did not complain or blame others. Instead, he took responsibility for not enacting agency, and at most blamed the objective circumstances (i.e. class size, lack of time, etc.). In contrast, in Excerpt 2 we have seen Shachar, a Jewish boy likewise from a middle-class family and with low perceived learning ability, begging for the floor and then blaming his teacher for not acceding to his request quickly enough.

We remind our readers that whereas Rabi'a received fewer turns of talk (4.25 per lesson) than did an average student in this class (6.63), Shachar in fact received about three times as many turns (19.63) as did an average student (see Table 3). In other words, neither Shachar's complaints nor Rabia's lack thereof were objectively justified. Instead, we argue, they are indicative of Shachar's high sense of entitlement vs its lack in Rabi'a's case.

In the next excerpt, we see how Ronnie, a middle-class female student with high perceived learning ability, reacts when her floor rights do not match her expectations.

Excerpt 3: Ronnie: Begging and blaming (her classmates)

599	Sarit:	Yes, but I don't hear students participating. Sleepy? What's up?	
600		What is the conflict about?	Ronnie, Itay, Shachar, Yarden, and Neta raise their hands.
601		One moment. Yarden you're participating wonderfully, I've heard you a lot, I've heard Ronnie, [I've heard Shachar, I've heard Itay.	
602	Ronnie→:	[Ugh! {angry for not being given permission to speak}	Ronnie continues raising her hand.
603	Shachar∪:	[Can I again?	

604	Sarit:	[One moment.
605	Ronnie∪:	[Can I too?
606	Sarit:	[One moment.
607	Rabi'a→:	A conflict /XXX/
608	Sarit:	[Neta.
609	Ronnie→:	[They always rob me! That thief {pointing at Ofir}!

Excerpt 3 begins with Sarit expressing her frustration with students' low participation, naming those students who she feels have actually been heard enough. Ronnie, who has her hand raised, is upset to find her name on this list. Keeping her hand up, she complains ('ugh!', line 602) and then, along with Shachar, she begs for the floor ('Can I too?', line 605). Sarit, however, allocates Neta as the next speaker (608). Upset for not being given the floor, Ronnie takes the floor anyway and accuses her classmate, Ofir, for always taking her words (609).

It follows that Ronnie, like Shachar, has a high sense of entitlement. She feels she has the right to be given the floor and enacts agency when her rights are not fully and immediately met. However, unlike Shachar, who blames the teacher when his floor rights do not match his expectations, Ronnie blames her classmates, accusing them of taking her words and thus depriving her from fulfilling her entitlement over the floor (609).

During her interview, however, Ronnie said that she 'wants others to participate', and doesn't 'care only for herself'. This suggests that although Ronnie has a high sense of entitlement, she is also aware that her own floor rights may come at the expense of others', who she realizes are no less entitled.

However, despite Ronnie's apparent concern for the floor rights of others, in class she repeatedly accused her classmates, and particularly the girls, for taking her words. Consider the next and final excerpt:

Excerpt 4: Tal's fleeting participation

21	Sarit:	Good. More. What is change? Yes Ofir.	Ofir raises her hand.
22	Ofir↑:	Change in appearance.	
23	Sarit:	Change in appearance, in external appearance. Lovely, change in external appearance.	
24		What other changes can we have here?	Tal and Itay raise their hands.
25	Itay→:	Change in internal appearance.	
26	Sarit:	Just a second, you're calling out. Tal.	
27	Tal↑:	Change in behavior.	
28	Sarit:	Change in behavior.	
29	Ronnie→:	e:h, that's mine, thief!	
30	Sarit:	Shhhh. Yes, what did you say, Itay?	
31	Itay↑:	Change in internal appearance.	
32	Sarit:	What is change in internal appearance?	
33	Itay≈:	Like if you […] if you misbehave and then all of a sudden you're good.	

Excerpt 4 includes two cases of girls (Ofir and Tal) who are granted permission to speak immediately after having raised their hands. Tal comes from an Ethiopian, working-class family background. The teacher perceives Tal's learning ability as very low. As noted earlier, Tal participated only twice during the five classes she attended, both by raising her hand. One of these instances appears in Excerpt 4. In line 25, Itay calls out. Sarit tells him off and gives the floor to Tal, who has her hand raised. Tal provides a short answer: 'Change in behavior' (line 27). Sarit laconically acknowledges Tal's response but then Ronnie calls out, accusing Tal that this was her idea. Sarit quiets Ronnie down, but rather than following up on Tal's answer, Sarit turns to Itay, whom she has just told off for calling out. Itay repeats his earlier response ('change in internal appearance'). However, whereas Tal's contribution was left underdeveloped and its credit appropriated by Ronnie, Itay is challenged with a follow-up question through which he is once again given the opportunity to expand both his words and his learning.

Discussion and conclusions

The current study highlights a 'constitutive' (Mehan, 1992) educational practice whose workings have thus far been transparent to both researchers and educators: obtaining floor rights. Previous studies of classroom interactions in Israeli Hebrew-speaking schools have noted that students in this context typically display an 'exuberant' style of participation (Segal & Lefstein, 2016; see also Lefstein, Pollak, & Segal, 2020). In line with this finding, the current study found that calling out was indeed the most prevalent floor-obtaining strategy. Some have argued that allowing students to call out may actually contribute to productive interactions. For example, in her article 'Teaching as creating space for participation', Helgevold (2016) provides a rather romantic description of a class discussion in which 'none of the students are raising their hands, asking permission to reply. Rather they are commenting spontaneously, both to the questions asked by the teacher and to fellow students' questions and answers' (p. 323). Helgevold presents this example in order to make the point that by 'passing-on' (p. 323) control over floor rights, teachers may create space for active student participation.

This may indeed be sound pedagogical advice, particularly in learning communities such as the Norwegian classroom studied by Helgevold (2016), in which participation is typically highly ordered. The case may be different when participation is more 'exuberant', as in the typical Israeli classroom. As we demonstrated, the right to call out is not equally available to all students. Instead, when teachers pass-on control over the floor to the students, it may very well be students from more privileged backgrounds who take control, leaving their less privileged peers, who may have lower senses of entitlement and agency, in effect silenced.

Another strategy not equally available to all is begging for the floor. Previous studies have generally overlooked this strategy. The current study indicates that while begging certainly yields benefits to those who beg, these benefits come at the expense of others, particularly students with lower senses of entitlement, who may wait quietly with their hands raised, while their peers vocally and effectively beg for and obtain the floor. Furthermore, our findings indicate that teachers may be unwittingly exacerbating the situation. In line with Calarco (2018), who found that teachers accede to middle-class students' help-seeking requests even at times when they would rather say 'no', the current study suggests that a similar process takes place when students beg for the floor. Students' incessant begging impels the teacher to give the floor to the begging student, if only to appease the nuisance.

Another way in which teachers may unwittingly be contributing to inequality in classroom participation is through follow-up questions that encourage students to elaborate and explain their ideas. Follow-up questions are considered pedagogically good practice (e.g. Sedova, Sedlacek, & Svaricek, 2016), contributing to the emergence of academically productive talk. This practice, however, becomes problematic when certain students are followed up more frequently and more elaborately than are others. As previously demonstrated (e.g. Clarke, 2015; Clarke et al., 2016; Kovalainen & Kumpulainen, 2007; O'Connor, Michaels, Chapin, & Harbaugh, 2017) and corroborated in the current study, some students are much more vocal than are others. When teachers follow-up on vocal students' contributions, they encourage precisely these students to continue holding the floor, thus bolstering learning opportunities for those who are already advantaged, at the expense of those who are disadvantaged.

In sum, classroom interaction involves 'dynamic interplay between interlocutors, institutions and histories' (Clarke et al., 2016, p. 28). The current study has shown how students' social backgrounds mediate the strategies they use for obtaining the floor. In line with studies from the US (e.g. Calarco, 2018; Streib, 2011), we have seen that in Israeli classes as well, students from more privileged backgrounds are endowed with higher senses of entitlement and agency which make certain floor obtaining strategies, such as calling out, begging, and receiving a follow-up turn, more readily available to them than to students from less privileged backgrounds. Consequently, the latter's learning opportunities were more limited.

The current study contributes to knowledge in the field of sociology of education in several respects. First, we expand the research site, which has thus far been located mainly within the US, to a different location that includes students from different nationalities, cultures and languages. Second, we expand the array of identity dimensions investigated, taking into consideration not only students' social class, but also gender, ethnicity, nationality, and language. Third, bringing together two schools of thought – social reproduction theory and sociocultural theory, the study has enabled us to gain a more accurate understanding of the constructs of entitlement and agency, which despite their resemblance are rarely studied together. Finally, our focus was an educational mechanism that has not been studied in such detail before. We have identified specific floor obtaining strategies claiming that they play a role in

educational inequality, thus taking us a crucial step towards its rectification.

The study has significant pedagogical implications. The study underscores the influence of students' social backgrounds on their participation in classroom discussion and by extension on their learning opportunities. Teachers need to be aware of varying factors that could promote floor time for some students and limit floor time for others in an educational context. For the context studied, we recommend that teachers do not accede to begging nor tolerate calling out, especially when these practices are used by privileged students at the expense of their less privileged classmates. Teachers could also make deliberate efforts to probe weaker students with follow up questions, rather than simply acknowledging their participation and moving on to stronger and more vocal students. Finally, clarifying the rules for participation in classroom discussions and making sure the students abide by these rules may likewise lead to greater equality, particularly in settings such as the Israeli classroom, which otherwise tends to be rather rowdy and disorderly.

Notes

1. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (https://old.cbs.gov.il/publications/local_authorities06/pdf/t02.pdf)
2. Analysis included only whole-class interactions, i.e. excluding group/individual work. Additionally, only talk related to the topic of the lesson was included, i.e. excluding discipline and procedural matters.

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Appendix: Transcription conventions

: vowel lengthening

[overlap overlapping speech

[overlap

/XXX/ undecipherable words

{comment} comments

[…] deleted text

↑ hand-raising

→ calling out

∪ begging

⊕ turn allocation

≈ follow-up