

## Significant Attributes of Conversation Analysis in Social Interviews

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### Abstract

This paper aimed at manifesting the role of significant attributes of conversation analysis in social interviews from a functional perspective. In this paper the concern would be on how these attributes of conversation analysis acted as important elements in analyzing the interviews. In particular, the author discussed some samples of B.B.C learning English interviews which considered some conversation ways and then analyzed it in order to find best solutions of how these techniques could be more effective. Moreover, in this paper, analyzing these features of conversation analysis in interview sections derived from the organization of the speech exchange system and of the types of actions sanctioned. Furthermore, utilizing this kind of didactic application such as B.B.C learning English and applied solutions in conversations highlighted the purpose of study. Finally, the results of the study indicates that, these features of conversation analysis can influence on the ways of using attributes in different situations and English learners can exploit the methods in their daily conversations and apply them in the best way.

**Keywords:** Conversation Analysis, Social Interviews, Conversation Attributes, B.B.C Learning English Podcasts, Didactic Application

### 1. Introduction

In as much as the title clearly states, this research aims at distinction the role of significant features of conversation analysis in social interviews. Since this kind of analysis is a method for studying and probing the structure and process of social talk in interaction, it emphasizes the talk, describe how people take turns in conversations and investigates the details of talk which became affected through an important attributes; as turn-taking, adjacency pairs and repair. The sequencing of talk, turn-taking sequences and the center of attention which relates what a specific speech segment carried out, are highlighted the issues of this paper. Moreover, Mazeland (2006) mentioned that, it “searches rules and practices them from an interactional perspective and studies them by examining recordings of real-life situations”, that is definitely relevant for selected significant parts of an interview; the remarkable proportion of this research.

Although some of the studies (Schegloff, 1992; heritage, 2004; Gardner, 1999) considered conversation analysis and its foundations such as: narrative analysis, CA and language proficiency, CA and institutional talk, but studies on how

some of the features of CA on diversity of social interview and their functions are not fully explored; hence, the current paper intended to display this type of gap through considerable features of CA in analyzing a social interview. Based on what mentioned above, the following research questions can be proposed:

1. Which kind of turn-taking's aspects was applied to interview?
2. To what extent, repairs sentences were used in interview transcription?
3. Did adjacency pairs employee in interview section?

### ***1.1 Conversation Analysis and Attributes***

With respect to what mentioned in previous section of this paper, CA provides a means of exploring the variable ways in which competence is co-constructed in particular contexts by the participants involved (Seedhouse, 2011). Furthermore, Garner (1999) defined CA as the study of sequences of actions and their interactional products, the event which is make some talk is that what is, nothing more. Whereas many CA studies worked on topic actions in some institutional environment, the conversation analytical of this paper highlighted the fundamental aspects of this organization which include turn-taking, adjacency pairs and repair; in relation to general ways in each sequence of social interview and how the participants manage their utterances through this action.

#### **Turn-taking**

The primary study in CA on turn-taking is the paper under titled "A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation" which was made by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in 1974. Having control of the scarce commodity which is known as floor; the right to speak at any time is called turn. When everyone can attempt to get the control which was not fixed, this is defined as turn-taking. Turn-taking operates in accordance with a local management system due to the form of social action. This system comprises a set of conventions for getting turns, keeping them or giving them away. This system focus on those points that where there is a possible change in who has the turn (George Yule, 1995).

#### **Adjacency pairs**

The level of sequencing of actions in talk can be defined as adjacency pairs. In other words; these automatic sequences always consist of a first part and second part, produced by different speakers. This action deals with a question which is followed by an answer such as a greeting or a suggestion which can be accepted or rejected. When the first part uttered, it creates an answer of a second part of the same pair, and if the second part failure to produce the response significant absence and meaningfulness were happened.

#### **Repair**

Repairs can take place like adjacency pairs but to some extent can act very particularly. This section deals with the situation in which the troubles of production or understanding in talk or maybe problems of hearing occurred. In this part, the

general organization, coherence or structures of the talk are preserved but some details of the talk are breakdown. The repair section has two aspects. In first aspect, self-repairs were occurred in which the speaker dealing with a problem him/herself during the production of talk and second one achieved more by the form of “pardon?” or “would you please repeat ?” in such cases, the repair takes place in the turn subsequent to turn in which the source of trouble occurs( Cf. Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks.1977).

### ***1.2 Review of Literature***

Many studies have been carried out in terms of conversation, interview and institutional talk analysis. Concerning turn-taking analysis, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) scrutinized turn-taking activities among a range of languages and cultures including Thai, Japanese, Finnish and German. They found no differences but some variations in grammar such as clause-final particles in Japanese or the placement of the main verb in German. However, such cultural differences could be seen in the tolerance of simultaneous talk which signifies differences in turn-taking practices in Italian language. Considering institutional talk, Heritage and Sorbonne (1994) realized that numbers of questions in medical conversations between health visitors and new parents were preceded.

Regarding conversation analysis in educational setting, McHoul (1987) examined examples of volitional and non-volitional formal classrooms and presented a set of turn-taking rules concluded from Sack et al (1974) and as a result, he summarized that only teachers can conduct speakership in any active method. In another paper on repair analysis in classroom, McHoul (1990) revealed similar types of repair activities compared with ordinary conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). However, other initiation in the next turn was visible frequently, although self-repair was the preferred type rather than other repair. Other scholars like Wong (1984) concluded that some features found in naturally occurring telephone conversation were absent and partial in 8 textbooks. Furthermore, Seed house (2005) addressed the interactional organization of second language classrooms and identified reflexive relation between pedagogy and interaction. He emphasized on significant role of context by demonstrating how students talked in and out the L2 classrooms institution and how well teachers make L2 classroom contexts by changing the order. He discriminated procedural context, task-oriented context, form and accuracy context and meaning and fluency context. Moreover, he pointed out that organization of turn and sequence varies in classroom interaction.

In respect to teacher-invented three part sequences (initiation-response-feedback/evaluation), many scholars investigated teaching and learning practices. Lee (2007), for instance, show how the third turn does task of replying to and acting based on the prior turns while regulating the interaction. In other papers, Hellermann (2005) indicated the systematic application of pitch level and contour in triadic

conversation and elaborated the important task of the third person in three-part sequence. Likely, Zemel and Koschmann (2011) showed re-initiation of IRF sequences as well as teacher engagement with students.

In connection with conversation analysis in language proficiency assessment, Seed house and Egbert (2006) examined 137 recorded IELTS speaking test and stated that in terms of producing incomprehensible turns by candidates, modes of applying repairs differed significantly from interaction in classroom or university settings to international language proficiency tests. They added that topic is crucial aspect in speaking test which can influence on organization of turn-taking sequence and repair.

## 2. Method

According to Heritage (1984) conversation analytic methodology, the mentioned assumption that participants have tendency to devices, implied as situated interactional reasoning. Accordingly, the significant aspect of conversation methodology can be achieving to convergence between the analysts point of view and that of participants.

### 2.1 Data

Concerning the validity of data, the transcription of BBC learning English podcasts was applied to be analyzed. The transcriptions can be second language learning style which arranged in formal way. It described how presenters communicate in interaction including applying various aspects of talk such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs and repair sentences. Moreover, researchers can make their data accessible to the scientific community by using transcripts.

### 2.2 Data Analysis

In terms of data analytic procedures, two kinds of studies are explained. In a single case analysis, a single episode is analyzed in connection with some relevant aspect. Conversely, in a collection analysis, researcher works on results of a cumulative series of single analyses as specific feature. Accordingly, all types of interaction are accompanied with each other. In this paper, an excerpt from BBC learning English conversation was selected and analyzed. In this analysis, these aspects of conversation analysis consisting turn-taking, adjacency pair and repair were examined and discussed. Here, the sample was shown as following:

#### **Rob**

Well, Professor Hawking has said recently that efforts to create thinking machines are a threat to our existence. A **threat** means something which can put us in danger. Now, can you imagine that, Neil?!

#### **Neil**

Well, there's no denying that good things can come from the creation of Artificial Intelligence. Computers which can think for them might be able to find solutions to problems we haven't been able to solve. But technology is developing quickly and

maybe we should consider the consequences. Some of these very clever robots are already surpassing us, Rob. **To surpass** means to have abilities superior to our own.

**Rob**

Yes. Maybe you can remember the headlines when a supercomputer defeated the World Chess Champion Gary Kasparov, to everybody's astonishment. It was in 1997. What was the computer called, Neil? Was it:

- a) Red Menace
- b) Deep Blue
- c) Silver Surfer

**Neil**

I don't know. I think (c) is probably not right. I think Deep Blue. That's (b) Deep Blue.

**Rob**

OK. You'll know if you got it right at the end of the program. Well, our theme is Artificial Intelligence and when we talk about this we have to mention the movies.

**Neil**

Many science fiction movies have explored the idea of bad computers who want to harm us. One example is 2001: A Space Odyssey.

**Rob**

Yes, a good film. And another is The Terminator, a movie in which actor Arnold Schwarzenegger played an **android** from the future. An android is a robot that looks like a human. Have you watched that one, Neil?

**Neil**

Yes, I have. And the android is not very friendly.

**Rob**

No, it's not. In many movies and books about robots that think, the robots end up rebelling against their creators. But some experts say the risk posed by Artificial Intelligence is not that computers attack us because they hate us. Their problem is related to their efficiency.

**Neil**

What do you mean?

**Rob**

Well, let's listen to what philosopher Nick Bostrom has to say. He is the founder of the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University. He uses three words when describing what's inside the mind of a thinking computer. This phrase means 'to meet their objectives'.

### 3. Results

Regarding application of turn-taking, adjacency pairs and repair sentences, in line 1 and 2, Rob asked Neil a question as well as using an insertion sequence as repair to clarify the meaning of threat in previous line. In line 3 to 6, Neil responded

to Rob question and first type of turn-taking occurred by Rob selection. Furthermore, Neil applied adjacency pair by explaining the word 'surpass' in previous sentence. In line 7 and 8, Rob employed second type of turn-taking aspect and also adjacency pair by asking question from Neil. To complete another pair, in line 9, Neil replied by considering the first type of turn-taking aspect.

In line 10 and 11, Rob chooses self-select as second type of turn-taking. But, in line 12 and 13, Neil used another insertion sequence as repair by furthering example and also self-select rule of turn-taking aspects. In line 14 and 15, another self-select type of turn-taking was used. Moreover, to compliment Neil speech, Rob employed adjacency pair as well as asking a question from Neil. In line 16, Neil responded the question and completed another pair and first type of turn-taking was happened.

In line 17 to 19, second type of turn-taking aspect was employed. Due to unclear previous specification, in line 20, Neil asked for more elaboration as form of repair question and used self-select type of turn-taking. To make up for misunderstanding in previous sentences, in line 21 to 23, Rob referred to listening to scientist explanation and applied the first type of turn-taking features.

#### **4. Discussion**

Considering application of three conversation attributes in BBC Learning English transcriptions including turn-taking, adjacency pairs and repair sentences, concluding remarks were extracted and analyzed. Due to first research question, results indicated that first and second type of turn-taking aspect were employed more than third feature. In connection with second research question, repair sentences were applies more or less in transcription randomly because of clear conversation performed by both speakers. At last, regarding third research question, use of adjacency pairs, two candidates employed asking question in their conversation due to clarifying and discussing the intended subject. So, in parallel with turn-taking distribution in whole conversation, adjacency pairs were employed fairly and appropriately.

In terms of turn-taking use in previous studies, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) analyzed turn-taking activities among various languages and cultures that they concluded such differences such as clause-final particles in Japanese or the placement of the main verb in German as well as cultural differences in tolerance of simultaneous talk which are in contrast with present research papers.

In application of repair sentences, results of present paper were in line with McHoul (1990) research who reached similar conclusions as repair conversations were preferred in ordinary and classroom setting. Furthermore, in other studies like Seed house and Egbert (2006) which recorded IELTS speaking tests were scrutinized, the conclusions were incongruent with present paper that repair application differed enormously in classroom settings to language proficiency tests.

### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, concerning the analysis of turn-taking rules, in most sentences, the first and second types of turn-taking were applied and as a result, the third option was not used at all. Regarding adjacency pair, in almost every line in both side of interaction, this aspect was appeared in fewer sentences as form of insertion sequence and question. So, the results are as reliable form of conversation analysis. Considering the pedagogical implications of article results, benefits can be achieved by English learners and masters through looking at the extent of applying conversation attributes. English students, for instance, can scrutinize the exact application of repair and turn-taking sorts in social interview and as a result take advantage of these characteristics in their formal and informal interactions.

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