

Turn keeping and turn over signals in a communicative event of accusation and indictment

1. Introduction

The extract from Jerry Springer's TV show, "Cold-Hearted Cheaters," was chosen for recording, transcribing, and analysis of turn-taking in a speech event of indictment and accusation. Emotional speech is characterized by a low degree of speaker monitoring. This can resolve the "observer's paradox" (Labov, 1972, pp. 209-210) which can appear during data selection by means of recording. Using the transcription method developed by the conversation analyst Gail Jefferson, (Transcription and Transcription Conventions, 2003), we will be able to reflect the prosodic features of speech and the conversation management signals of interaction.

2. The Transcribed Script of the Conversation

1. Jerry: Welll (.)I 'll let you talk to your brother . (0.7) Here's your brother (.) Josh
2. Josh: (to the audience) ye (0.3) ye (0.2) <SHHHUT UP>(0.3) SHUT the hell UP (0.2)
You don't even know me (.) SHHHUT (.) UP.
3. The audience: YOU(.) SUCK (.) [YOU(.) SUCK (.) YOU(.) SUCK (.)]
4. Josh: [SHHUT UP (.) SHUT UP(.)]
5. Jerry: Okay (0.4) Now when we established tha::t (0.1) yeh(0.3) This is your brother(0.1)
What do you want to say to him (0.1)
6. Josh: I HHATE you Matt (0.3) You are the most WORTHLESS(.)SORRY >excuse for a
brother I have< (.) EVER(.) SEEN(.) You have done NNOTHING but STABBED(.) me in

the BACK(.)> for the last six month (.)and d'ye know WHA:T< (0.2) <I(.) LLLOVE(.)
MMISTY (0.2)>and YOU are just (.) TR*RASH(0.1)

7. Matt: YOU(.) >don't get to call me a brother< ENY(.) ... MO:RE(0.1) The ...you 've
 done (0.2) NNO(.) >There is no me and you< (0.1) and she does (.)NNOT(.) LLOVE (.)
YOU(.)

8. Josh: >What makes you think I wanna call< <YOU (.) a brother(.)> You are the worthless
SSUCK...(.) MA:TT(.) >After everything I DID to you(.) After I took care of you (.) After I
 did<< E:VRYTHING> (0.1) What do I get(.) A stab in a back(.)You are running around and
 telling my friends that I'm a (.)[CR*RACK head]

9. Matt: [YOU(.) YOU(.)] ...

10. Josh: (starts fighting)

3. The Ethnography of the Conversation

For the appropriate analysis of speech, Hymes (1974) takes into account an ethnography of the communicative event, particularly, all the extralinguistic factors influencing the speakers' choice of verbal and non-verbal means of interaction: setting and scene, the participants' social characteristics and psychological state, their strategies, act sequence, key, choice of channels, norms of interaction and interpretation, and genre.

The Psychological Determiners of the Interaction

In this speech event, the high degree of emotional tenseness is predetermined by the relationships between the participants of the interaction. In this situation, when the elder brother stole his younger brother's wife. The reason why his wife initiated their sexual relationships with the elder brother was that her husband did not prove his love and was not

attentive enough to her after she had offered him a job, a house, money, etc. The reason why the elder brother is being aggressive is that his younger brother is a loser, being unable to find his place in life, unable to keep any job, or to appreciate everything that has been done for him by his relatives.

The Social and Other Determiners of the Interaction

This communicative event takes place during the TV show setting. The atmosphere and the content of this show and the goals of the participants' encourage them not to observe the norms of interaction and interpretation.

The participants are people of a poor educational background and a low social status. They pursue different communicative strategies in this interaction. Josh came here to tell the brother that he did not deserve his wife. Instead of feeling remorse and asking for apologies, he accuses him of what has happened. His brother Matt came to the show hoping that his brother and his wife would change their minds and quit dating, or at least apologize for what they have done to him. However, when he realized that it would not happen, he took the strategy of indictment of his brother. The tone of speech is aggressive. They employ spoken English with elements of slang in their interaction.

4. Turn Managing Analysis

Turn managing includes turn-keeping signals and turn-over signals. We will examine the means of communication the speakers are employing to keep their turns and the signals they provide to "give up their turns to others" (Burns & Joyce, 1997, p. 30). We will also define the interruptions and overlaps that occur, and at what points of informational structure they occur.

In face-to-face communication with the least degree of emotional background, the most common means of turn-keeping is a low rising or falling and rising tone used in non-final and sometimes in final thought groups (tone groups) of sentences, which signals non-completeness of a turn. Slowing of tempo, vowel elongation, falling intonation in the final tone group of an utterance followed by a pause, a change in gaze direction, keeping a hand raised during the turn and its lowering, are the signals of turn-over, which is also called a transition-relevant place. In unemotional interaction, turns are usually nicely timed. If overlaps happen, they show alignment between the communication partners. An overlap is placed so as not to hinder the listener's perceiving and comprehending relevant (new) information. In other words, a listener's overlapping speech occurs at the segments of a speaker's speech which represents shared information. Therefore, there are more cases of "cooperative overlapping" (Wardraugh, 2002, p. 298) in unemotional speech.

Let us analyze how the interlocutors manage their turns in emotional speech, particularly, in the communicative event of indictment and accusation. In order to keep the floor in expressing thoughts, both of the brothers do not employ a traditional means of turn — low rising or falling rising intonation in non-final and final tone groups. It is used by Jerry in the non-final thought group of his turn (5), i.e. by an emotionally unaffected participant. Josh and Matt are employing a mid or high falling tone in either non-final or final thought groups within a turn and a low falling tone at the end of the turns. Therefore, the pitch range in this case has the function of a turn-keeper.

Another means of turn-keeping that Josh and Matt employ is a variation in tempo. While expressing given, shared information, they speed up, and while presenting the new and most important information, they slow down. The accelerating of speech, as a rule, precedes its

slowing down. The recurrence of fast and slow segments of speech makes the listener wait until the end of the sentence where the most important information for him/her will be introduced. Lack of long pauses between the sentences of a turn (utterance) is another signal to wait and not take the floor.

As a major turn-over signal, the speakers use a categorical low falling tone on the final word of a turn preceded by a short pause and followed by a comparatively longer pause (6, 7, 8). For both of the speakers, the elongation of the vowels and the initial consonants of the prominent syllables in the words presenting the new information are characteristic. Josh's turn-over signals are distinguished by changes in the voice quality by adding some squeaky sound effect and exaggerated aspiration to the stop consonants (6, 8). He also accompanies the above pronunciation of the turn transition with pinpointing hand gesture and with a change in proxemics - making one step forward to get closer to Matt. These means make him sound and look more aggressive than his brother.

Overlaps do not occur at the beginning of the conversation. This can be accounted for by the desire of the interlocutors not to hinder expressing the arguments. The overlaps in Matt/Josh interaction happen at the moments of the emotional climax (8, 9). In this particular case, the overlap occurs at the moment of presenting new information at the end of the turn. In their following conversation they do not care about the appropriate placement of overlaps. Their overlaps are not cooperative.

5. Conclusions

- The turn managing in an emotional communicative event differs from that in emotionally neutral speech.

- In the communicative event of accusation and indictment, the turn-keeping signals are mid and high falling tones in non-final and final thought groups pitch range, variation in tempo, and lack of long pauses between the sentences of the turns.
- The turn-over signals are a low falling tone used in the final thought group of the turn, micro pause before the final prominent word, and a longer pause after it at the end of a turn, squeaky sound effect and exaggerated aspiration of the stop consonants of the prominent syllables, a pinpointing hand gesture, and taking one step closer to a partner at the beginning of each new turn.
- The overlaps in the competition for the floor are not cooperative and happen at relevant points in the communication of information segments.

References

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