

DEALING WITH TURN-TAKING TROUBLES: MANAGING TURN-TAKING, REPAIR AND SEQUENCE ORGANIZATION IN CHINESE CONVERSATION

(LECTURE)

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Turn-taking and repair organization are among the fundamental infrastructures underlying human social interaction (Levinson 2014). One of the grossly apparent facts about conversation as listed in Sacks et al's (1974) seminal paper on the organization of turn-taking is the repair mechanisms that deals with turn-taking troubles. Repair mechanism is seen at work when two parties find themselves talking at the same time and one of them gives up on bringing his/her in-progress turn constructional unit (TCU) to completion (Schegloff 2000) thus resolve the trouble of 'more-than-one-at-a time' (C.f. other kinds of trouble-source dealt with by repair as documented in Schegloff et al 1977; Drew 1997; Lerner & Kitzinger 2012; Hayashi, Raymond & Sidnell 2013 among others). However, the very practice for repairing turn-taking troubles "is itself otherwise violative in turn-taking terms, namely stopping a turn before its possible completion point" (Sacks et al 1974: 724). In this paper, we examine how participants manage repairing troubles of turn-taking and turn completion in spontaneous Cantonese and Mandarin conversation. We observed that speakers who have given up on an in-progress TCU may leave it as incomplete as shown in example (1). Or, they may find their way back to the incomplete turn, picking it up from where it was apparently withdrawn and bring it to completion as shown in example (2). We then examine the sequential contexts where the 'giving-up' and 'picking-up' cases are situated and explore the interactional contingencies that are relevant to whether a speaker goes back to his/her earlier withdrawn turn and how he/she does it. While in many cases turn-taking troubles are repaired at the expense of turn completion, in other cases an incomplete turn would be picked up and brought to completion when the action being implemented is at some sort of stake, e.g. a dramatic point in the telling would be lost or a self-defense in the face of negative assessment would be weakened if the turn is left incomplete. Speakers reactivate their withdrawn turn by repeating the part of TCU up to its withdrawal. However, when facing a 'winning' turn with a sequence-initiating action (Schegloff 2007), they often aligning to that action first before attending to their own turn which has been left incomplete. We will conclude the paper with a discussion on how participants manage interactional organizations through which the goals of the interaction is achieved.

(1) Cantonese-EF

01 Eve: 暇 完嘍完 屍, [婦 嘍 燻 悔 夠 慘.

jigaa jiu ting . jat . ting sin, [daanhai jat jat zau m gau w o.

now just stop first but one day then not enough PRT

'Now I need a break, but one day doesn't seem enough.'

02 Fra: -> [殿 :

[ngo soeng:

'I want:'

03 Fra: => 從 .

haa?

'Huh?'

(2) Cantonese-AB

01 Ada: -> 咁 多燻 . 嶽 : heh . 咁 [heh . . 咗 -

ngodei gamjat daaifung _ dou ne: heh, ngodei [fong ne heh, hoi_zo -

we today strong.wind_COMP PRT we room PRT open_ASP

'we have such a strong wind today: heh, our room, heh opened-'

02 Ben: [. . 必 f .

lin kwan dou ceoi hei .

even skirt all blow up

'your skirt ballooned.'

03 Ben: hehehe [hehehe

04 Ada: => [悔婦 悴・・咗・・咗 禪・・
mhai aa, **hoi_zo- hoi_zo** go coeng ne, ganzyu ne,
no PRT **open_ASP open_ASP** CL window PRT then PRT
'no, the window in our room was open, then, ...'

05 Ada: 禪諫・必咗 咁.
go coenglim dou ceoi _ zo ceotgaai aa .
CL curtain all blow_ASP go.out PRT
'... the curtain was blown out of the window.'