Conversation Analysis

“Conversation analysis” is an approach to the study of social interaction that focuses on practices of speaking that recur across a range of contexts and settings. The early studies in this tradition were based on the analysis of English conversation. More recently, however, conversation analysts have begun to study talk in a broader range of communities around the world. Through detailed analyses of recorded conversations, this book examines differences and similarities across a wide range of languages including Finnish, Japanese, Tzeltal Mayan, Russian and Mandarin. Bringing together interrelated methodological and analytic contributions, it explores topics such as the role of gaze in question-and-answer sequences, the organization of repair, and the design of responses to assessments. The emerging comparative perspective demonstrates how the structure of talk is inflected by the local circumstances within which it operates.

Jack Sidnell is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto.
Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics

EDITORS
Paul Drew, Majorie Harness Goodwin, John J. Gumperz, Deborah Schifrin

1. Discourse Strategies John J. Gumperz
2. Language and Social Identity edited by John J. Gumperz
3. The Social Construction of Literacy Jenny Cook-Gumperz
5. Discourse Markers Deborah Schiffrin
6. Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse Deborah Tannen
7. Conducting Interaction: Patterns of Behaviour in Focused Encounters Adam Kendon
10. Crosstalk and Culture in Sino-American Communication Linda W.L. Young (with a foreword by John J. Gumperz)
11. AIDS Counselling: Institutional Interaction and Clinical Practice Anssi Perakyla
12. Prosody in Conversation; Interactional Studies edited by Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen and Margret Selting
13. Interaction and Grammar edited by Elinor Ochs, Emanuel A. Schegloff and Sandra A. Thompson
14. Credibility in Court: Communicative Practices in the Camorra Trials Marco Jacquement
15. Interaction and the Development of Mind Anthony J. Wootton
16. The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air Steven Clayman and John Heritage
17. Gender and Politeness Sara Mills
18. Laughter in Interaction Philip Glenn
20. Communication in Medical Care: Interaction between Primary Care Physicians and Patients edited by John Heritage and Douglas Maynard
21. In Other Words: Variation in reference and narrative Deborah Schiffrin
22. Language in Interaction in an urban school Ben Rampton
23. Discourse and Identity edited by Anna De Fina, Deborah Schiffrin and Michale Bamberg
24. Reporting Talk: Reported Speech in Interaction edited by Elizabeth Holt and Rebecca Clift
26. Talking Voices, 2nd edition by Deborah Tannen
27. Conversation Analysis: Comparative Perspectives edited by Jack Sidnell
Conversation Analysis

Comparative Perspectives

Edited by

JACK SIDNELL

University of Toronto
Contents

List of figures page vii
List of tables ix
List of contributors xiii
Transcription conventions xv

Part I Introduction
1 Comparative perspectives in conversation analysis 3
   JACK SIDNELL

Part II Repair and beyond
2 Repetition in the initiation of repair 31
   RUEY-JIUAN REGINA WU
3 A cross-linguistic investigation of the site of
   initiation in same-turn self-repair 60
   BARBARA FOX, FAY WOUK, MAKOTO HAYASHI, STEVEN
   FINCKE, LIANG TAO, MARJA-LEENA SORJONEN, MINNA
   LAAKSO, AND WILFRIDO FLORES HERNANDEZ
4 Repairing reference 104
   MARIA EGBERT, ANDREA GOLATO, AND
   JEFFREY D. ROBINSON

Part III Aspects of response
5 Projecting nonalignment in conversation 135
   ANNA LINDSTRÖM
6 Two answers to inapposite inquiries 159
   TRINE HEINEMANN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vi</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gaze, questioning, and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FEDERICO ROSSANO, PENELlope BROWN, AND STEPHEN C. LEVINSON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Negotiating boundaries in talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MAKOTO HAYASHI AND KYUNG-EUN YOON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part IV</td>
<td>Action formation and sequencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Alternative responses to assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MARJA-LEENA SORJONEN AND AULI HAKULINEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Language-specific resources in repair and assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JACK SIDNELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Implementing delayed actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GALINA B. BOLDEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part V</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>One perspective on <em>Conversation Analysis: Comparative Perspectives</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EMANUEL A. SCHEGLOFF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bibliography* 407  
*Index* 436
### Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Open-class repair German “Wa?”</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Open-class English “What?”</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Underspecified referent repair initiation (URRI) German “Was.”</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>URRI German “Was denn.”</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>URRI English “What.”</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Location of three cultures</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Gaze toward other participant, by language</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Gaze behavior across the three cultures clustered by participation role</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Distribution of actions by languages</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Distribution of percentages of each action in which the Q-speaker looks at the addressee, by language</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Distribution of percentages of each action in which the Q-recipient looks at the Q-speaker, by language</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Italian dyads</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>Tzeltal dyads</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>Yélî Dnye dyads</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Responses to assessments with a verb repeat</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1 Post-beginning and pre-completion repair initiation  
3.2 Recognizable completion and repair initiation in English  
3.3 Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Indonesian  
3.4 Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Finnish  
3.5 Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Bikol  
3.6 Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Japanese  
3.7 Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Sochiapam Chinantec  
3.8 Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Mandarin  
3.9 Site of initiation of simple recycling repair initiated in monosyllabic words  
3.10 Site of initiation of simple replacement repair initiated in monosyllabic words  
3.11 Site of initiation in recycling repairs in words of three or more syllables  
3.12 Site of initiation in replacement repairs in words of three or more syllables  
3.13 Frequency of monosyllabic words for each repair type  
3.14 Frequency of multisyllabic words for each repair type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Post-beginning and pre-completion repair initiation</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Recognizable completion and repair initiation in English</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Indonesian</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Finnish</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Bikol</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Japanese</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Sochiapam Chinantec</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Recognizable completion and repair initiation in Mandarin</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Site of initiation of simple recycling repair initiated in monosyllabic words</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Site of initiation of simple replacement repair initiated in monosyllabic words</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Site of initiation in recycling repairs in words of three or more syllables</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Site of initiation in replacement repairs in words of three or more syllables</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Frequency of monosyllabic words for each repair type</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>Frequency of multisyllabic words for each repair type</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables

3.15 Site of initiation of recycling repairs in bisyllabic words 89
3.16 Percentage of recycling repairs initiated in bisyllabic words 90
3.17 Recycling repairs: Bisyllabic words by syntactic class 91
3.18 Recycling repairs: Multisyllabic words by syntactic class 92
3.19 English replacement repairs by word type for monosyllabic words 93
3.20 Replacement repairs by word type for monosyllabic words 94
3.21 Word length in recycling repairs 95

7.1 Instances of Q-speaker and Q-recipient gaze toward other participant, by language 207
7.2 Logistic regression analysis predicting gaze toward other participant in relation to role (Q-recipient as reference group), by language 209
7.3 Logistic regression analysis predicting Q-speaker gaze toward Q-recipient in relation to language (Italian and Tzeltal as reference group) 210
7.4 Logistic regression analysis predicting Q-recipient gaze toward Q-speaker in relation to language (Italian and Tzeltal as reference group) 211
7.5 Instances of mutual gaze by language 213
7.6 Logistic regression analysis predicting mutual gaze in relation to language (Italian and Tzeltal as reference group) 213
7.7 Questions in which speakers look at recipients and recipients do not look back, by language 214
7.8 Distribution of actions performed by questions, by language 214
7.9 Q-speaker looking at Q-recipient, by action and by language 215
7.10 Q-recipient looking at Q-speaker, by question type and by language 217
7.11 Distribution of response types by language 218
7.12 Distribution of responses to questions, by language 218
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>Distribution of questions that do not get responded to in which the recipient does not look at the speaker</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>Logistic regression analysis predicting no response</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>Logistic regression analysis predicting no response if Q-recipient is not gazing, by language</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>Q-speaker gaze, by language</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>Q-recipient gaze, by language</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>Questions in which lack of Q-speaker gaze toward Q-recipient motivated by question content or competing activity</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>Questions in which lack of Q-recipient gaze toward Q-speaker motivated by question content or competing activity</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Transcription symbols</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Distribution of “so”- and “oh”-prefaced sequence initiators</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contributors

Galina B. Bolden, Department of Communication, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., USA

Penelope Brown, Language Acquisition Group, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Maria Egbert, Department of Business Communication and Information Science, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Steven Fincke, Nuance Communications, Cambridge, Mass., USA

Barbara Fox, Department of Linguistics, University of Colorado, Boulder, Col., USA

Andrea Golato, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Ill., USA

Auli Hakulinen, Department of Finnish Language and Literature, University of Helsinki, Finland

Makoto Hayashi, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Ill., USA

Trine Heinemann, Department of Business Communication and Information Science, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Wilfrido Flores Hernandez, Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Minna Laakso, Department of Speech Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland

Stephen C. Levinson, Language and Cognition Group, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
Contributors

Anna Lindström, School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Örebro University, Sweden

Jeffrey D. Robinson, Department of Communication, Portland State University, Oregon, USA

Federico Rossano, Department of Development and Comparative Psychology, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany

Emanuel A. Schegloff, Department of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles, Calif., USA

Jack Sidnell, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, Canada

Marja-Leena Sorjonen, Research Institute for the Languages of Finland, Finland

Liang Tao, Department of Linguistics, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, USA

Fay Wouk, Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Ruey-Jiuan Regina Wu, Department of Linguistics and Asian/Middle Eastern Languages, San Diego State University, Calif., USA

Kyung-eun Yoon, Department of African and Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla., USA
Transcription conventions (from Schegloff 2000)

I. Temporal and sequential relationships

Overlapping or simultaneous talk is indicated in a variety of ways.

[ Separate left square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers, indicates a point of overlap onset, whether at the start of an utterance or later.

] Separate right square brackets, one above the other on two successive lines with utterances by different speakers indicates a point at which two overlapping utterances both end, where one ends while the other continues, or simultaneous moments in overlaps which continue.

= Equal signs ordinarily come in pairs – one at the end of a line, and another at the start of the next line or one shortly thereafter. They are used to indicate two things:

(1) If the two lines connected by the equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate the placement of overlapping talk.

(2) If the lines connected by two equal signs are by different speakers, then the second followed the first with no discernable silence between them, or was “latched” to it.

A single equal sign indicates no break in an ongoing piece of talk, where one might otherwise expect it, e.g., after a completed sentence.

(0.5) Numbers in parentheses indicate silence, represented in tenths of a second; what is given here in the left margin indicates 0.5 seconds of silence. Silences may be marked either within an utterance or between utterances.
Transcription conventions

A dot in parentheses indicates a “micropause,” hearable but not readily measurable without instrumentation; ordinarily less than 0.2 of a second.

II. Aspects of speech delivery, including aspects of intonation

The punctuation marks are not used grammatically, but to indicate intonation. The period indicates a falling, or final, intonation contour, not necessarily the end of a sentence. Similarly, a question mark indicates rising intonation, not necessarily a question, and a comma indicates “continuing” intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary. The inverted question mark is used to indicate a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.

:: Colons are used to indicate the prolongation or stretching of the sound just preceding them. The more colons, the longer the stretching. On the other hand, graphically stretching a word on the page by inserting blank spaces between the letters does not necessarily indicate how it was pronounced; it is used to allow alignment with overlapping talk.

- A hyphen after a word or part of a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, often done with a glottal or dental stop.

word Underlining is used to indicate some form of stress or emphasis, either by increased loudness or higher pitch. The more underlining, the greater the emphasis.

word Therefore, underlining sometimes is placed under the first letter or two of a word, rather than under the letters which are actually raised in pitch or volume.

WOrd Especially loud talk may be indicated by upper case; again, the louder, the more letters in upper case. And in extreme cases, upper case may be underlined.

° The degree sign indicates that the talk following it was markedly quiet or soft.

“word” When there are two degree signs, the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around it.

Combinations of underlining and colons are used to indicate intonation contours:

_: If the letter(s) preceding a colon is/are underlined, then there is an “inflected” falling intonation contour on the vowel (you can hear the pitch turn downward).

_; If a colon is itself underlined, then there is an inflected rising intonation contour on the vowel (i.e., you can hear the pitch turn upward).
Transcription conventions

The up and down arrows mark sharper rises or falls in pitch than would be indicated by combinations of colons and underlining, or they may mark a whole shift, or resetting, of the pitch register at which the talk is being produced.

The combination of “more than” and “less than” symbols indicates that the talk between them is compressed or rushed. Used in the reverse order, they can indicate that a stretch of talk is markedly slowed or drawn out. The “less than” symbol by itself indicates that the immediately following talk is “jump-started,” i.e. sounds like it starts with a rush.

Hearable aspiration is shown where it occurs in the talk by the letter h – the more h’s, the more aspiration. The aspiration may represent breathing, laughter, etc. if it occurs inside the boundaries of a word, it may be enclosed in parentheses in order to set it apart from the sounds of the word. If the aspiration is an inhalation, it is shown with a dot before it.

III. Other markings

Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber’s descriptions of events, rather than representations of them: ((cough)), ((sniff)), ((telephone rings)), ((footsteps)), ((whispered)), ((pause)), and the like.

When all or part of an utterance is in parentheses, or the speaker identification is, this indicates uncertainty on the transcriber’s part, but represents a likely possibility.

Where alternate hearings are possible these are enclosed in parentheses and separated by a back slash.

Empty parentheses indicate that something is being said, but no hearing (or, in some cases, speaker identification) can be achieved.

IV. Multi-linear transcription conventions

Many of the transcriptions in this book are of talk in languages other than English and include one or two lines of glossing. In three-line transcripts the first line is a broad phonetic representation of the talk in the original language. The second line is a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss using a combination of word-for-word translation and abbreviations such as ASP to indicate particles and other functional items that do not admit of a direct translation into English. Authors who use these abbreviations in the transcripts they present include a key explaining them at the conclusion of the chapter. The third line presents an idiomatic English gloss – an attempt to get as close as possible to the contextual sense or meaning of the utterance. The following example from the chapter by Wu illustrates:
Transcription conventions

01 L:  wo dou hai mei jian guo ta.
       I    all   still N   see   ASP he
       ‘I haven’t met him yet.’

In two line transcriptions the morpheme-by-morpheme gloss is not included. The following example is from the chapter by Sidnell:

01 C:  him mada biilongz tuu Hamilton.
       his mother is from Hamilton.