

Conversational Analysis:

Data From Native and Non-Native Speakers of English*

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1 Introduction

Having laid much emphasis on the study of the structure of language, people began to realize the importance of verbal interaction in real life. Conversation is not just an interaction of words by the participants. It does not proceed straightforwardly, being affected by various factors such as the participants' age, sex, race, social status, language, background knowledge, and culture. The dynamics of conversation thus merit analyzing, and have attracted many scholars from different fields, such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and linguistics. As research has increased, discourse analysts have adopted various approaches and provided us with different perspectives on how oral communication is constructed through the mutual effort of the participants (cf. Gumperz 1982 and Schiffrin 1994 among others).

According to Sacks (1992), conversation is a string of at least two turns called adjacency pairs, within which insertion sequence may occur, and discourse is the process of conversation, and thus is negotiable and unpredictable (cf. Ainsworth-Vaughn, Class Lecture 1991).

Conversational analyses have been mostly practiced on data by

native speakers of a language since they contain natural and authentic resource reflecting native speakers' discourse competence.¹ However, it is equally worth paying special attention to conversations by non-native speakers of a language, e.g. Japanese EFL students' conversations in English.

The purpose of the present study is to examine English conversations by non-naive speakers, focusing on several aspects of discourse analysis, and to compare them with native speakers' conversations. The data presented and analyzed here were tape-recorded in East Lansing, Michigan in 1991. The informants were: M: Japanese female, C: Japanese female, B: Taiwanese male, R: American male, and D: American male. M, C, and B are non-native speakers of English, and lived in the U.S. for three to five years, studying at the graduate level. Their English proficiency could be regarded as being comparatively high. The other two, R and D, are native speakers of English pursuing their MA degrees.

In the next section, I will analyze the data with special reference to topic change, overlap/interruption, and narrative, and show that non-native speakers of English with a relatively high level of proficiency resemble native speakers, at least with respect to these three aspects of discourse. Finally, section 3 contains the conclusion of this study.

2 Analysis

2.1 Topic Change

In a conversation, the conversationalists are talking about something. What they are talking about is their topic. Maynard (1980: 263) indicates that the topic in a conversation is what the conversation is "about." Interestingly enough, the conversationalists do not continue talking about the same topic. Rather, they transfer their

topics from one subject to another while they are talking. This nature of conversations brings a natural flow of topic changes. Maynard (ibid.) defines topic-changing points as the “places where a current utterance may not display a relationship to, or may not fit with, a prior one.” In some cases, topic changes occur suddenly, but mostly the changes develop gradually in a conversation. The sequence of a gradual change of topic is referred to as a topic shade sequence.

Excerpt 1 is an example of non-native conversation where topic change occurs in a topic shade sequence (gradually).

Excerpt 1 (Non-Native Conversation)

- 487 M: Are you gonna go out of Michigan?
488 C: Uh-huh.
489 M: During the break?
490 C: We'll go to New York.
491 M: Yeah, for how long?
492 C: Five days maybe.
493 M: Are you gonna stay at hotel or do you know somebody?
494 C: Hotel.
495 M: It's expensive.
496 C: Yeah.
497 I have a friend there.
498 But, yeah, she is a girl,
499 So if I go there alone, she will let me stay with her,
500 But because I'm with my boyfriend, maybe, maybe not.
501 M: She goes to school there?

In lines 487-496, C and M are talking about C's boyfriend coming during

winter break, but in line 501, they are discussing C's friend in New York. These seem to be two different topics. Close scrutiny reveals, however, that they are included in a topic shade sequence. The beginning of the topic shade sequence is M's utterance in line 493, where M provides the entrance to a new topic about "somebody" living in New York, although it is still coherent with the prior talk. C's speech in lines 497-500 is coherent to M's utterance in line 493; both mention C's boyfriend and a friend in New York. In line 501, the topic about C's boyfriend has completely gone out of the conversation, but M's talk in line 501 is about C's friend in New York, hence still coherent to C's prior utterance. In this topic shade sequence, thus, the topic evolves from C's boyfriend to C's boyfriend and her friend in New York. Then in line 500, M picks up an aspect of the current topic and shifts completely to the new theme.

Here is an example of topic shade sequence by native speakers:

Excerpt 2 (Native Conversation)

- 15 R: I had a
16 great date, um
.....
- 26 R: I mean ...
- 27 D: Could you drive?
- 28 R: Oh, yeah.
- 29 D: Well, my first Homecoming was pretty bad. I took Mary
Ford, and I didn't even know her. and uh, I had gotten my
license that afternoon and I was really nervous so I didn't
31 drink anything.
.....
- 37 R: Well, at least you had a good time with your buds.. I ..

38 D: Were you nervous?

39 R: Um, yeah I was –

D's utterance in line 27 seems to be a sudden topic change, but more careful examination of this sequence shows that line 27 is cohesive to the previous utterance: the second-person singular pronoun "you" in line 27 is cohesive to the first person singular "I" in the prior talk. The utterance in line 27 also serves as an introduction of D's narrative from line 29, and the word "drive" in line 27 and the word "license" in line 30 are cohesive with each other. In this sense, line 27 connects the two different topics, R's first homecoming and D's first homecoming. In line 38, R changes the topic again, but the word "nervous" makes R's utterance coherent and cohesive to line 30.

The topic shade sequence in Excerpt 2 is not the same as the one in Excerpt 1 because in the latter, the wider topic of "homecoming" is still alive. Maynard (1980: 271) terms this type of topic shade sequence as topic shift, making a distinction between topic shift and topic change. According to Maynard (ibid.), "topic shifts involve a move from one aspect of a topic to another, in order to occasion a different set of mentionables, and they can be done in various ways." Since the topic of R and D's conversation is "homecoming," the sequence is characterized as a topic shift sequence in which the focus moves from R's homecoming to D's and then R's again.

The following is an example of a topic change by non-native speakers:

	M:	A good little corner downtown	260
[affirmation]	G:	OK, Be sure, yeah, make sure	261
[formulation]	M:	That's what happened after you left	262
[topic change]		After that, what did you do?	263

Excerpt 3 (Non-Native Conversation)

391 C: I'm looking forward to meeting somebody who is very
handsome and single.

392 M: (laughter)

393 I'm looking forward to meeting Teru – Teruhiko

394 He's from Osaka, and goes to Lancing Community College.

M's talk in line 393 shifts the topic from C's fantasy to M's acquaintance, but it is still coherent and cohesive to the prior utterance since M utilizes the same expression as C did, namely "I'm looking forward to meeting..."

The end of the previous topic is an appropriate place for a topic change, and there are certain patterns which indicate the closing of a topic. West and Garcia (1988: 554-556) point out that the end of a topic is denoted by several features such as the exchange of pass turn markers, aphoristic conclusion, reformulation of a prior talk, assessment, making arrangements, and silence. Here are some examples in which topic changes occur after such features.

Excerpt 4 (Non-Native Conversation)

257 M: So whenever you have a problem like that,

258 watch out, and check your zippers, or you know

259 C: OK, I will. I will.

260 M: A good little corner, don't miss it. [aphoristic conclusion]

261 C: OK, Be sure, yeah, make sure. [affirmation]

262 M: That's what happened after you left. [formulation]

263 After that, what did you do? [topic change]

Excerpt 5 (Non-Native speaker)

- 318 M: We will be so busy, working on the paper and tests.
319 (4.0 seconds silence)
I have to take the GRE examination this weekend. [topic change]

In Excerpt 4, M's utterance in line 262 formulates the prior speech, indicating the end of the current topic, and subsequently M changed the topic in line 273. In (5), M alludes to a topic change by means of silence, and afterwards M started a new topic about GRE.

The topic change that occurs at the end of the prior topic as observed in Excerpts 4 and 5 is called a collaborative or joint topic transition since it is constructed by both participants. In contrast to collaborative transition, there is another type of topic transition, called "unilateral topic transition," in which the topic change is not cooperatively accomplished by the conversationalists, and characterized as occurring before the participants' completing the pre-closing sequence of the prior topical talk. Examples of unilateral topic changes are given in Excerpts 6-8.

Excerpt 6 (Non-Native Conversation)

- 355 B: But at least, you can practice.
356 C: So what did you do in Colorado?

Excerpt 7 (Non-Native Conversation)

326 C: Hokkaido also and Nagano.

327 It's a middle part of Japan.

328 B: ah.

329 So what else do you like to do?

Excerpt 8 (Non-Native Conversation)

482 B: When I get out of the car, that's fine.

483 C: (laughter)

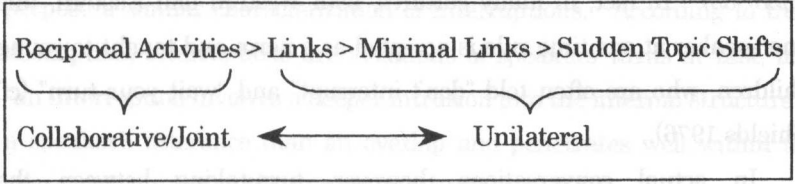
484 B: Because I wasn't interested in it.

485 Em What else, can we say um ...

In Excerpt 6, line 356 can be considered a unilateral topic change since it occurs before the prior topical talk comes to an end. In Excerpt 7, line 329 is also a type of unilateral topic change because B changes the topic, only giving a short response "ah," to C's prior topical talk, which is not completed yet. In Excerpt 8, B provides a summary for his topical utterance in line 484, but he changes the topic with his summary without waiting for C's affirmation. Therefore, line 485 is also characterized as a kind of unilateral topic change.

Collaborative and unilateral topic transitions are placed at the opposite ends of a continuum. Furthermore, they are classified along the same continuum, as shown in Fig. 1, adapted from Ainsworth-Vaughn (1991: 9).

Fig. 1. Continuum of Topic Transition Activities



Reciprocal activities correspond to West and Garcia's (1988) collaborative transitions. Unilateral transitions have three subtypes: Links, Minimal Links and Sudden Topic Shifts. Links are attempts by participants to refer explicitly to the content of the previous turn. Minimal links are indicated by markers such as "OK," "M-hm," or "Alright" followed immediately by a change of topic from the same speaker. B's utterance in lines 484-485 and 329 are instances of links and minimal links, respectively. Sudden topic shifts occur when there is an absence in surface referential cohesion with a previous utterance.

West and Garcia (ibid.) observed that in cross-gender conversation, men are more likely to initiate unilateral topic changes than women. In the present finding, the male interlocutor used links or minimal links to change the topic (see B's topic changes in Excerpts 7 and 8).²

2.2 Overlap and Interruption

One of the characteristics of conversation is the role-change of the speaker and the listener, and one speaker at a time is considered to be a basic rule. A conversation proceeds in a turn-by-turn sequence, and the conversationalists generally undertake a collaborative activity within the transitions, trying to avoid speaking at the same time. Sacks suggests that there is an underlying rule in American English conversation – 'at

least and not more than one party talks at once' (cited from Coulthard 1985: 59). In fact, in many cultures, both Western and Eastern, this one-speaker-at-one-time rule is accepted as a norm and taught to young children, who are often told "don't interrupt" and "wait your turn" (cf. Shields 1976).

In actual conversations, however, turn-taking between the participants does not always take place in an orderly way. One speaker often starts speaking in the middle of the other's ongoing utterance, resulting in the two participants speaking concurrently or the ongoing utterance being halted. As West and Garcia (1988: 551) point out, the intending speaker waits for the possible completion point of the prior speaker's talk and tries to take a turn successively, but due to the next speaker's misjudgment of the possible completion point or for some other reasons, turns of speech are not perfectly allocated in regular order. Thus, silence, simultaneous speech, overlap, and interruption naturally occur in any conversation.

Definitions of simultaneous speech, overlap, and interruption vary among researchers, and in most cases, they are defined based on the forms of how the conversationalists' utterances interact. For example, Ferguson (1977) regards simultaneous speech as a cover term for overlap and interruption, and proposes definitions as follows (adapted from Oreström 1983: 136):

Overlap: simultaneous speech, no apparent break in continuity, new speaker takes the floor

Interruption: simultaneous speech, ongoing speaker's utterance is incomplete, new speaker takes the floor

This means that interruption takes place only when two (or more)

speakers talk at once. West and Zimmerman (1983: 103-104) also propose a similar characterization of interruptions. According to their description, interruptions are violations of speakers' turns at talk, and "an interruption involves a deeper intrusion into the internal structure of a speaker's utterance than an overlap and penetrates well within the syntactic boundaries of a current speaker's utterance."

In analyzing the present data, however, I would like to highlight the psychological aspects of conversationalists in addition to the surface forms of conversations, such as simultaneousness and syntactic boundaries. As shown below, there are cases where a new speaker interrupts the current speaker's utterance, but the two speech acts do not overlap, that is, they are not simultaneous. In this study, thus, overlap and interruption are roughly characterized as follows:

- Overlap: non-offending simultaneous speech, no apparent break in continuity, coherent and cohesive to the prior speech
- Interruption: not necessarily simultaneous, psychologically offending/aggressive

Given these characteristics, let us first examine overlapping (simultaneous) speech. The participants must carefully negotiate their turns without offending the other person. Unless the current speaker indicates the end of his/her speech, the next speaker has to catch a possible ending of the current speaker's talk in order to obtain the floor. It is not obvious, however, where the ending point is since, as Sacks indicates, it is always possible to add more to an apparently complete utterance, and speakers frequently do so (cited from Coulthard 1985: 61). As a result, the hardship in detecting the completion points and

successful turn-taking procedures causes overlaps. West and Zimmerman (1983: 104) raise a similar point: "The delicate timing involved in honoring these constraints often produces a brief stretch of simultaneous speech initiated by a next speaker just as a current speaker arrives at a possible turn-transition place."

In spite of the difficulty of catching the exact completion points for turn-taking, some overlapping speech is uttered within the grammatical boundaries acceptable as possible completion points. Here is an example.

Excerpt 9 (Non-Native Conversation)

480 C: You must be very surprised and scared,

aren' t you?

481 B: Yes, I was.

B speaks before C's utterance has been completed, yielding B's simultaneous speech on C's tag question. The simultaneous speech initiated by B is not regarded as being offensive, however, the boundary between the main clause and the tag question is a possible complete point for an utterance.

The listener to an ongoing speech is guessing and predicting an entrance to the next utterance. Jefferson (1975) claims that the listener to a current utterance "has the technical capacity to select a precise spot to start his own talk 'no later' than the exact appropriate moment," and she gives impressive examples where recipients come in at the right moment with their presupposed completion point of an uncompleted sentence (cited from Coulthard 1985: 62):

Louise: No a Soshe is someone who [is a carbon copy of their friend.
 Roger: [drinks Pepsi.

Jefferson also presents an example where the recipient predicts the ending of the sentence and attempts to say the same thing simultaneously, as follows (also cited from Coulthard 1985: 62):

Dan: The guy who doesn't run the race doesn't win it, but
 'e doesn't lose it.
 Roger: [But lose it.

Interestingly enough, in my data of non-native speakers of English, there are instances of the speakers uttering the same thing simultaneously.

Excerpt 10 (Non-Native Conversation)

270 C: Oh, yeah, [you were [in the panic,
 271 M: [I was [panic
 272 C: and we are having [fun. []
 273 M: [Fun []

Excerpt 11 (Non-Native Conversation)

472 C: But when he comes here, maybe everything
 is covered [with snow. []
 473 M: [with snow. []

In lines 270-271 in Excerpt 10, the utterances of C and M are not exactly the same. However, the pronouns "you" and "I" used there refer to the

same individual, namely “M,” therefore, it could be regarded as an instance of overlap of the same content.

Now let us consider interruptions. As listed above, the structural characteristic of an interruption is a deep intrusion into the internal structure of the current speaker’s utterance, as observed in the following native conversation.

Excerpt 12 (Native Conversation)

123 R: Your date must have been really pissed

124 D: // we went as friends,

but I don’t think we were ever close—then I got a flat tire –

D’s utterance in line 124 breaks into R’s speech in line 123 before R’s speech arrives at the possible turn taking place. It is inserted in the middle of R’s sentence, which is not an appropriate position for insertion, and interrupts R’s speech.

As mentioned above, focusing on the psychological aspects of the conversationalists, I characterize interruptions as an emotionally offending utterance. Murray (1985:37) also defines interruptions as the prior speakers’ feeling of being interrupted. In the view of members of the speech community mostly studied by conversational analysts, interruptions are not always marked by simultaneous speech.

Sudden topic changes are also a case of interruption. As Murray (ibid.: 38) insists, “when the current speaker’s topic is abruptly cut off, it is upsetting, and likely to be felt interrupted.”

Excerpt 13 (Native Conversation)

23 R: y'know you're sixteen years old,

24 you're stupid, ...

25 D: // Well, we weren't.

Excerpt 14 (Native Conversation)

20 R: Oh, yeah, but I was so inexperienced.

21 D: // Do you know
about the church?

These are both examples of abrupt cut off. In Excerpt 13, R actually arrives at a possible turn-taking place, but R's next potential speech was terminated by D, and D's utterance could be regarded as an interruption. Excerpt 14 is an example of an interruption through a sudden topic change.

A similar interruption is observed in the following non-native conversion.

Excerpt 15 (Non-Native Conversation)

313 B: **Where** have you skied?

314 C: I

313 B: // Maybe down Mt. Fuji or something.

B's utterance in line 313 is an instance of interruption since B breaks in when C is considering how to answer B's question.

2.3 Narrative

One of the first forms of discourse we learn as children is telling stories about past events, which seems to be a universal activity and used throughout the life course by people of all social backgrounds in a wide array of settings (cf. Reissman 1993). Labov (1972: 359-360) defines “narrative” as being “one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred.”³

As pointed out by Labov (*ibid.*) and Polanyi (1979: 208) among others, one of the most salient characteristics of a narrative is the correspondence in temporal order between events and clauses in the narrative. Labov (*ibid.*) notes that “the clauses are characteristically ordered in temporal sequence,” and Polanyi (*ibid.*) contributes that “the order of recital of the events is to be presented exactly as it had taken place.” The correspondence between temporal order and narrative sequence is observed in Excerpt 16.

Excerpt 16 (Native Speaker)

- 34 D: we just split down
and I went joyriding with my friends
35 and left here and there
and then y’know I came back a couple hours later
36 and picked her up and drove her home.

In the narrative above, D tells what happened on his first homecoming date according to the temporal order of the events. If he changed the order of the clauses, the narrative would become a totally different one or the hearer would misunderstand the event itself.

Speakers sometimes break the rule of temporal order in their narratives. However, they make an adjustment so as to have their narrative correctly understood. Here is an example of temporal order alteration:

Excerpt 17 (Non-Native Conversation)

- 129 C: And I thought maybe I lost my key
130 So I was in a panic at that time
131 And I called the locksmith.
132 M: Did you?
133 C: Yeah.
134 No, before I called the locksmith, I called the owner of the car.

In this sequence, the clauses are not ordered according to the temporal order of the events. The actual sequence of events are: C called the owner of the car, and then she called the locksmith. However, in her narrative, C actually altered the temporal order by saying, "Before I called the locksmith, I called the owner of the car." From this example, we may point out that the speaker of the narrative always pays attention to the correspondence between the narrative and the temporal order of events.

Another important aspect of narrative structure is Labov's (1972) properties, according to which a fully structured narrative consists of six elements: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result or resolution, and coda. Abstract is a summary of the substance of the narrative. Orientation is the part where time, place, situation, participants, etc. are given. The sequence of events is described in the complicating action. Evaluation gives the significance and meaning of

the action that has taken place, and describes the attitude of the narrator. Resolution is what finally happened, and coda returns the perspective to the present time. How these elements are realized in a context is shown in Excerpt 18 (cited from Riessman 1993: 62).

Excerpt 18 (Native-Speaker's Narrative)

- 001 L: uh (1 sec.) the way I've usually started these is to ask
002 how you found out you were a DES daughter,
003 and what it was like [002-003 abstract]
004 N: (1 sec.) um, it's funny because the, details are fuzzy, in
005 my head
006 what I think happened, was um (1 sec.)
007 when I was around 19,
008 I we-
009 I was in college [006-008 orientation]
010 and I went, to a, a gynecologist to get birth control
011 and, I happened to be lucky with my first exam
012 he was, he knew that I was a DES daughter because I had
013 adenosis (1 sec.) um,
014 so he, told y'know he told me (2.5 sec.)
015 and I don't remember how it became (laughs) clear
016 between my mother and I,
017 that (1.5 sec.) that uh 'cause she didn't know I was going
018 to the gynecologist
019 that she (1 sec.)
020 I think shortly after that,
021 she told me

- 018 um and I either said "I know already" or, (inhale)
 [009-018 complicating action]
- 019 um (1) but I didn't learn from her directly first
- 020 um (1) but I learned it form this doctor (1.5 sec.)
- 021 L: uhm
- 022 and I was so concerned at the time about getting birth
 control,
- 023 that I think it sort of didn't, um,
 it never really, become the major part.
- 024 it never really, became the major part my life
- 025 it sort of f'flitted in and out . [022-025 resolution/codal]

Applying Labov's structural categories, let us now examine M's narrative.

Excerpt 19 (Non-Native Speaker's Narrative)

- 11 M: Until I enjoyed my weekend until ... Sunday night.
- 12 C: Why? Why? What happen?
- 13 M: Because
- 14 I didn't tell you what happened after you left?
- 15 C: Oh, you didn't.
- 16 What happened?
- 17 M: (laughter)
- 18 C: Tell me.
- 19 M: Well, what happened was, it was such a panic.
- 20 Satomi and I came back to the front of our house.
- 21 Actually, I came back to my room.
- 22 And then we were looking for my keys, my key chain

- that had every
single keys in my – every single key.
- 23 every single keys in my – every single key.
- 24 Well I couldn't find it.
- 25 And then.
- 26 C: You couldn't find it?
- 27 M: Yeah, horrible.
- 28 And at that time, both of us were in a panic.
- 29 And well anyway, both of us were in a panic.
- 30 And we had to take our bags,
- 31 and um take everything out of our bags and looked
- 32 every single corner of our bags, and pockets and
- 33 everything
- 34 And it started to rain.
- 35 and then we had, we were doing all this in outside in the
- 36 rain.
- 37 C: Oh so bad.
- 38 M: Yeah, horrible.
- 39 And we were getting wet, and so cold.
- 40 and well unfortunately, we couldn't find anything.
- 41 C: So
- 42 M: So we couldn't find anything.

Lines 11 and 14 are the orientation in which M indicates the time of her story by saying “Sunday night,” and “after you left.” Line 19 is the abstract of the narrative, and it also includes the evaluation element. The word “panic” draws the hearer’s attention to her narrative because it denotes an unusual situation and makes the hearer expect the story to be interesting. Lines 20-22 represent the first action in her story and

the orientation which indicates the persons, place, and situation. Line 22 shows the syntactic properties (past progressive clause), which according to Labov are commonly seen in the orientation.

We can also observe several evaluation elements besides the word "panic" in this sequence. M's words "horrible" and "so cold" are embedded evaluations in which M reveals her sentiments at the moment, and they indicate the dreadful experience she had on Sunday night and also how miserable she was in the rain. These words gave the newsworthiness to her narrative because something outrageous and pitiful is worth mentioning.

M also uses syntactic devices to evaluate her narrative. The quantifiers "every single" and "everything" in lines 31-33 and repetitions in lines 22-23, 28-29, 40, and 42 intensify the narrator's evaluation. According to Labov (1972: 383), a narrative is also evaluated based on the concepts expressed with negation such as "what was not the case" or "the narrator did not want it to happen," which is observed in Lines 40 and 42. The evaluation point with negation makes her narrative noteworthy, for something unusual and undesirable is worth talking about.

In addition, M's narrative contains an epigram as in Excerpt 20.

Excerpt 20 (Non-Native Conversation)

257 M: So whenever you have a problem like that,

258 watch out and check your zipper, or you know

259 C: OK, I will. I will

260 M: a good little corner, don't miss it.

Narrativization tells not only about past actions but how narrators

understand those actions. The narrators' views of those actions are described in evaluation clauses, and using an epigram is one of the most effective strategies for creating an evaluation. Reissman (1993:20) points out that "narrators say in the evaluation clauses (the soul of the narrative) how they want to be understood and what the point is. Every competent narrator tries to defend against the implicit accusation of a pointless story." The epigram in Excerpt 20 functions as evaluation effectively since it makes M's narrative meaningful and storyworthy. It conveys a message that her narrative is not a mere report of an event, but contains a lesson we should follow, successfully blocking the implicit accusation.

Finally, let us look at the concluding sequence (coda) of M's long narrative.

Excerpt 21 (Non-Native Conversation)

- 309 M: But what a weekend.
310 It was (laughter), a lot of things happened.
311 C: Yeah.
312 M: Good things, bad things,
313 C: Busy weekend.
314 M: Busy weekend.
315 But the good thing is that it's at the beginning of the term.

In this example, both C and M convey, in Labov's term, general observations of M's narrative, and at the same time, it brings the conversation to the present time.

3 Conclusion and Implication

Conversations contain many ingredients, which can be analyzed from various perspectives, and there have been many approaches proposed in the history of conversational/discourse analyses. This paper demonstrated a micro- and macro- analysis of the conversational data that were tape-recorded in East Lansing, Michigan in 1991. In section 1, the introduction of the general idea of conversational/discourse analysis was presented. Section 2 highlighted the conversational data by advanced-level non-native speakers of English. In particular, they were examined in terms of topic change, overlap/interruption, and narrative. Section 2.1 discussed some important features of topic change such as topic shade sequence, the difference between topic change and topic shift, indicators of the end of a prior topic, collaborative and unilateral topic transitions, etc., and those features were observed in the non-native conversations just as the native ones. In section 2.2, first, a brief survey of the previous definitions of simultaneous speech, interruption, and overlap was introduced, and following Murray's (1985) definitions based on participants' psychological aspects, the alternative characterizations were proposed. The present analysis showed that the non-native speakers appropriately used overlaps at the possible completion points of an ongoing utterance, and their psychologically offending speeches were regarded as interruption. Section 2.3 dealt with narratives. As Labov (1972) claims, a fully structured narrative (by a native speaker of English) is composed of six elements: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result/resolution and coda. Some of these were exemplified in the narrative by a non-native speaker of English. Consequently, as long as the findings presented here are concerned, it could be concluded that advanced-level non-native speakers of English utilize the discourse strategies similar to those used by native speakers of

English and the conversations presented in this study developed as naturally as native speakers'.

As Gumperz (1982: 1) states, "communication is a social activity requiring the coordinated efforts of two or more individuals. To participate in such verbal exchanges, that is, to create and sustain conversational involvement, we require knowledge and abilities which go considerably beyond the grammatical competence." Therefore, it is admirable for language instructors to develop teaching materials that contain discourse analysis techniques so that learners can be exposed to numerous activities that stimulate the recognition of specific conversational constituents which will eventually contribute to successful face-to-face interaction (cf. Riggenbach 1999).

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Timothy Kelly in taking his precious time for reading and commenting on the earlier drafts of this paper. Any errors are of course mine.

Transcription Conventions



overlaps



interruptions

Notes

* This paper has been developed from a term paper written at Michigan State University in 1991. A similar discussion was made in Yogi (1992) using different conversational data. Due to limited space, the whole transcription was not listed here.

¹ There are many works that research English conversations by native and non-native speakers of English, such as Clyne (1994).

² Examples of male-female conversations are listed and analyzed in Yogi (1992).

³ For both Polanyi and Sacks, what Labov calls "narrative" is "story." Coulthard (1985: 82) quotes Sacks' definition of the "story": For Sacks a story is any report of an event".

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会話分析：英語母国語話者と非英語母国語話者のデータ

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会話分析あるいは談話分析とよばれる研究領域には様々なアプローチが存在し、それぞれの手法でいわゆる文法を越えたより広いレベルを研究対象にしている。特に社会言語学者や言語人類学者の行う会話分析／談話分析では、実際の会話が録音され、その詳細が記述・分析される。そして会話参加者によるコミュニケーション活動がどのような特徴を持ち、いかなる影響を受け、どのような効果を生み出すのか、などが研究される。会話／談話に対するこのようなアプローチは多くの成果を上げ、母国語話者（特に英語母国語話者）の談話能力及び談話構造の解明に多大な貢献をしてきた。

本稿では、英語を母国語としない話者の英語による会話の記述・分析を行った。分析対象としたのは日本人女性同士の会話と、日本人女性と台湾人男性による会話、及びアメリカ人男性同士の会話で、いずれも1991年に米国ミシガン州にて録音されたものである。協力して頂いた日本人女性2人と台湾人男性は、録音当時3年から5年のアメリカ滞在経験を持つ大学院生で、比較的高い英語運用能力を有する話者であった。

会話における個々の発話(utterance)はそれぞれ重要な機能を担っていると考えられるが、本稿では特に話題変換(Topic Change)、割り込み(interruption)／重複(overlap)、会話物語(narrative)の3つの観点に絞って考察を行った。話題変換が生じているところでは、漸進的課題推移(topic shade sequence)や相互交渉的及び一方的課題推移(collaborative and unilateral topic transitions)が観察された。また、話題変換を示すために格言的結論(aphoristic conclusion)や沈黙(silence)が使用されている例もあった。割り込み(interruption)／重複(overlap)は多くの研究では同時発話(simultaneous speech)の一種と捉えられ形式面を重視した定義がなされているが、本稿で

は Murray (1985) の心理的側面を重視した特徴付けを採用した。分析したデータの中には、2人の会話参加者が全く同時に同じことを発する例や、先行発話の終了を待たずに次の話題に移行する割り込みの例等が観察された。会話物語に関しては Labov (1972) の分類に従って分析した。Labov によると会話物語は、話の概要(abstract)・話の場、時、登場人物(orientation)・話の中に出てくる出来事 (complicating action) ・その出来事の評価 (evaluation) ・その出来事の結末(resolution) ・話の終結(coda) の6つの要素から構成される。最初にどのような話であるか宣言され、いつ、どこで誰が登場するかが提示され、実際どのような出来事が起こり、どう決着がついたのかが述べられ、最後に終結の表現が加えられる。今回分析した会話物語にも同様の要素が観察された。

本稿で取り上げた3点に関する限り、英語を母国語としない話者でも運用能力が比較的高ければ、英語母国語話者の会話と同じような特徴が観察された。この結果に基づき、さらにより効果的なコミュニケーション活動を可能にするため、会話分析・談話分析で得られた知見を英語教育でも活用すべきであることを示唆する。