

CONVERSATIONAL ACTIONS INSIDE THE SAME TURN

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1 Introduction¹

This paper addresses two problems that Schegloff (2007: xiv) relates to the description of organization of interaction: turn taking and action-formation. In regards to the former, we focus on Complex Transition Relevance Places (CTRPs), which are the most feasible points of turn-change in conversation according to Ford & Thompson (1996).

Concerning action-formation, our goal is to describe the conversational actions (CAs) that occur when the speaker maintains his turn even after a CTRP has occurred, and how these CAs can be arranged.

2 Previous work on CTRPs

Ford & Thompson (1996) studied turn changes focusing on three kinds of completion: intonational, syntactic and pragmatic. The point where the three kinds of completion appear together is denominated a CTRP. For example:

(1) C: *They never drink, without it* ↗

¹ Transcriptions in this paper are based in a slightly modified version of the transcription method proposed by DuBois et al. (1993). The following symbols are used: Q quotation; [] speech overlaps; .. brief pause; ... long pause; % creaky voice; = lengthening; TRM tremulous voice; H inhalation; Hx exhalation; - interrupted word; -- interrupted IU; , continuing intonation; ? appeal; ↗ CTRP.

D: *Yeah, you never have liquor, without ... fried meat* ↗
(Example from Ford & Thompson: 157)

We put the flag to indicate the CTRP, which is the point where syntactic, intonational and pragmatic completions converge. Intonational completion is based on intonational contour. Pragmatic completion is based on the assignation of a correspondent CA to the utterance. And finally, syntactic completion is based on the condition of the utterance as syntactically well-formed, without missing anything at the end.

Example (1) also illustrates the turn change after a CTRP.

In their work, Ford & Thompson studied turn changes outside a CTRP and the causes for that change to be produced.

In a subsequent study, Ford, Fox & Thompson (2002) examined turn-continuation after the CTRP (where a turn change could be expected, according to Ford & Thompson, 1996). They classified the cases found in two types: turn-extensions (elements syntactically linked to what the speaker has just said) and free constituents (such as unattached NPs). (2) and (3) are examples of turn extensions and free constituents, respectively.

(2) *Bill said that he was at least goin' eighty miles an hour* ↗
with the two of 'em on it ↗
(Example from Ford, Fox & Thompson: 16)

(3) *That guy was dreaming* ↗
fifteen thousand dollars,
(Example from Ford, Fox & Thompson: 17)

The authors concluded that the CTRP is not necessarily a point of turn change, and that turn-extensions are mostly motivated by uptake problems. An example of the last is (4), where the addressee does not answer immediately the question and the speaker inserts a turn extension:

(4) *Have you been to New Orleans?* ↗
ever? ↗
(Example from Ford, Fox & Thompson: 18)

They analyzed 64 increments, from which 45 were extensions in this sense.

3 Corpus

The corpus used in this research differs significantly from other investigations on this subject. It is comprised of 5 telephone conversations (transcribed by the author). The topic of the conversations is also very rare in this kind of research, and can lead the interaction to significant differences from other conversational corpora.

This corpus was recorded in Puebla, Mexico in December, 2005. 8 speakers participated: 6 males and 2 females (although female speakers have minor roles, such as to answer the phone). All speakers are Mexican, although two of them are of Lebanese descent. They are in the rank of middle to high class; all of them are adults (age estimated: 40 to 60). They did not know that they were being recorded, and the topic of their conversations is mostly a conspiracy that they were planning against the Mexican journalist Lidia Cacho. This conspiracy was revealed by the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, in February, 2006.

These recordings still can be downloaded from the following link: <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/graficos/animados/EUOL/kamel-ok.html>

4 Results

Table 1: corpus summary

Total length	20 minutes
Intonational Units	1180
Words	5252
Total of CTRPs	484 (100%)
CTRPs with a turn-change	340 (70%)
CTRPs without a turn-change	144 (30%)

The group of CTRPs non-accompanied by turn change can be classified according to the conversational action (CA) that appears at the CTRP without a turn-change. This CA is identified in accordance with the context of interaction.

Table 2 describes conversational actions manifested in the corpus and the correspondent percentages.

Politeness	35	24%
New information	33	23%
Appraisal	22	15%
Clarifications	18	13%
Pre-sequences	16	11%
Turn-change requests	15	10%
Quotations	5	3%
Total	144	100%

4.1. Politeness

In 35 cases, the transition towards the turn change (or even towards the conversation closure) occurs between expressions of politeness.

- (5) *K: Te agradezco [...] tu atención* ↵
te mando yo un abrazo,
 I appreciate ... your kindness ↵
 I send you a hug.
- (6) *C: Sí está bien.* ↵
ándeale. ↵
gracias. ↵
 yes, that's good. ↵
 ok. ↵
 thanks. ↵

4.2. New information addition

The introduction of new referents in the discourse is done before the first CTRP and an increment is introduced if it is necessary to talk about those referents. This is the case of 33 CTRPs in the corpus.

- (7) *(H) y luego se dedicó a ser,*
.. promotor de <P espectáculos P> ↵
Construyó .. do=s discotecas ↵
 and then he became,
 .. a show agent ↵

He built.. two discoteques ♪

- (8) *Yo sé=,*
pero= estos cabrones siguen= sacando mamadas y <TRM
mamadas TRM> ♪
(H) *Pero yo --*
hice una declaración <% a= %>--
fui a la televisión ♪
I know,
but these idiots keep talking <TRM bullshit and bullshit TRM> ♪
(H) But I --
made a declaration <%at%> --
I went to the T.V. station ♪

4.3. Appraisal

In 22 cases, the CTRPs inside the same turn occur in a context of an evaluative commentary of the speaker. This evaluation can be highly expressive, and it is done as a conclusion or summary before the turn changes.

- (9) *K: [[se le]] notificó varias veces ♪*
chingue a su madre ♪
K: She was notified several times ♪
Fuck her ♪
(10) *es el éxito ♪*
Así se hacen las cosas ♪
That's success ♪
That's the way things must be done ♪

4.4. Clarifications

In this section we include the cases where the speaker adds more specific (but not necessarily unknown or new) information. (18 cases in the corpus).

- (11) *K: Aquí ♪*
que la iban a mandar a México pero la pasaron aquí ♪
Here ♪

they said that they were transmitting it in Mexico City but
they transmitted it here ♪

- (12) *G: Claro claro. ♪*
No nos tiembla,
... Ni nos temblará ♪
of course of course. ♪
We're not afraid,
and we won't be ♪

4.5 Pre-sequences

A pre-sequence is an announcement that refers to something that is going to be said (cfr. Schegloff, 2007). The pre-sequence anticipates that the speaker is going to say something else. There are 16 occurrences of CTRPs after a pre-sequence.

- (13) *K: ... A ver ♪*
% % orita le marco yo ♪
Let's see ♪
I'll call you in a second ♪
(14) *sabe qué? ♪*
.. (Hx) Cuándo la quiere? ♪
You know what?
When do you want it?

4.6. Turn-change requests

There are 15 occurrences where the speaker manifests on-record his intention to close his turn, but has to try again since the hearer does not proceed with the turn change.

- (15) *le dije,*
(H) <Q pos,
(H) .. Al señor gobernador no le tembló la mano Q> ♪
... Hm? ♪
G: *Clar-.*
I told him,

(H) <Q well,
 (H) ... Mr. Governor doesn't have a shaking hand Q> ♪
 ... Hm? ♪

G: of cours-

(16) G: .. Órale ♪
 ... Sale ♪
 ...ok ♪
 ...all right ♪

4.7. Quotations

In 5 cases, the speaker is quoting another person. He introduces a CTRP and continues quoting.

(17) C: Pues dijeron,
 <Q bueno ♪
 pues si ellos no hicieron nada,
 pues mucho menos lo va a hacer el señor N. Q> ♪
 They say,
 <Q well. ♪
 if they didn't do anything,
 then Mr. N. will hardly do something Q>. ♪

(18) y le dijo el ministerio público <Q no ♪
 si no notificamos,
 nunca va a parar,
 y nunca va a caer a la cárcel Q> ♪
 and the officer said <Q no. ♪
 if we don't notify,
 it will never stop,
 and she never will be put in jail Q> ♪

5 Conclusions

- In the data analyzed, CTRPs are mostly accompanied by a turn change, as Ford and Thompson (1996) established as hypothesis.
- Politeness is a significant factor in CTRPs production during the same turn.
- Cognitive limitations in the processing of information flow could motivate the appearance of CTRPs, since, as Chafe (1994)

demonstrates, there is a clear limit to the amount of information that IUs can handle.

- Appraisal is another conversational activity which is important for CTRPs occurrence inside the same turn. They can be seen as a strategy directed towards the turn-change, since in our corpus they function as a summary that ends the turn of the speaker.
- In the corpus examined in this paper there are more strategies related to turn transition that those considered in the Ford, Fox and Thompson paper. Those additional strategies are appraisal, politeness and asking on record for the turn change.
- Moreover, we found that there are other strategies for continuing the turn that are not oriented towards the turn change (as Ford, Fox & Thompson's extensions are) but towards discourse elaboration: these are pre-sequences, quotations and introduction of new information.
- Proposed continuum (from discourse elaboration to interactional work).

**Pre-sequences → New information → Quotations → Appraisal
 → Clarifications → Politeness → Turn change requests**

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