

## Realizations of turn-taking in conversational interactions

YANG Wei-dong

(English Department, China University of Petroleum, Beijing 102249, China)

**Abstract:** The most common kind of spoken language is conversation, when one person communicates through speaking to another or to other people. In this paper, the author tries to give an account of how turn-taking is realized in conversational interactions. Discussion is made about: (1) General discussions about interactions; (2) Turn-taking cues; (3) Varieties of gesticulation and body movements in turn-taking, and (4) Differences in turn-taking. Also, attempts are made to introduce overlaps and gaps in turn-taking.

**Key words:** turn-taking; cues; varieties; overlaps

### 1. Introduction

The most common kind of spoken language is conversation, in which one person communicates through speaking to another person or to other people. Just as there are patterns in sounds, words, and sentences, so there are patterns in conversation. Even in the most unpredictable conversations, there are certain devices that we use time and time again. If a person wants to tell a joke or some bad news or to ask for a special favor, there are recognized ways of introducing these subjects. Without these cues, listeners would be very disconcerted.

Conversations are orderly and proceed in an organized way, but all the participants have to work at the conversation, making sense of things, supporting each other, checking for meaning, and so on. A conversation, unlike a piece of written work, is the work of at least two people.

When humans want to use language to communicate orally with each other, they are faced with a sort of coordination problem. "Avoidance of collision is one obvious ground for this coordination of actions between the participants. In order to communicate efficiently and successfully, they will therefore have to agree to follow certain rules of interaction" (Oreström & Bengt, 1983, p. 18). One such rule is that no one monopolizes the floor but the participants take turns to speak. This important concept in linguistic interaction is called "turn-taking".

Turn-taking "...is made possible by the cognitive limitations of human beings" (Beattie, 1982, p. 93). Usually people find it very difficult to talk and to listen simultaneously and therefore there must be some means of allocating turns so that for some limited period one person alone holds the floor and acts primarily as the listener, contributing only briefly to provide support, encouragement, and feedback.

In this context the tasks of the present study are firstly to discriminate and secondly to discuss how turn-taking is realized in conversational situations.

### 2. General Discussions about Conversational Interactions

#### 2.1 Adjacency pair

Turn taking by itself should not tell us much. But Sacks (Sacks & Harvey, 1994) and his colleagues also

---

YANG Wei-dong, lecturer of English Department, China University of Petroleum; research fields: English writing, translation, spoken English.

pointed out that one turn is related in predictable ways to the previous and next turns. That is called adjacency, being next to. This may seem obvious, but it is different from previous approaches to conversation that looked for some larger structure, like a grammar. A question suggests the next turn will be an answer, a greeting suggests the next turn will be a greeting. Many things people say could have several meanings; the next turn shows what the people take it to mean, for now. So if someone insults you, and you respond "Thank you," you are taking the insult as a compliment.

This simple point about adjacency has implications for the way we correct mistakes, and the way we present tricky requests, and for communicating by phone or in broadcasting.

We can see how this works with invitations. Not all invitations are accepted, of course. But an acceptance or rejection is what is expected next. And these two possible responses are not handled the same way. An acceptance typically comes quickly, even before the inviter is finished (Heritage, 1998, p. 258):

B: Why don't you come up and see me some times?

A: I would like to.

B: I would like you to.

A rejection is likely to be delayed or modified in some way, with "well" or a silence or a reason (Pomerantz, 1984, p. 101):

B: Uh if you'd like to come over and visit a little while this morning, I'll give you a cup of coffee.

A: Hehh .Well, that's awfully sweet of you, I don't think I can make it this morning hh uhm I'm running an ad in the paper and-and uh I have to stay near the phone.

The technical term for this is that there is a preference for agreement. That doesn't mean that agreement is actually what either party would want; it means that agreement will typically come in the unmarked way.

## 2.2 Pre-sequences

If a turn is really problematic, a speaker may prepare for it with a pre-sequence. You are probably familiar with these routines for invitations.

C: How ya doin', say what'r you doing?

R: Well we're going out. Why?

C: Oh, I was just gonna say come out and come over here and talk this evening, but if you're going out you can't very well do that.

In fact, this routine is so familiar that the question "What are you doing tonight" is heard as an invitation itself, not a query about how you spend your time. Pre-sequences can also be used in giving bad news:

D: I-I-I had something terrible t'tell you.

So, uh

R: How terrible is it.

D: Uh, th- as worse it could be.

R: W-y'mean Edna?

D: Uh yah.

R: Whad she do, die?

D: mm:hm,

Pre-sequences show how talkers have taken on the idea that talk is sequential, one thing after another, and how they are careful in the order in which they present possibilities.

## 2.3 Repair

Talk leaves lots of room for misunderstanding. You can realize you have said the wrong thing, or the other person has said the wrong thing, or either of you has said something inappropriate. When a speaker makes a mistake, any of the following could happen:

the speaker corrects himself or herself

the hearer corrects the speaker

the hearer prompts the speaker, for instance by repeating back what he or she just said

the hearer prompts the speaker by not responding

In this example, the hearer suggests a corrected version to the speaker (The “=” shows the hearer breaks in without any pause):

Student: He let me write his assignment=

Tutor: He let you read his assignment?

Student: Yes.

Conversation analysts have noted that, at least for their largely US-based data, there is a preference for allowing the speaker to repair his or her own mistake:

A: Hey, the first time they stopped me from sellin’ cigarettes was this morning.

B: From selling cigarettes?

A: From buying cigarettes.

Even when parents are trying to train kids to talk in a polite fashion, they seldom correct directly, leaving the kid to figure out what is wrong:

A: (father) and F (four years old)

F: I want pizza.

A: Please.

F: I want pizza please.

Once you start looking for it, you will find that repair is surprisingly frequent. That is because talk is a noisy medium, with many possible misunderstandings. And the mechanisms of repair can be used even when the speaker does not think they have said anything wrong, to emphasize errors of politeness or strategy.

#### **2.4 Telephone talk**

Much of the early work on conversation was done with tapes of talk on telephones. This is partly for practical reasons—when people talk on the phone, they can not see each other, so that much of the complexity of face-to-face interaction is cut out. Also, they are easier to record clearly.

But phones raise their own problems as media. Talkers have to make clear by talking alone all that they might have suggested with bodies, faces, and movement. And they have to manage the opening and closing of phone calls without offending the other person. Schegloff (1978) wrote an early study in conversation analysis noting the standard opening of a US phone call:

		(phone rings)	
T1	A:	Hello.	summons
			response
T2	C:	Hello.	allowing for voice identification
T3	A:	Hi.	greeting

Why does it take four turns? In Schegloff's (1978) analysis, the first "Hello" is just to show the phone has been answered. There is then an exchange that gives the person called the chance to guess the name of the caller from his or her voice alone. This gives a sense of intimacy, but it can also lead to embarrassment:

A. Hello,

C. Hi. Susan?

A. Yes,

C. This's Judith, Rossman

A. Judith!

This offers an example of how conversation analysis works. We know there is trouble because of the way A draws out her "yes", and the way she fails to pick up after Judith's first name, and then because of her emphatic response when Judith gives her full name. We do not need to guess about the states of mind of caller or answerer; we can look at how they talk.

Hanging up is even more of a problem; you all know the problems of seeming to hang up too abruptly. Sacks and Schegloff (1978) show how it takes six turns to close. In one pair of turns, one party signals that the conversation is about to end, giving the other party a chance to open it up again. Then they both need to pass on the chance to open it up. Only then do they exchange closings. If you do less than this, you can be heard as hanging up on the other person.

A: Well, I just wanted to see how you were doing

B: Thanks for calling. We'll have to have lunch sometime

A: I'd like to

B: Okay

A: Okay

B: See you

A: Yeah, see you

This pattern leaves room for "opening up closings" if one or the other party wants to say more. That's why you may find it hard to get off the line with some people.

For the purposes, what is interesting about these openings and closing is the way people deal with the limitations (or opportunities) of a medium that doesn't allow for visual signals.

### **2.5 Assessments**

Some of the preferred responses in adjacency pairs seem obvious. We all have a sense of Questions and Answers, or Invitations and Responses. The way second turns work may also be seen in a type of pair we may not think of: assessments. Assessments are statements of opinion or evaluation, and have a preferred second when they are opinions of someone or something known to the hearer. That is, the second person typically agrees, and even upgrades the evaluation:

A: Hal couldn't get over what a good buy that was

B: Yeah that's an r-a (really good buy).

A: Yeah, Great buy,

### **2.6 News interviews**

One use for all this detailed analysis is that it helps us understand the way talk is used on television and radio. One example of this type of analysis is a study by David Greatbatch (1992). He argues that, in British news interviews, the following assumptions usually hold:

- (1) The interviewer opens and closes the interaction
- (2) The interviewer selects the next speaker, if there are several interviewees.
- (3) The interviewer can only ask questions
- (4) The interviewee can only respond to these questions
- (5) The performance takes place for an overhearing audience
- (6) The interviewer must be seen by this audience to be objective

Again, this may seem to be far from what you usually hear on television or radio. Interviewers say lots of things that don't seem to be questions, and interviewees certainly say lots of things that don't seem to be answers. Greatbach (1992) shows the interviewer's remarks are still interpreted as questions and the interviewee's talk as answers or evasions.

### **3. The Turn-taking Mechanism**

#### **3.1 Models of turn-taking in conversation**

Over the last 25 years this topic has attracted much interest. It has been investigated in two ways: first, by analyzing transcriptions of naturally occurring conversations; and second, by analyzing video-recordings, with an emphasis on the role played by nonverbal signals (Power & Dal Martello, 1986, p. 29).

The first of these methods, labeled "conversational analysis" was pioneered by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson. In 1974 they conducted a seminal investigation of the ubiquitous phenomenon of turn-taking in conversations. They described how participants, through their conversation, adapt the turn-taking system and create for themselves the social occasion they intend (Reed, Patton & Gold, 1993, p. 145). They began with the gross empirical observation that in ordinary conversations: (1) although who is speaking changes, members speak one at a time, usually for varying lengths of time; (2) the transitions between speakers are "finely coordinated"; (3) general methods exist for allocating who speaks next; and (4) specific methods exist for constructing utterances so that the utterance displays the status both as a following turn and as an utterance that allocates a next turn (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, p. 704). The rules defined here function as an unnoticed resource that participants use for carrying on a conversation.

On the other hand Duncan (1972), Duncan & Fiske (1977), or Wiemann & Knapp (1975) have carried out observational studies of conversational interaction which have suggested that gestural behavior, in addition to speaker gaze, are of considerable importance in regulating the flow of social encounters.

Today there is a large, valuable, and robust body of knowledge generated by many studies, which used a variety of analytical methods.

#### **3.2 Development of turn-taking skills**

Turn-taking skills develop early. It has been found that the child begins to acquire knowledge about this organization of togetherness (Oreström, 1983, p. 19) and its characteristic patterning which exists in and builds up the dialogue. It has been observed that communicative interaction, manifested in eye glances and taking place from the first week, gradually develops into an interaction with sounds where the adult talks and the child is cooing. So, at the early age of three or four months, the child has learnt the role play of conversation. As the child develops, his basic conversational skills develop with him. It may be suggested that nursery school children have already acquired certain aspects of those skills, including the gestural behavior.

#### **3.3 Turn taking cues**

While a number of studies have dealt with various behaviors which may be part of the turn-taking mechanism, only Duncan (1972) has dealt directly with it in its entirety. Taking an inductive approach, Duncan observed interactions, and then described the behavior that accompanied speaking-role changes.

According to Duncan, in conversation we use turn-yielding cues, back-channel cues, and turn-maintaining cues. Wiemann & Knapp (1975) also identified turn-requesting cues.

### 3.3.1 Turn-yielding cues

Turn-yielding cues are used by speakers to let the listener know that they have finished what they want to say and that someone else may speak. The display of a turn-yielding cue does not require the auditor to take the floor; he may remain silent or reinforce the speaker with a back-channel cue. If the turn-taking mechanism is operating properly, the auditor will take his turn in response to a turn-yielding cue emitted by the speaker, and the speaker will immediately yield his turn (Wiemann & Knapp, 1975, p. 79).

Duncan (1972) identified six turn-yielding cues in conversation. Five are verbal or paralinguistic and transmitted via the auditory channel. These include:

(A) Intonation: the use of any pitch-level-terminal juncture combination other than at the end of a phonemic clause refers to a phonemic clause ending on a sustained intermediate pitch level

(B) Drawl on the final syllable, or on the stressed syllable, of a terminal clause

(C) Socio-centric sequences: the appearance of one of several stereotyped expressions, typically following a substantive statement, e.g. “but ah”, “you know”, etc.

(D) Pitch/loudness: a drop in paralinguistic pitch and/or loudness in conjunction with one of the socio-centric sequences. When used, these expressions typically followed a terminal clause, but did not often share the same paralanguage

(E) Syntax: the completion of a grammatical clause involving a subject-predicate combination.

The sixth turn-yielding cue involves gesticulation and is therefore transmitted via the visual channel.

### 3.3.2 Back-channel cues

Back-channel cues are used by listeners to indicate that they do not wish to talk even though the speaker is displaying turn-yielding cues. So, the listener stays in his or her position when there is an opportunity to become the speaker. Vocal cues appropriate for this purpose include reinforcers (e.g., “Mm”, “Oh”), completion of a sentence by the listener, or requests for clarification (Malandro & Barker, 1989, p. 247). There are also non-verbal cues to be found, for example, postural shifts, head nods or, hand gestures.

### 3.3.3 Turn-maintaining cues

Turn-maintaining cues, in which speaking-turn claims are suppressed, are used by speakers to keep their speaking turn. Although hand gestures may constitute the most important nonverbal behavior for this purpose, some vocal cues may be used alone or may accompany hand gestures. These vocal cues include increased changes in volume and rate of speech in response to turn-requesting cues from listeners. Using more filled pauses (with some form of vocalization, e.g., “Ah...”) than silent or unfilled pauses is a useful method of turn-maintaining.

### 3.3.4 Turn-requesting cues

Turn-requesting consists of the display of one or more of a number of verbal or nonverbal cues by the listener. If the turn-taking mechanism is functioning correctly, the speaker should relinquish the speaking role upon completion of the thought unit he is communicating at the time the request is made (Malandro & Barker, 1989, p. 82).

Turn-requesting is more frequently accomplished by simultaneous talking. Buffers and reinforcers are also

used.

Buffers are short words or phrases that are content-free and more or less stereotypical and that either precede or follow substantive statements (e.g., “but uh”, “you know”). Buffers generally constitute a clear attempt by the auditor to get the floor. Occasionally, the buffers are uttered while the speaker is talking; but more often they are uttered while the speaker is silent, either during a pause or after the speaker has clearly ended his utterance. In the second case they seem to be a signal by the listener that he is ready to talk; the buffers allow the other participant time to attend to the new speaker before he begins his part. The use of buffers by the listener at this point may also constitute a signal to the speaker that he has accepted the speaker’s offer of the floor.

Stutter starts are similar to buffers but may reveal a stronger demand to speak than buffers. Stutter starts are also likely to be used if the speaker has had the floor for fifteen to twenty seconds or if the speaker pauses longer than usual.

### **3.4 Varieties of gesticulation and body movements**

#### **3.4.1 Gazing behaviors**

Gazing here refers to looking toward the partner’s face.

While you are talking, your eyes are down for much of the time. While you are listening, your eyes are up for much of the time.

For much of the time during a conversation, the eyes of the speaker and the listener do not meet. When speakers are coming to the end of a turn, they might look up more frequently, finishing with a steady gaze. This is a sign to the listener that the turn is finishing and that he or she can then come in.

The instruction that some of us were given at school, “Look at me when you speak to me”, is unsoundly based. In normal English conversations, a speaker does not look steadily at the listener but rather may give occasional quick glances.

Some people find it impossible to carry on a conversation with someone who is reading the newspaper. We need to be able to see where someone’s eyes are directed to know whether we are being listened to.

In telephone conversations, where we cannot see eye gaze, we have to use other clues to establish whether the other person is listening to us.

Auditor-directed gazes seem to be the most frequently occurring nonverbal yielding behavior. Wiemann & Knapp (1975) found out that the percentage of time spent by the speaker looking at the face of the auditor increases steadily as the speaking turn approaches finality, while the percentage of time the auditor spends looking at the speaker increases from the first third to the second third of the interaction episode, and then drops off in the final third.

As the speaker comes to the end of an utterance, he or she looks at the auditor in search of feedback. If this feedback is in the form of a verbal response, then the speaking role is likely to be exchanged. The looking away by the auditor seems to be a response to the speaker—acknowledging the turn-yielding cue and the acceptance of the speaking turn.

One can say that other-directed gazes function more as a turn-yielding device than as a turn-requesting device, but they can function as both.

On occasion a person just stops speaking without looking directly at one of those being addressed or without indicating in some way who is to speak next. A period of silence may follow in the absence of a clear signal as to how the conversation is to continue (Wardhaugh, 1985, p. 85).

#### **3.4.2 Head nodding**

Head nodding appears to play a major role in turn-requesting, while having little or no significance in turn-yielding. Speakers do not systematically increase the amount of nodding as the episode progresses. On the other hand, there is a dramatic increase in nodding by the auditor.

The rapidity of the head nods and whether or not they are accompanied by any verbal behavior seems to determine how speakers interpret them.

#### 3.4.3 Hand and arm gestures

They are defined as hand and arm movements generally away from the body, which commonly accompany, and which appear to bear a direct relationship to, speech (e.g. an upraised and pointed index finger).

Specifically excluded from the definition of hand and arm gestures are movements in which the hand comes in contact with one's own body. Examples would be rubbing the chin, scratching the cheek, smoothing the hair, picking lint from the socks, etc. Such self-adaptors are very frequent for many individuals both while they are speakers and while they are auditors.

#### 3.4.4 Smiles and laughs

Despite the large variety of aspects within the realm of communication, smile and laughter occur in the context of turn-taking. They appear to play a major role in back-channeling (e.g. a silent smile of feedback, perhaps coupled to direct eye contact). Nevertheless, a smile may stand at the end of a speaker's turn as a request for taking over the turn.

#### 3.4.5 Postural shifts

During a conversation, a person may shift the position of his legs or may shift his seat in the chair.

The role that shifts of posture play in the turn-taking mechanism is unclear. But one can assume that people do not really sit still in their seats for an appreciable length of time. Listeners may be reclining for a time and then, as they prepare to take the speaking role, move to an upright position or even to a forward-leaning position. On the other hand, speakers at times "punctuate" their yielding of the floor by leaning back in their chairs as they finish their utterances.

### **4. Differences in Turn-taking**

In examining the functions and types of gesticulation and body movements in the turn-taking mechanism, individual differences have not been mentioned. This section will attempt to give insight into the effects of sex, personality, and culture on the turn-taking mechanism.

#### **4.1 Sex differences**

Though turn-taking cues are similar for males and females, one must consider sexual differences in the style of the operation of the turn-taking mechanism.

Sex differences in human interaction are unapparent until about the fourth grade. At approximately this age, society's influences begin to affect visual interaction.

Environmental influences train women to be more aware of visual cues than men. Women are usually taught to give special attention to dress, color, spatial arrangements, and so on. The eye contact of women becomes an emotional expression of striving to build social relationships. Women strive by looking more while speaking and being spoken to.

It has also been observed that females look more at people they like but less when giving false impressions to the person in question. When males increase eye contact while talking they are seen to be more active than

females with the same amount of eye contact. Apparently, both males and females look more at each other as the physical distance increases between them (Malandro & Barker).

Duncan & Fiske (1977, p. 55) found out that the mean length of the males' speaking turns was distinctly longer than the length of the females' turns.

The females smiled longer and more often than the males, engaging in smiling for a larger proportion of their non-speaking time. The picture was similar for laughing: the females laughed more often, even if in speaking or in the listening role. The females spent more time gazing at their partner than did the males. On the other hand the males shifted their seat position more than the females did.

Concerning interruptions in conversation, representing a major violation of the turn-taking rule, Beattie (1983, p. 112) stated that in male-female conversation men interrupted much more frequently than women. In fact, nearly all of the analyzed interruptions were initiated by men.

#### **4.2 Personal differences**

Despite the apparently universal status of turn-taking, it may nevertheless appropriately be thought of as a highly skilled act. Beattie (1982) identified groups who are poor in executing turn-taking cues.

For example, one of the major differences between shy people and others is the ability of the latter to initiate and structure conversations. The shy individuals have longer pauses between turns and speak less frequently and for a shorter percentage of the time.

Even turn-taking and interruption are effected by personality variables. It has been found that extroverts interrupt, and speak simultaneously, more often than introverts. In three-person discussion groups the less intelligent subjects interrupted more frequently than the more intelligent subjects (Beattie, 1983, p. 96).

Individuals with greater eye contact are seen as attractive and described with favorable adjectives such as friendly, confident, sincere, and mature, while those subjects showing little eye contact are described as cold, pessimistic, defensive, and immature.

According to Beattie, one has to acknowledge the importance of differences in turn-taking skills. "Given the centrality of the turn-taking mechanism, individual differences in the style of its operation will undoubtedly influence interpersonal perception" (Beattie, 1983, p. 95).

#### **4.3 Cultural differences**

Effective communication depends upon a shared understanding of behavioral cues. Moreover, the turn-taking rules are probably not generalizable to other cultures, even if they are for our own culture (Larrue & Trognon, 1993, p. 180).

It has been found that cross-cultural differences in patterns of turn-taking cues like eye behavior are a potential problem in social interaction. Many visual turn-taking behaviors are different for blacks and whites. For example, there is a tendency for many blacks to avoid looking others directly in the eyes. Or, in one study, when the whites did speak they found themselves speaking while the blacks were speaking because of different interpretations of turn-taking cues (Malandro & Barker, 1989, p. 141).

Another finding is that the British do not nod their heads to let you know they understand; rather, they will blink their eyes to let you know they have heard you.

## **5. Overlaps and Gaps in Turn-taking**

### **5.1 Empirical interpretations**

You may already be thinking that this is not much of a basis for a model, much less a whole field of study, because it often happens that two people talk at once, or that there is an embarrassing silence. But the model doesn't say that this will not happen; it says that when two people do talk at once, they will acknowledge that something odd is going on here. For instance, the person who has been interrupted talks louder, and the other person finally stops and apologizes.

A: They have at their disposal enormous assets and their policy

B: //look can I just come in on that// last year

A: //YES IN A MINUTE IF YOU MAY AND WHEN I'M FINISHED // then you'll know

B: // yes I'M SO SORRY

Or people may deliberately overlap, for instance when they want to register emphatic disagreement or agreement (Levinson, 1983).

A: uh you been down here before // haven' lunch

B: // yeah

A: well I wrote what I thought was a a a reas n//ble explanation

B: //I think it was a very rude letter

The same holds true for silences. Of course they happen, but if one person says something and the other does not respond, both people will take the silence as significant. Here the 1.0 in parentheses indicates a silence of just a second, but if you try it, you will find that is a long time.

Roger: Well it struck me funny. Al ha, ha - ha - ha

Ken: hh

Roger: Thank you

One consequence of this pattern is that if the hearer does not want to speak, he or she typically signals the speaker can keep talking, by making the sort of sounds, not always words, that linguists call back-channel utterances. An example is the "uh huh" in the following:

B: Go to Elmhurst, pass the courthouse and go to Elmhurst and then to Elmhurst, uh north.

A: mm hum.

B: Towards Riverton, till you come to that Avila Hall.

A: Oh yes

B: Dju know where that//is?

A: //uh huh

A: Oh surely

B: Avilla Hall on the corner of Bor//don

A: //uh huh

B: Well there, on Bordon you turn back to town, left.

These back-channel utterances can be especially important in telephone conversations and broadcast talks because they show the channel is working, and sort out who is and who isn't the intended audience for remarks.

So conversation analysis does not say that the turn-taking rules are rules that people must follow to make sense, like grammar, or that they are rules of politeness. They are patterns people expect without thinking about it, and when they are broken people can take the breaking to mean something.

## 5.2 Defining overlaps

I now present the categories that were elaborated before and during the analysis, in the order of their

frequency in the data.

(1) Overlaps related to TRPs (Transition Relevant Places). A TRP and its projected closeness in an ongoing turn convey to the co-locutors that the current speaker is about to end his or her turn, and that the co-locutors can begin theirs even with a slight overlap of turns.

(2) Discourse Management Devices (DMDs). “DMDs are paralinguistic and pragmatic devices which are outside the grammatical structure of utterances but which provide continuity, informational structuring, and socio-pragmatic coherence in spoken discourse” (Pennington & Doi, 1993, p. 68). DMDs are not produced in general to indicate a desire for turn transition but to show interest and participation. In other literature, the same class of phenomena has been labeled “back channel” or “feedback”.

(3) Their role is to create and enforce the relationship between the participants and to facilitate the interaction. In order to maintain the turn, vowel drawls and short repetitions are produced, but sometimes they can also take on the role of invitation for others to take the turn, to complete the current speaker’s unachieved turn. Wieland (1991, p. 113) claims that some westerners very often complete others’ incomplete turns when there seems to be a problem within the fluency of the ongoing turn.

(4) Simultaneous onsets—occurrences of two or more participants trying to take their turn at the same time, after the previous speaker has finished or is about to finish his or her current turn. Frequently only one of the allocutors will be continuing the turn and accomplishing it, as the others drop out.

(5) Laughter and shared laughter are produced mostly to establish or reinforce a relationship or an alignment between the participants, as well as to convey a less serious attitude towards the previous or the following turns (Ellis, 1997).

(6) Simultaneous turns occur when participants start their turns simultaneously and no one relinquishes the floor to the other. Take French for instance, Wieland (1991, p. 103, 105) claims that it is a frequent phenomenon in French, although, according to her study, it contravenes the American style of communication. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1996, p. 72) states that the tolerance of overlaps and interruptions is high in the French communication style. She compares the French opinions on interruptions to the German ones, and concludes that what might seem lively and a sign of active participation to the former, the latter could interpret as aggressive. Wieland (1991, p. 107, 109, 111, 112) points out that on the other hand, the French can interpret the absence of overlaps as a sign of impoliteness.

(7) Delayed Completions (Lerner, 1989) or “justified” interruptions. The allocutor producing one might have been “interrupted” before he or she reached the end of a prior turn, which gives the allocutor the “right” to complete his or her previous turn by interrupting the current speaker.

(8) Interruptions are an observable situation in the sequence of interaction in which the current speaker has started his or her turn as a second person speaking, through an audible overlap or a pause (i.e. an Interjacent Onset), thus interrupting the previous speaker, without it having been a TRP, a phatic discourse marker (or a DMD), a sequence of interaction with simultaneous onsets, a simultaneous turn, or a “justified” interruption (Delayed Completion).

(9) Third party mediation is a specific case in the data where two of the three participants start arguing and the third participant successfully attempts to alleviate the conflict through a disruptive action that changes the topic altogether.

## 6. Conclusion

For Interaction Analysis the situation is ever more complicated because an Interaction-Analytic turn-taking system has to take into account more than talk: It encompasses the whole range of behaviors through which people can “take a turn”, that is, participate in an interactional exchange system. Not only “turns at talk” must be considered, but also “turns with bodies” and “turns with artifacts”.

Conversational interactions are mostly realized by speaking, but without other cues in turn-taking interactions cannot go smoothly in daily life. For such reasons, turn-taking is realized in many kinds of forms, including gestures and other body movements.

This paper, however, is just a tentative research of turn-taking, so there must be some limitations and unresolved problems. For example, how turn-taking applies in people of different ages, and how to improve our skills in turn-taking system.

### References:

- Beattie, A. & Geoffrey. 1983. *Talk: An analysis of speech and non-verbal behavior in conversation*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Duncan, Starkey Jr. & Fiske, Donald. 1977. *Face-to-face interaction: Research, methods, and theory*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ellis, Y. 1997. Laughing together: Laughter as a feature of affiliation in French conversation. *Journal of French Language Studies*, (7), 147-161.
- Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. 1996. *La conversation*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Larrue, Janine & Trognon, Alain. 1993. Organization of turn-taking and mechanisms for turn-taking repairs in a chaired meeting. *Journal of Pragmatics*, (19), 177-196.
- Lerner, G.H. 1989. Notes on overlap management in conversation: The case of delayed completion. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, (53), 167-177.
- Levinson & Stephen. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Malandro, Loretta A., Barker, Larry L. & Barker, Deborah A. 1989. *Nonverbal communication*. MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- Oreström & Bengt. 1983. *Turn-taking in English conversation*. Malmö.
- Pennington, M.C. & Doi, T. 1993. Discourse management devices in the interlanguage of Japanese learners of English: An exploratory study. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, (4), 67-90.
- Power, R. J. D. & Dal Martello, M. F. 1986. Some criticisms of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson on turn taking. *Semiotica*, (2), 29-40.
- Reed, James, Patton, Michael and Gold, Paul. 1993. Effects of turn-taking sequences in vocational test interpretation interviews. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, (2), 144-155.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. & Jefferson, G. 1974. A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, (5), 696-735.
- Ten Have, P. 1999. *Doing conversation analysis*. London: Sage.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. 1985. *How conversation works*. New York: Oxford.
- West, C. & Zimmerman, Don H. 1983. Small insults: A study of interruptions in cross-sex conversations between unacquainted persons. *Language*, (1), 18-19.
- Wieland, M. 1997. Turn-taking structure as a source of misunderstanding in French-American cross-cultural conversation. In: L.Bouton & Y. Kachru. (Eds.). *Pragmatics and language learning 2*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Wiemann, John & Knapp, Mark. 1975. Turn-taking in conversations. *Journal of Communication*, (25), 75-92.

(Edited by Jessica and Stella)