

Current assessment
of that talk are closely



Current research into talk-in-interaction focuses on the turn-taking system and extracts interest from the way in which participants observe the course of a turn in progress and predict the end of that turn. This paper presents a Conversation Analytic study of the distribution of pauses and gaps throughout the turn-taking system, instances of overlap and the behaviour of participants in speech exchange systems. This article will review literature on the basic turn-taking mechanism and research that focuses on the implications of CA work for how we think about language processing. It will analyse both the process of comprehension and production and the constant shift between the two in conversation.

The micro level of analysis this paper will provide allows for a more fine-grained understanding of turn projection. Finally, this analysis will demonstrate how the notion of turn projection is a key component in the organisation of turn-taking. Keywords: turn-taking, turn projection, prediction, conversation analysis, talk-in-interaction 1.

Introduction According to CA, the projectability of TCUs plays a fundamental role in the ways in which conversation is structured and in the process of listening to talk in progress (Liddicoat 2004). Listeners must process the turn in progress in advance in order to be aware of speaker change and to achieve a smooth floor transfer, two essential properties of a successful speech exchange. In terms of temporality, participants do not process a previous utterance once it has occurred and wait until it finishes to prepare their own. Conversation would be much more drawn out with substantial gaps after every turn. Rather, the model of turn-taking proposed by Sacks et al. (1974)

involves considerable projection of what the other interlocutor might utter and when their turn may end.

Participant-oriented evidence exists in speech exchange systems for predictive language comprehension and for gaps in language production. As Pomerantz (2012) describes participation in a conversation and assessment of that talk are closely related processes. One way to account for inter-speaker gaps often being shorter than intra-speaker latencies is the process of overlapping in conversation.

Participants demonstrate an assessment of this occurrence by keeping any competing turns they may produce brief with one participant often dropping out. For the purpose of this paper, it is important to differentiate between pauses, gaps and lapses and to define between-overlaps in comparison to within-overlaps. Silences can be distinguished according to their length, the preceding turn and the turn which follows the silence. Pauses, therefore, refer to silences within turns and on average last around 600ms and higher according to Levinson and Torreira (2015). Turns with such pauses usually consist of a grammatically incomplete turn or an "um" demonstrating place-holding behaviour (Mushin and Gardner 2009). Gaps, however, only average around 200ms and refer to those that require a floor transfer between participants occurring at transition-relevance places (TRPs) or between turns. Finally, extended silences between turns are known as lapses (Sacks et al. 1974) which often occur when no-one has selected to speak.

With regards to overlaps, we can differentiate between two kinds according to when they occur in conversation. Between-overlaps can be defined as

floortransfers that occur without any gap between participants and within-overlaps are those with overlapping inter-pausal units that don't cause floor transfer (Heldner and Edlund 2010). The following sections will present examples of such features extracted from a corpus of data and demonstrate how they are significant features of talk-in-interaction. 2.

The Corpora The data used for analysis in this research is of naturally occurring conversations sourced from a British reality television show and compiled into a corpus of recordings. These recordings were collaboratively transcribed by a class of students using CA practices. The transcriptions have thus provided evidence for the claims made by this paper. 3.

Turn-taking as a system Sacks et al. (1974) provide the foundational work on turn-taking and define it as a form of organization for conversation demonstrating this system using a model with various rules and observations. The model consists of TCUs which can be described as potentially complete turns (Schegloff 1996) which end with a space known as a TRP which makes relevant a speaker change but does not require it. In CA, projectability is seen as being fundamental to the turn-taking model. According to the model, a complete TCU must be understood as such by another interlocutor within a given sequential context implying therefore that the other participant must be able to project the action of the preceding turn and when that turn may end (Liddicoat 2004).

The model claims that social interactions are regulated by social norms which suggest that one party talks at a time however do allow for open participation. This refers to the fact that talk-in-interaction is highly flexible

and occurs in a moment-by-moment fashion and therefore overlap may occur. According to the rules of the model, overlap is expectable and contributes to the vast majority of transitions (Sacks et al. 1974). One such rule of the model claims that two participants may self-select themselves as the next speaker resulting in overlap. This may also be the case if a participant tries to demonstrate an understanding of the current turn where exactly the same words feature in the overlap as in (1).

(1) McLaughlin - First Dates 1. Sarah: > that's good that they were there for ya < . hhh > cause like lads can be < (0. 6)? like i ther (0. 3)-2. Phil: the \$? MA(h)d jo(h)kes^oor^o- 3.

Sarah: >? Yeah the like < 4. Phil:

yeah its: 5. Phil: (0. 4) ? I think it helps that (0. 6 scratches brow) (h h h-) In (1), the word " yeah" feature twice in an overlapping nature between lines 3 and 4. In this case, the two participants seem to agree on a single understanding without saying much about it. Phil has just explained how his friends were there for him after the loss of his mum when Sarah states that this was a good thing by implying something about " lads" however she doesn't actually make any statement.

Phil seems to make a guess at what she might be referring to at which point the two of them form a kind of agreement or mutual understanding with the overlapping " yeah" s. This may be due to the fact that Sarah hasn't made any direct observations herself and neglects to do so in line 3 where Phil makes an attempt to show that he understands self-selecting himself to take the floor, perhaps before Sarah was finished. Overlap may also occur if a

participant misinterprets the end of a turn. This is common in conversation however the rules also predict that latencies during a turn will be longer and more frequent than those gaps between turns as participants can actually often predict when speaker-change may occur, the main focus of this article. This is shown in example (2), suggesting that participants do have a good understanding of when a turn may end, that is, they are able to predict the end and can therefore prepare and swiftly produce their own response but with no overlap (Levinson 2015).

(2) is an example of latching in conversation where one turn occurs immediately after the previous turn without any pause. (2) McAllister- First Dates 6. Stu:

Jen: =°oh wow= 8. Stu: = it(.) just took (0. 1) the sight I had left really
The above extract is taken from a date where one of the participants is blind and (2) shows the point in the interaction when he explains how he lost his sight. The example demonstrates that prediction plays a key role in the process of listening as Jen's turn does not overlap with Stu's in line 5 but responds with no gap suggesting that she may have thought he had finished his turn as he had completed an action sufficiently, that is, of providing her with an explanation for his loss of sight. In turn, line 7 suggests that Stu may have also predicted that "oh wow" concluded Jen's response and her turn and therefore selected himself for the next turn, again with no gap or overlap.

This idea of no-gap-no-overlap was prominent in early work of the projection theory however more recent studies show that transitions with slight gap are

actually more frequent than those with none (Heldner and Edlund 2010) and it is more accurate to state that universally, the target in turn transition is to minimise gaps and instances of overlap between turns. Other components of the turn-taking model include basic observations such as the occurrence or quite often recurrence of speaker-change, a varied turn order and size allowing for longer units when mutually arranged and an indeterminate number of participants (Sacks et al. 1974).

4. Distribution of gaps I have previously defined the silences in conversation differentiating between different instances and when they occur, suggesting that lapses are often longer than pauses, however, pauses are often longer than gaps. Of course, this is not always the case. Gaps which occur between question-answer sequences for example can often present longer gaps especially if a wh-question occurs. Naturally, a more complex question specifies a longer answer than those expected of polar questions, therefore more complex responses which require more preparation will result in a more substantial gap between turns as in (3).

On the other hand, question-answer sequences are one of the few instances which make a floor transfer relevant where at least one participant is waiting on a response. In most other cases, floor transfer is optional and it is normal for participants to consider whether or not they want to contribute any more to the conversation.

(3) McAllister - First Dates 9. Jen: (0. 8) what sort of women do you go for (0. 7) 10. Stu: i've had a run with a few (.) ?

gingers I guess they would call themselves ginger Line 8 demonstrates an example of a pause at the end of a syntactic unit but within a single turn:

"(0.8)" This pause constitutes a TRP. This suggests that Jen has made an attempt to leave the floor open for Stu to self-select for the next turn however when he doesn't do so, she continues, producing a wh-question and thus explicitly selecting Stu to respond. While the purpose of this example is to highlight a substantial gap between turns, note that the focus of this paper is still evident in that the first pause is still slightly longer than the inter-speaker gap, supporting . Referring now to the effect of the wh-question and addressing the question of how such action was accomplished, we can observe that quite a long gap was produced implying that the response in line 9 required some preparation, more so, than that for a simple yes/no question.

4.1 The role of silences in dispreferred responses Sacks et al.

(1974) suggest that a preference exists for no gap between turns in conversation however it is evident that silences do occur in this way in a number of instances. With questions, for example, if an interlocutor asks a question they will expect some kind of response and as participants are very sensitive to timing, extensive gaps in this TRP can be seen as problematic. In other words, a delay in transmission often causes disruption in conversation and silences of 700ms or longer after a question constitute as dispreferred responses (Kendrick and Torreira 2015). It is also important to note that gaps between turns do not only represent participants still in the progress of preparing what to say.

Other reasons exist for these silences, for example, as a politeness strategy. In other words, gaps may occur between turns in an interaction if one participant wants to avoid any imposition, confrontation or embarrassment

(Brown and Levinson 1987; Nakane 2007). The context of extract (4) presents a typically uncomfortable setting where both participants of the date are asked whether they'd like to see each other again by a third interlocutor. It is important to note that Ben has already answered the question with a yes and the extract below demonstrates Tamzin's turn to

answer. (4) Reid -First Dates 11. Ben: *I think let's face it (1. 3) its more (h) about (h) = whether (h) she's gonna? See me? \$12.*

Tamzin: *(h)13. Tamzin: (h) (0. 6) 14. Ben: She's the one with the (.) fussy checklist.*

15. Ben: *(h) 16. Tamzin: (h) 17. Tamzin: It's not a no.*

(h)18. Ben: It's not ano? 19. Tamzin: (h)20. Ben: Is it a yesthough? (1. 0)21.

Tamzin: *That's not what I'm saying. The silence in this extract can be viewed as a negative politeness strategy where Tamzin appears to use silences as a form of distancing tactic (Nakane 2007) as she avoids providing a yes or no answer to the question of seeing Ben again. The first gap in line 13 is 600ms almost meeting the time proposed for a dispreferred response and in fact, resulting in Ben self-selecting again. In line 20, Ben poses another question: "Is it a yesthough? (1.*

0)" explicitly selecting Tamzin to speaker next which is followed by a longer, quite extensive gap of 1 second. This implies that Tamzin may want to avoid

answering with a definitive yes or no in attempt to avoid any embarrassment. Extract (4) also suggest ordered rules within the turn-taking system. The inter-speaker gaps already mentioned demonstrate how typically it is expectable for Tamzin to have rights to the next turn unit especially as both turns beforehand are questions however as she does not speak at all, Ben continues with rights to the turn unit (Levinson and Torreira 2015). 5.

Overlap Previous evidence claims that 80% of the transitions in face-to-face conversation are gaps and 20% are partial overlaps (Levinson and Torreira 2015). Overlaps are most likely to occur at turn transitions however they are brief and subject to repair in that when two participants speak at the same time, very often one will drop out quite quickly thus repairing the trouble. Overlap can occur in many situations, some of which are already discussed in section 2.

Another brief but very common instance of overlap is a setting where a participant may enter some environment and several other participants greet them simultaneously creating an instance where a vast number of speaker utterances may overlap with each other. According to Sacks et al (1974), simultaneous starts may occur as an example of overlap when both participants self-select at some possible TRP, for example, in extract (5). (5)

O'Hanlon- First Dates 22. Toby: You alright, (.) nice to meet you 23.

Bree: yeah nice to meet you ((kissing sounds)) 24.

Bree: ? hi 25. Toby what's your name sorry? Lines 24 and 25

illustrate an overlap where both participants have self-selected at the same time. Interestingly, Bree was the last participant to speak before they kiss and she still self-selects to continue after they do so.

In this case, both participants project possible completion points of the other and one will drop out. In this instance, Breemay only have planned to say "hi" however there is also the possibility that she dropped out as she predicted that Toby's turn was a question not close to completion. 6. Turn projection Ten Have (2007) suggests that conversational flow is responsible for turn projection which he claims is vital for both language production and comprehension in situ. This suggests that as a conversation progresses, there will be less gaps between turns as participants have a mutual understanding about what they are talking about. They have also been able to assess the conversation so far and according to Schegloff (2000), turns between participants are often co-ordinated with their response times often changing to match their interlocutors'.

One instance which very clearly demonstrates that participants often predict the others' upcoming utterance and when they may stop is illustrated in conditional clauses of the form 'if X then Y'. The following example highlights this idea. (6) Lerner (1991) 26. Rich: if you bring it in then 27. Carol: -> it don't cost yuh nothing Provided that Rich agrees that line 27 is what he was meaning or what he would've followed with in his next turn, example (6) demonstrates how his use of a conditional clause allowed Carol to project the content of the second clause (Levinson and Torreira 2015). Further proof that substantial projection occurs in conversation is at word level, the instance of one participant pausing as they are searching for a word that the other interlocutor can provide.

6. 1 Turn-final cues The CA approach to turn-taking analyses what may be regarded as a complete turn and how participants are able to recognise it as

finished (Sacks et al 1974). These sources that participants use for projectability depend on various properties known as turn-final cues.

These sources include syntactic closure, pragmatic actions or gestures and prosodic cues (Ford et al. 2003) which can all mark possible TRPs. With regards to prosody, certain intonational contours occur which are consistent

with the ends of turns such as phrase-final syllable lengthening as shown in

extract (7). (7) Reid - First Dates 28. Tamzin: I might just nip to the toilet:

29. Ben: You're not gonna leg it are ya? Tamzin, in line 28, ends her

turn with a stretched sound, lengthening the final syllable, illustrated with “:”.

This seems to signal to Ben that her turn is complete and he is able to project this and have a response prepared with no gap or overlap between the turns.

Another example of completion marking exists in the form of tag questions

(Sidnell 2010). (8) Tougher - First Dates 30. Jessica: >? Charmeryou

are < aren't YA? 31. Will: ? oh

(1.

0) > I don't #know < In extract (8), Jessica turns her statement into

a question which Will seems to orient to as a completion marker as he begins

his turn with no gap. In fact, his response even overlaps Jessica's turn slightly

illustrating how tag question allow for the listener to project the end of the

preceding turn. 7.

Experimental studies of turn-taking The methods involved in CA involve

acquiring data that is naturally occurring and mechanically recorded. This is

important as hypothetical or reinvented instances of talk are difficult to

construct in the same way that they occur in actual conversation and

therefore they may not be thought to be reasonable by an audience (Sacks et

<https://assignbuster.com/current-assessment-of-that-talk-are-closely/>

al. 1974). The next step is to then transcribe the data and make observations such as those made in this paper.

As CA is typically inductive, it is then these observations that help to provide a theory. In other words, conversation analysts often extract turns from their transcriptions of talk-in-interaction and observe fine details. While the corpora for this work is somewhat restricted in the nature of videos from YouTube, data of this kind allow for the actual temporality of the conversation, including pace and silences which can now be analysed. However, with regards to projectability and language processing there have been many experimental studies carried out which eliminate the constraints that this restricted corpus faces.

One example, from De Ruiter et al. (2006) employed the use of a button by participants when they detected the end of a previous turn. Other studies involve picture naming tasks and eye movement tracking which suggest that planning is required for production and provides a way to time this process. Processing speed can be seen as the main difference between language production and language comprehension with the latter occurring at three or four times the speed of production (Levinson and Torreira 2015).

While these methodologies are less constrained, they also lack free interaction and in contrast to CA approaches, the participant's response is often of non-linguistic nature. As this paper aims to present a conversation analytical study in the way of examining data from actual conversational practices, it will view the listener as an active participant in the interaction rather than a passive recipient of incoming speech items (Liddicoat 2004). 8. Conclusion This conversation analytical study has aimed to provide analysis of

certain features of conversations such as gaps, overlap and intonation at a micro level in order to give evidence for projection within turn-taking. It provides evidence that anticipation plays a key part in language comprehension looking closely at the role of the listener in conversation. The paper demonstrates how smooth speech exchange takes place with minimal gaps and overlaps between turns and how participants collaboratively achieve this. Making the claim that participants not only predict the end of a preceding turn but also the content of that turn, this study demonstrates how the mutual understanding formed between interlocutors and the cues that they provide each other with make this a less demanding task than it seems.