Section 2. Linguistics

AN EXPLORATION OF TURN-TAKING STRATEGIES AND THE REFLECTION OF POLITENESS PRINCIPLE IN INTERVIEW PROGRAMS — TAKING TAYLOR SWIFT'S GUEST ON LATE NIGHT WITH SETH MEYERS AS AN EXAMPLE

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Abstract

This paper presents an exploration of turn-taking strategies and their reflection of the politeness principle in interview programs. Conversations, while appearing effortless, require coordination of multiple cognitive processes, including turn-taking. Turn-taking, an integral part of any multi-party conversation, can be impolite when inappropriate. Drawing from previous research on turn-taking and the prisoner's dilemma, this study examines the strategies employed by guests and hosts in reality talk shows, particularly focusing on how these strategies reflect the Politeness Principle. This research analyzes the specific turn-taking strategies and their politeness implications. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of turn-taking in interview settings and their significance in maintaining politeness and effective communication. This study offers insights for future research on conversational strategies and their role in interpersonal communication.

Keywords: *turn-taking strategy, politeness principle, communication*

1. Introduction

Conversations with others are one of our everyday activities and they appear effortless. However, multiple cognitive processes have to be coordinated during conversation, such as understanding what the other person wants to say and planning and producing your own turn (Bögels, 2020). Sibly and Tisdell (2018) made an interesting analogy, they compare turn-taking to a repeated modified prisoners' dilemma (MPD): a MPD game differs from the standard prisoners' dilemma (SPD) game in that it is efficient for one player to "compete" and the other player to 'cooperate'. Given the importance of prisoner dilemma games in explaining economic behaviour, it is similarly important to understand how people actually play repeated

MPD games and, specifically, whether and how turn taking occurs in the finitely repeated version of this game.

Turn-taking has an extremely important place in any conversation with two and more participants and inappropriate turn-taking can be impolite. Therefore, this paper will examine the strategies used by the guests and hosts of reality talk shows when they engage in turn-taking, and how these strategies reflect the Politeness Principle.

2. Literature Review

Entering the search term "turn-taking" on CNKI, a total of 23 core journals were searched. The earliest one was published in 2003, and the last one was published in 2018. Eight of these articles use movies or literary works as the object of study, exploring the characterization or plot development of the characters in them from the perspective of turn-taking (Zhang and Wei, 2016; Zhao, 2016; Qiu, 2016; Zhou, 2011; Li and Yu, 2011; Sang, 2010; Huang, 2010; Yi and Wang, 2010). Shen (2012) innovatively took the famous interview program "Yang Lan Interview" as an example to analyze the different turn-taking strategies adopted by the hosts in the Chinese and English environments, and reveal the cultural differences in the use of turn-taking strategies in English and Chinese. Using natural spoken corpus as the object of investigation, He (2010) used discourse analysis theory to discuss international students' spoken Chinese turn-taking ability and its problems, and summarized the teaching countermeasures to improve international students' spoken Chinese turn-taking ability.

Comparatively speaking, foreign research on turn taking started earlier and developed better. Since Sacks proposed the concept of turn-taking in 1974, foreign scholars have carried out in-depth research on turn-taking. Lourenço et al. (2023) conducted an diachronic study and analyzed the vocalizations of 44 mother-child free-play interactions, ranging from three to five years of age. They found that the relevance of using complementary metrics (FTO, gap, overlap) to understand the developmental trajectories of turn-taking, and that examining all temporally contingent vocalizations can provide a valid and more inclusive measure of turn-transition duration in childhood. Brusco and Gravano (2022) experiment with two supervised learning approaches, using recurrent neural networks and random forests, on a corpus of Argentine Spanish task-oriented dialogues annotated with 12 turn-taking categories following standard guidelines. Seuren et al. (2021) conducted secondary analysis of 25 video consultations recorded for heart failure, (antenatal) diabetes, and cancer services in the UK. They found that in our data latency unnoticed until it becomes problematic: participants act as if they share the same reality.

Overall, domestic research on conversation turn-taking mostly uses qualitative analysis methods and lacks data support, while foreign research has combined computer tools to study the interval between conversation turn-taking.

3. Research Design
3.1 Research Questions
This paper aims to address the following three research questions:

1: Did the host and guest on the show use turn claiming strategy, and if so, which ones specifically?

2: Did the host and guest on the show use turn holding strategy, and if so, which ones specifically?

3: Did the host and guest on the show use turn yielding strategy, and if so, which ones specifically?

4: Try to explore how the Politeness Principle is reflected in the turn-taking process?

3.2 Research Significance
First of all, through the study of this paper, we can deeply realize the profound meaning of the turn-taking. We can further investigate the strategies used by the host and the interviewee in the interview program to promote the turn-taking.

Secondly, exploring other people's turn-taking strategies can also give us some inspiration, such as how to properly use these strategies in later life to help us complete conversations more politely.

Finally, this thesis could expand researches on turn-taking in the area of interviews and deepen the analysis of speaking skills in interview programs from the perspective of psycholinguistics.

3.3 Research Object

In this study, the video of Taylor Swift's participation in the Late Night with Seth Meyers on November 11, 2021 was chosen as the corpus of the study.

Late Night with Seth Meyers is currently the 24th most popular show on NBC and 240th overall on TV, watched by a total number of 517,000 people (0.17% rating, down from last week) per episode, as of the average weekly audience measurement for the period ending July 2, 2023.

Taylor Swift is a powerful singer with creative talent and an idol singer with beautiful appearance. Her music style inherits the traditional American country music, but adds various fashion elements such as R&B, dance music and rock in the treatment of details.

Therefore, the corpus selected for this study is highly representative and well-known, and can be used to study how famous artists use hedges when they participate in interview programs.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

After identifying the corpus for the study, this study first get the subtitled text of the interview using TamperMonkey software. The corpus was then cleaned and organized. An host corpus(corpus 1) and an interviewee corpus(corpus 2) were obtained. The host spoke a total of 43 times in corpus 1 and the interviewee spoke a total of 44 times in corpus 2.

The host and interviewee conversations were then manually labeled to identify the turn-taking strategy used in their conversation.

4. Data Description and Discussion

4.1 Data Description

Table 1 describes the use of the turn-taking strategy in the host's and interviewee's words. The host used the turn claiming strategy most frequently for 21 times, turn holding strategy for 10 times and turn yielding strategy for 10 times. The interviewee used the turn holding strategy most frequently for 28 times, turn claiming strategy for 7 times and turn holding strategy for 5 times.

Table 1. *Turn-taking strategies used by the host and interviewee*

Strategy	Category	Host	Interviewee
Turn claiming	interruption	4	2
	Insertion	17	5
Turn holding	hesitation filler	2	9
	discourse marker	8	19
Turn yielding	appoint next speaker	7	2
	choose by themselves	2	3

4.2 Turn Claiming Strategy

From Table 1, we can see that the hosts use the turn claiming strategy much more frequently than the interviewee, this is because the hosts play the role of controlling the direction of the conversation and controlling the duration in the program, so they need to interrupt the speaker at the right time.

The common turn-claiming strategies are interruption and insertion for turn-claiming. Interruption refers to the act by a speaker who knows that the current speaker has not finished his talking yet still interrupt to get a floor to speak. For example:

Example 1:

• Host: Our first guest tonight is an 11-time Grammy-winning musician and one of the biggest stars in the world. Her album, "Red (Taylor's Version)" is out tomorrow. She's also returning to "SNL" this week as musical guest along with host Jonathan Majors. Please welcome back to the show, the one, the only... Taylor Swift, everybody. Welcome back to the show.

• Interviewee: Thanks for having me back.

• Host: We love having you in the building, especially when it means we get to see you on "SNL" this coming Saturday. Your fifth time as a musical guest.

• Interviewee: Yes. What a dream. – And — a one-time host. An incredible host back in the day.

- Host: Thank you! – And I'm wondering. You...
- Interviewee: Back when I was teen.
- Host: That's crazy how young you were.
- Interviewee: Yeah, I was — Yeah.

Example 1 is an excerpt from the opening segment of this interview, in which the host makes an introductory statement and introduces the guest of honor, Taylor Swift. As you can see from the underlined part, the host clearly did not finish his sentence because he only said the subject of one sentence, "you", but what Taylor said at this point was a continuer to what she said in the previous sentence, "An incredible host back in the day". The host did not stick to his previous statement, but followed Taylor's words.

Insertion refers to the talk occurring when the current speaker has conveyed his viewpoint and is about to end his speech. The second speaker inserts to continue, supply or express his agreement to the first speaker's point of view. Different from interruption, insertion is viewed as the way to claim the turn effectively as well as politely. In particular, the host can take the floor to speak by insertion to add more detailed information or repair what others have said. For example:

Example 2:
- Host: That is really cool. I want to ask — I mean, I have emotional connections to songs I listen to for the first time ten years ago. I can only imagine what it's like for you, having written them. Like, is it — is it cathartic to go back and re-record them? Or does it — When they're about painful things, do you, like, feel it all over again?
- Interviewee:-I mean, I think — for —One thing that I noticed about this —just this week in general is that I think back to the release week of "Red," which is the album that is, you know...Just in case anybody missed it. So this originally came out...
- Host: -This is it. It's this. It's Taylor's Version.

In Example 2 the host and guest talk about Taylor Swift re-record her decade old album. The host asks Taylor if she remembers any of those painful memories when she reprises those songs. Taylor's answer then

doesn't end there, but the host responds to Taylor's words with approval at that point.

As we can see from these two examples, there is a significant difference between interruption and insertion. The former can occur at any point in the previous speaker's presentation, while the latter does occur towards the end of the previous speaker's painting. Moreover, the content of interruption is not fixed and can be anything, while insertion mostly expresses the illustrator's recognition and approval of the speaker.

4.3 Turn Holding Strategy

As we can see from Table 1, respondents used the turn holding strategy much more frequently than interviewee. This is because the hosts mainly take on a role of asking questions and controlling the direction of the program, and they need to leave more opportunities to speak to the respondents.

After completing part of the speech, the current speaker does not intend to transfer the turn to the next speaker though with no particular planned utterance in mind and he may use hesitation fillers like "Er", "Well", "like","you know" to indicate that he wishes to continue but is not sure what to say or how to say temporarily. Hesitation fillers can also serve to avoid offering TRPs (Transition Relevance Place) in a competitive environment and avoid embarrassing pauses (Yule, 2000). For example:

Example 3:
- Host: Do these people believe it when they get a phone call, saying, "Hi, it's Taylor Swift. I want you to sing a song with me?"
- Interviewee: Well, I try not to cold call people.
- Host: Right. That's a good instinct, yeah.
- Interviewee: It can go very bad.
- Host: Sure.
- Interviewee: But, you know, I do send, like, a very long text that I've crafted over many days. And I'll send the song, because I don't want them to ever feel pressured to say yes to something creatively if it doesn't gel with what they want to do.

In Example 3, the primary form of this part of the hosts and Taylor's exchange is the host asking questions and Taylor answering.

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As Taylor prepares to answer the questions, it is inevitable that she will need to think, but the specificity of the interview setting does not lend itself well to large periods of reflective white space and pauses. Therefore, Taylor chooses to use a hesitation filler to fill in the gaps. This can also make their conversations more fluid and smooth.

Discourse markers refer to utterance incompletators and incompletion markers. The two are summarized as discourse markers because they both serve the function of telling hearers beforehand that the speaker has some points to elaborate on and making the speech continue as a whole without any interruption. Utterance incompletor are conjunctions like but, and, since, however, because, etc. And incompletion markers refer to words like first, second, third, to sum up etc. Discourse markers can turn a potentially completed sentence into an incomplete sentence, leaving the current speaker holding the turn. For example:

Example 4:
- Host: So, tell us about —But this was —So you've always had this version.
- Interviewee: Yes. This is the original thing that I wrote. So, there's a song called "All Too Well" that was never a single. You guys are really —This is very nice, what you're doing out there. His song was never a single, it never had a video, and somehow, the fans just turned it into the song from this album. And when I–I used to get so sad when I would sing it that I could barely, like, get through the song. And then, over time, I realized the fans were just, like, screaming the words back to me so loudly that it made it a very joyful experience for me to sing this song. And since —It has been a joyful thing for me to sing. I play it all the time in concert. And it's just so fun to hear them scream the words. So this song originally was —It's a very long song, as it is, but it was originally 10 minutes long. And I just kept — I was just like I couldn't stop. But I was like, "Oh, you got to fit something on an album, so that's unreasonable for it to be 10 minutes long." And so I had

to cut out certain verses and parts of the bridge and lots of different things that I really loved. Left some of my favorite lines on the cutting-room floor, and I'm really happy that people get to hear them. I'm so proud of this version of it. I think this version is the version of the song that was meant to be heard.
- Host: That is really thrilling. And then, on top of all that, there's a short film that you wrote.

Example 4 is special because in this example, the part of Taylor Swift's response is long, with a total of 267 words. In such a long spoken conversation, the speaker will use a lot of discourse markers to make her session more logical. Oral conversation is different from written expression in that the listener can only listen and respond once in general, so it is more important for the speaker to organize his/her words properly.

Through the above two examples we can also find the essential difference between the hesitation filler and the discourse marker, the main function of the hesitation filler is to fill the conversation gap, give the speaker enough time to think, make the whole conversation more fluent. While the main function of the discourse marker is to make the conversation more logical and help the listener to clarify the speaker's thoughts.

4.4 Turn Yielding Strategy

From Table 1 we can see that in the corpus selected for this paper, the times in which the host and the interviewee use the turn-yielding strategy is generally low, which may be due to the specificity of this corpus. Since there are only two speakers in the corpus selected for this paper, turn-taking is only possible among these two speakers. However, the host uses the strategy slightly more often than the interviewee, which is also due to the status of the host, who needs to introduce and ask questions to the interviewee, and therefore uses this strategy more often.

Turn- yielding means the act that the current speaker gives up the chance to speak and passes it to the next speaker. According to whether the current speaker actively selects the next speaker from the listener or not, the turn-yielding strategies can be divided into two types: first, the current speaker appoints the next speaker. Second, the current speak-

er does not specify the next speaker, and the listener chooses by themselves to be the next speaker.

By calling the hearer's name, using the pronoun "you", or showing body language and eye contact, the current speaker can select the next speaker to take the floor to talk. For example:

Example 5:
- Host: Our first guest tonight is an 11-time Grammy-winning musician and one of the biggest stars in the world. Her album, "Red (Taylor's Version)"...-[Cheers and applause]-is out tomorrow. She's also returning to "SNL" this week as musical guest along with host Jonathan Majors. Please welcome back to the show, the one, the only...

Taylor Swift, everybody. [Cheers and applause]Welcome back to the show.
- Interviewee-Thanks for having me back.

Example 6:
- Host: Having been a one-time —and a first-time host, obviously, when you hosted, **do you have any advice for Jonathan, your first-time host this week?**
- Interviewee: Well, I — I met him, and I just want to say he seems like one of the coolest people on Earth.

In Example 5, the host uses the interviewee's name directly to elicit the interviewee's response, whereas in Example 6, a question is used and "you" is used to prompt the taking of turn.

When the current speaker does not nominate the next speaker, the listeners will self-elect as the speaker. For example:

Example 7:
- Interviewee: It's — You know, it's also interesting to kind of go back and relive this nostalgia with fans who are the reason why I get to do this and why I get to, like, sit here and, like, have this lovely chat with you. Going back and — and reliving these things with the fans. And this time around, I get to really —I get to do things that I know they wish I would have done the first time.
- **Host: That's really good.**
- Interviewee: Because I'm always listening and I'm always lurking. And I'm

always listening to their opinions and their theories. And what — You know, they'll — they — They will let me know which songs should have been singles.
- **Host: Yeah.**

In this example, the respondent did not designate anyone to continue her session, but finished her part of the narrative normally, but the moderator uttered his response in a timely speaking gap.

As we can see from the above examples, the host will use the turn-yielding strategy more often in interview programs, while the act of picking up the conversation on their own occurs more often in multi-person talk shows.

4.5 The Reflection of Politeness Principle

4.5.1 The Maxim of Tact

Tact maxim is the first politeness maxim of Leech's Politeness Principle, and it requires speakers to reduce the expression that might do harm to the benefits of other people. And it is a hearer-oriented or other-centered maxim. In other words, the maxim of tact means that speakers try to make the damage and cost of others be in a minimum status while make the benefit of others be in a maximum status (Leech, 1983). In this interview, the participants also use this maxim, for example:

Example 8:
- Host: I wonder if —if there are people who might think that they were the one you were singing about if it's easier or far, far worse for them ten years later.
- Interviewee: I haven't thought about their experience, to be honest.
- Host: I think that's the —that's the biggest burn.

In this example, the host wants to ask Taylor a question, but the question may be offensive to Taylor, so the host uses the "I wonder if + there be" pattern to minimize the offensiveness of the statement. This is a good example of the use of the maxim of tact.

4.5.2 The Maxim of Approbation

Approbation Maxim means that the speakers tries to make the disparise of hearer be in a minimum status while make the praise of hearers be maximum. For example:

Example 9:
- Interviewee: Well, I try not to cold call people.

- Host: Right. That's a good instinct, yeah.
- Interviewee: It can go very bad.
- Host: Sure.

In this example, Taylor says that she doesn't cold call people she hasn't talked to for a long time, and the hosts seem more polite by recognizing and agreeing with Taylor's statement.

4.5.3 The Maxim of Modesty

According to Leech, the famous linguist, modesty maxim refers to that the speakers try to make the praise of themselves be in minimum status while make the dispraise of themselves be maximum. For example:

Example 10:
- Host: Because you're young now, and that was a long time ago.
- Interviewee: That is so — Thank you.
- Host: You're very welcome. I can say it honestly because I've also aged.

In this example, the host first complimented Taylor, saying that she has been a famous singer for many years and is still very young. This was followed by a self-deprecating comment that she is now old. This fits right in with the two sub-maxim of the maxim of modesty, which are minimise praise of self and maximize dispraise of self.

4.5.4 The Maxim of Agreement

The maxim of agreement, according to Leech, refers to that the participants in this conversation should try to make their disagreement be in a minimum status while make the agreement of them be in maximum. For example:

Example 11:
- Interviewee: Those people are unicorn-special.
- Host: Yes, it's so — it's a very-very nice combination.

In Example 11, the host tries to be consistent with Taylor's views to minimize the divergence of opinion between the two parties, thus following the maxim of agreement.

5. Conclusion

Overall, this paper has selected a reality interview program to explore the use of turn-taking strategy, and its embodiment of the Politeness Principle. In this paper, it is found that the host play the role of facilitators of turn-taking more often in interview programs. The host use turn yielding strategy more often, while the interviewees use turn-holding strategy more often. this is also determined by their different status. Additionally, this study found that both speakers in this program used the maxim of tact, the maxim of approbation, the maxim of modesty and the maxim of agreement.

However, since this paper is all about manually making judgments about the embodiment of various turn-taking strategies and politeness principle in the article, it is inevitable that there will be some omissions, and this paper will also explore how to make the judgments more objective at a later date.

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