

TALK SHOW INTERVIEWS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INTERACTIONAL ORGANISATION

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Abstract: A talk show is considered as one daily form of social interaction where conversation occurs. As the fundamental element, turn-taking automatically occurs where the 'floor' of conversation continuously moves from one participant to other participants. The participants of the conversation will manage their roles as the listener and speaker, respectively, in order to make the conversation successful. The following study focuses on revealing the order of turn-taking that occurs in a talk show. Specifically, the study employs two different types of talk show interviews, which are *The View* as the multi-interviewer interview and *The Tonight Show* as the multi-interviewee interview. The study used the framework proposed by Sack et al. (1974) to examine how the order in two types of interviews differs from each other. Accordingly, the analysis shows that the order of turn-taking in both types of the interview remains the same in the form of question-answer pair. However, the main difference lays out in the pattern of turn-taking. Although the form is a question-answer, the process when the 'floor' goes back to the interviewer is more varied in the multi-interviewee interviews. In this case, the number of interviewers and interviewees is seen as the reason behind the pattern of turn-taking order

Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Turn-taking, Talk Show, Interview

INTRODUCTION

Conversation Analysis (CA) in the field of investigation concerned with the norms, practices, and competencies underlying the organization of social interaction. It focuses its investigation on all forms of the spoken interaction, including not only everyday conversations between friends and acquaintances but also interactions in task-focused social contexts such as medicine, the mass media, education and socio-legal context (Heritage, 2001). CA seeks to discover the way(s) participants in an intelligible conversation construct systematic strategy and solution to organisational problems of talk. Thus, CA is a highly empirical and data-driven approach (Renkema, 2018). CA will process the empirical data by transcribing the recorded conversations with the help of set systematic symbols and markers. It also views participants' utterances as the main source from which analysis must develop. Participants of the conversation will employ the context to a social situation to which their knowledge of conversation organisation will influence their behaviour during the conversation, such as deciding who will be the next speaker. As a consequence, this specific behaviour should display patterns of conduct that could lead to a certain formulation of behaviour's principles.

In another study, Heritage (1984) has also summarized the basic perspective of CA in three fundamental assumptions: (1) interaction is structurally organised; (2) contributions to interaction are contextually oriented; and (3) these first two properties need to be identified in precise analysis so that no order of detail can be dismissed, a priori, as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant (Heritage, 1984:241). The first assumption is the main idea that will be taken into account in this study that mentions interaction as a phenomenon of systematic organisation. Thus, it implies the idea of a turn-taking strategy as the basic knowledge during a conversation.

Conversation scholars base the accomplishment of speech exchange on a series of principles known as the turn-taking system. This system refers to the condition when the conversation flow moves from one speaker to the next. Consequently, it comprises the most relevant aspects of the talk organisation between parties. According to Martinez (2000), a conversation is a phenomenon whose features vary according to the circumstances of the participants, and as such, it also has a turn-taking system in its own right, which varies for each speech encounter, what a speaker says every time s/he takes control of the 'floor' until another speaker talk constitutes a turn.

In conversation, there is no fixed limit to the length of a turn (Renkema, 2018). Accordingly, it implies the idea that there is also variability concerning the order of turns in a conversation and the number of turns a participant can take or the possible content of a turn.

According to the aforementioned issue, the following study tries to reveal the interactional organisation specifically on the order of the turn-taking in a talk show. Interest in televised interaction has so far centred on news interviews, a genre in which an important number of studies have proliferated. By contrast, a little attention has been paid to the examination of talk show interviews. In a talk show, where host and guest have a conversation on a certain topic, the phenomena of turn-taking might seem different yet interesting to be examined concerning the participants of the conversation and the concept of the event. Yet, in a talk show, there is a condition where it comes to a multi-interviewer and multi-interviewee interview.

So, this study focuses on the conversation used by the host and the guest in a talk show, which simultaneously created in interaction and the turn-taking applied in the conversation. Therefore, the aim of the study is to account for the turn-taking organisation that embody the two types of interview, multi-interviewer and multi-interviewee interview, with the purpose of establishing generic differences.

METHOD

Data Sources

The data of this study consists of 4 videos published by *The View* and *The Tonight Show* YouTube channels. Both of the channels provide talk show programs which in detail, *The View* is a multi-interviewer interview while *The Tonight Show* is a multi-interviewee interview. So, two videos were selected, each from *The View* and *The Tonight Show*. The selection of the videos was made on a random basis, the only ruling criterion being their representativeness of one of the talk show types under investigation, which are multi-interviewer and multi-interviewee interviews. In addition, the selected videos are talk shows that were conducted through online video conference.

The sample of videos together lasts a total of 27 minutes 32 seconds. The distribution of time per types of the interview is as follows:

- The multi-interviewer interview: 12 minutes 8 seconds
- The multi-interviewee interview: 15 minutes 24 seconds

Data Analysis

In order to determine how the turn-taking order in two types of interviews differ from each other, the analysis will use the framework of turn-taking proposed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). This analysis consists of two major processes of determining the turn-taking strategy in two different types of talk shows. Firstly, the transcription process will take into account to make the data permanently visible for analysis and comparison in the form of written text. Thus, the study will adopt dramaturgical notation as the most widely used transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson (1978) (see Appendix 1). The transcription of the entire videos is listed in the appendix. Secondly, the analysis will continue examining the process of turn-taking that occurs in the talk shows. Accordingly, the data will be analyzed to answer the proposed research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In a talk show, turn-taking is the whole thing during the conversation and considered as the fundamental aspect of conversation analysis. The turn-taking happens as the result of the collaboration between the IR and IE to respect each other's roles in order to make the conversation successful.

In this study, the following table shows the main highlights that differentiate between the multi-interviewer and multi-interviewee interview.

	Multi-interviewer interview	Multi-interviewee interview
The role of the IR	There is an IR who plays a role as the controller and thereby allocate the next IR after each single answer	The IR adopts a superior status during the conversation

Interruption	Less interruption occurs	More interruption occurs
Turn order	A-B-A-B	A-B-A-B and A-B-B-B-...-A

Table 1. The Difference between Multi-Interviewer and Multi-Interviewee Interview

The Generic Differences between Multi-interviewer and Multi-interviewee Interview

In an interview of talk show, the IRs and IEs systematically restrict themselves to producing turns that are at least minimally recognizable as questions and answers, respectively. Although quite often, the response such as countering and resisting the IRs statements also happens in the midst of the conversation. According to the table of results above, the three differences have been highlighted as the basis of the discussion in the present study.

The roles of the IR and IE have been decided as the pre-allocated set prior to the interview. This joint effort is manifested in the orientation to the roles of IR and IE, which they adopt in order to understand the speech encounter in an interview. Thus, it is the duty of the IR to deliver a question first and that of the IE to confine themselves in answering the question.

In the multi-interviewer interview, the design of the turn-taking might be a little bit complex considering the number of participants that will ask a question to only one guest. It has been mentioned previously that the interviewer has full control over selecting the next speaker; however, in this type of interview, as it involves more than one IR and a single IE, the problem occurs in deciding who will be the interviewer that can speak. Thus, based on the analysis of the video, it shows that there is one IR who plays the role of the highest controller of the conversation and hence allocates the next IR after every single answer. The case can be seen through the following extract of dialogues,

- MIR: **[Okay: Sunny]**
- IR2: [Ricky] you've been- you've been with your lovely partner ehh (.) Jane for almost 40 years now
- IE: Now she's always at home
- IR3: Yeah **Ricky, first of all, let me tell you: this is Joy**
- IE: Well yeah: ((laughs)) that's one thing.....
- IR4: **Mr. Gervais this is Meghan**, ehm,

Through that part of dialogues, there are certain markers indicated to allocate the next interviewer. As the controller, this one IR only opens the interview, selects the next interviewer, and closes the interview.

Another pattern can also be highlighted in analyzing the role of IR in a multi-interviewer interview. There is a tendency that each interviewer has been assigned to only ask a certain type of question to the interviewee. Thus, it results in a variety of topics talked in an interview because after one question is answered, another interviewer will ask another question with different topics to the guest. This condition also implies that the IRs may either pre-arrange the order in which they are to make questions under the control of one IR as the manager of turn shift. The following dialogues show how the shift of topics is common in a multi-interviewer interview,

- MIR: So I thought **you are also technologically challenged?**

- IE: Oh: very much, so yeah:
- IR2: But: let me go to **this topic** because we know from your past experiences and- and my own interactions with **you that you're not a fan of Trump**
- IE: oh well joy:
- IR3: what:- **in what way: is it: the most (.) complex (.) character: you've played** because you played so many:
- IE: This: eh:: yes it's sort of Raymond Chandler meets Rod Serling.....

Meanwhile, in the multi-interviewee interview, the IR is assigned as the main and only one person who controls the conversation during the interview. It is only the IR who can open and close the encounter, make questions, manage the topic shift, and thus allocate next turns. The IEs have an inferior status due to the role of being 'an interviewee' assigned to them. Thus, in most situations, the IR will select the next speaker by addressing the question to a specific IE. The following dialogues exemplify the case,

- IR: **Joe**: where are you:- where are you calling from:?. Where are all of you: guys right now?
- IE3: I: am: in: (.) Los Angeles right now
- IR: **Kevin** where are you: at?
- IE1: I am: in New: Jersey I'm:: home
- IR: **And: Nick** (.) where- where are you?
- IE2: Eh: I am: in: Los Angeles as well ehm::=
- IR: Last time I think: eh:: **Nick** you were on the show: we were talking about maybe: you guys were working on a new album
- IE2: Well actually we- we had the album nearly finished eh:

In a conversation, although the participants orient themselves to the rule that one party talks at a time, very often, especially in a talk show, that two or more participants will talk at the same time. However, in a multi-interviewer interview, less interruption occurs. This condition is most likely caused by the presence of only one IE. In this case, the IRs would avoid interference to the IE's answers and do not even produce continuers because the turn-taking system in an interview provides the IE with the right to produce an indefinite number of turn units (Martinez, 2000). In brief, the IR lets the IE talk extendedly. Thus, it results where the IE could talk without any specific interruption from the IRs although there might also be some cases where IRs urge IEs to be brief due to lack of time.

On the other hand, the occurrence of interruption is much higher in the multi-interviewee interview. There is a tendency that another interviewee will jump into the conversation. The first reason is that the desire of the other interviewee to give a response to the previous talk. The results show that the participant in The Tonight Show has quite a strong desire to back up, add information, or just to express his/her opinion towards the current speaker's answer. Below is an example of the case.

- IE3: It's pretty **[much:]**
- IE2: **[No,]** "Baby Shark" is a different situation (.)

IE2: ["Baby Shark" workout]

IE1: [Are we all doing this workout] with you right now?

The other generic differences between multi-interviewer and multi-interviewee interviews lay on the pattern of turn-taking order. In the multi-interviewer interview – involving more than one IRs – the order of the turn-taking is simply solved since there is only one answerer/IE. Turn order in this situation is equated to the pattern, A-B-A-B, to which multi IRs will ask a single question to one IE. The following dialogue shows the pattern of the turn order.

IR2: [Ricky] you've been- you've been with your lovely partner ehh (.) Ja:ne for almost 40 years now

IE: [Yeah]

IR2: [and I] hear you've been annoying her apparently: a little more than usual: so:: what is it exactly that you're doing?

IE: Now she's always at home:

IR3: Yeah Ricky, first of all, let me tell you: this is Joy I love your show it's just hysterical I was watching it yesterday laughing (.)

IE: Well yeah: ((laughs)) that's one thing,

However, in the multi-interviewee interview – involving more than one guest – the order of turn-taking is quite various. As it has been mentioned that interruption previously is common in this type of interview. Thus it results in the order of turn-taking. Two situations may occur in a multi-interviewee interview. Either the IR will address the question to one IE and thus select the next speaker, or the IR issues an undirected question which any IE may answer by self-selection. In the case of the undirected question, it has the probability to display variations owing to the number of potential IEs. In this context, a sequence may be well be constituted by a single question followed by several answers, each corresponding to a single IE. The process is produced alternatively, each IE self-selecting answer completion of an answer by another IE, and so on until all potential IEs have issued an answer. Once the last IE has finished his/her turn, the 'floor' of conversation goes back to the IR. Accordingly, another pattern of turn-taking order, like A-B-B-B-...-A might well also be displayed in this interview. The following dialogues might well represent the case.

IR: WOW (.) Is this the longest you: guys have gone ehm: without seeing each other?

IE2: [Oh: man]

IE1: [It's the longest]

IE2: Probably:=

IE1: =I've been thinking about this

IE2: Yeah: in like 20 years (.) There was a few:: (0.2) summers during college where we: spent like: you know li:ke (.) six weeks apart (.)

IR: Yeah yeah exactly (.) eh: how is everything with: the: (.) family and the kids?
Your kids are older than mine (.) but they're homeschooling okay?

Aside from the differences discussed above, a number of similarities can also be spotted during the interview in a talk show. A high number of IR turns do not only consist of a questioning component. Thus, in a talk show, the IR may have multi-turns which generally consists of prefatory statement (Heritage & Greatbatch: 1991). This kind of statement functions as a set of rules to create the background context that helps to establish the relevance of the subsequent questions and provides the necessary references.

The Turn-Taking System in Talk Shows

Regardless of the number of participants in a conversation, turn order remains strict, especially in a talk show. The process of an interview should always in the form of a question-answer pair. In this case, the IR speaks first and then the IE, and so on successfully. Both parties, the IR and IE, should refrain from initiating actions other than questioning and answering, respectively. In short, turn types are pre-allocated to the participants of the conversation in accordance with their institutional identities of IR and IE.

Within the framework of turn-taking rules proposed by Sack et.al and applied to the case of multi-interviewer and multi-interviewee interviews, the process of turn-taking remains the same in the form of question-answer pair. Among the three rules proposed in the framework, the first rules, where the current speaker selects the next speaker, and the second rules, where self-selection occurs, are the conditions that most commonly happen in both types of interviews. However, a slight difference can be indicated in the pattern of turn-order in both types of interviews.

The turn-taking system for talk shows operates through the collaboration roles between the IR and IE. This condition applies both in any type of interview. The main point that differs between multi-interviewer and multi-interviewee interview is that the pattern of turn-order in multi-interviewee will be more varied rather than in a multi-interviewer interview. This is none other caused by the number of interviewers.

In the multi-interviewer interview, every role of the interviewers has been pre-arranged beforehand, through which one interviewer will ask a question in a planned sequence under the direction of the main interviewer. Hence, the pattern of the turn-taking will seem more regular, namely A-B-A-B, as the interviewers and interviewee will take the turn to speak.

However, in a multi-interviewee interview, the probability of pattern is more varied. The case of interruption, which is a spontaneous condition and unplanned, is more likely to happen in this type of interview. There is a tendency that another interviewee will give a response to the current speaker's answer, especially if the interviewer asks an undirected question. This condition also leads to a condition where self-selection is common during the interview. In short, one question might have two or more answers. Thus it leads to a more diverse pattern of turn order, namely A-B-B-B-...-A.

CONCLUSIONS

Turn-taking is the fundamental aspect of a conversation and, thus, the following study pays more attention to the turn-taking order in two different types of talk shows. The study demonstrates that both *The View* and *The Tonight Show* employ the same turn order within the concept of question-answer as how the talk show should be. But, the turn-taking in these two talk shows adopts different patterns. While *The View*, as a multi-interviewer interview, has a common pattern of question-answer, *The Tonight Show* appears differently. The variety of patterns in *The Tonight Show* is more diverse as it has more than one interviewee to which a single question might have multiple answers. Hence, it leads to a quite long process before the 'floor' of conversation goes back to the interviewer.

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