

Analyzing the Interruption and Overlapping of the Debate between Trish Regan and Liu Xin

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ABSTRACT. *A debate is a reference to each other using a certain reason to state their views on things or problems, to expose the contradictions, and finally get the common understanding and opinions. Debate is a kind of verbal communication based on the premise of speculation, which is interactive and confrontational. In a conversation between two or more people, only one person speaks at the same time. There is no pre-determined conversion method, and the turn-taking is skillful. The interruption and overlapping are common in turn-taking. This paper aims to analyze the interruption and overlapping in the TV debate between Trish Regan and Liu Xin.*

KEYWORDS: *political speech, Systemic-Functional Grammar, transitivity system*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, China and the U.S. are facing the trade conflict, especially in 2019. Trish Regan, the host of a Fox Business show, expressed commons about the trade conflict and unsurprisingly embraced the U.S. government's "economic war" with China. Regan blamed three times the Chinese for "stealing" billion from the Americans with such words: war, weapons, stealing even that China is "raping" their economy, which is not the language of a trade "partner", but the insults one might hurl at an enemy. According to her, China has no any choice but to wage this "war". The U.S. side did not hesitate to brandish the "weapon", and slap higher tariffs on China. In 2019, one year after the trade friction first erupted, China itself is finally calling this a trade "war". The word has consequence. If an American who don't know any better might clench the fists and pound the wall. On May 30th, there was a TV debate or talk between Regan, the host of a Fox Business show and Liu Xin, a journalist working for CGTN.

Under such a background, a study of the debate is necessary for exploring the ideology and attitude of Regan and Liu Xin as an individual to such conflict. There is seldom research in debate with turn-taking theory (Sacks, 1974).

At the broad, the relative researches are mainly involved in Measuring Turn-Taking Offsets in Human-Human Dialogues (Rebecca, 2016); Simone (2018) claimed the communication can be easily realized through taking turns; Vlad (2018) studied the vocal turn-taking in Meerkat Group Calling Sessions. They criticized and developed the neo-turn-taking theory, claiming that the turn judging should bear the following rules: (1) a turn should have three interpersonal functions: backward, forward, and downward;(2) when the speaker's role switches, a different turn appears; (3) Overlapping is the type of shared voice. Completely overlapping words according to the number of overlapping words calculated the number of words, incomplete overlap, the original speech wheel continued, inserted words counted as another turn; (4) Non-overlapping co-construction discourse has actually undergone a role shift, calculating the number of words based on the number of overlapping people; (5) The speaker role is not changed, whether or not accompanied by a pause, whether the topic has a significant change, are counted as a turn; (6) Silent nods, smiles, and short forms of judgment such as "ah, hmm" are referenced to rule (1);(7) Silence counts as a turn.

The researches I mentioned above are merely about the TV debate between the public hosts. So this paper contributes to fill the gap, and provides a new perspective to applying the turn-taking theory. What's the most important is that we can make a further step in studying the TV debate without preparation in advance. Through the turn-taking analysis in the debate or talk between Regan and Liu Xin, we can easily find out their attitudes to the economic conflict and have a deeper understanding with each other and eliminate the misunderstanding in cross cultural communication.

The purpose of this study is to clarify the turn-taking operating models in debating and analyze the interruption and overlapping phenomena in the TV debate.

2. Data collection

The data are from the debate between Regan and Liu Xin expressing on May 30th, 2019. They discussed about the trade between China and America, intellectual property rights, Hua Wei, whether China is a developing country, tariffs, Chinese market economy, and state capitalism. The debate covers many fields, in which turns are taken to come to a balance condition. The debate lasts for around 17 minutes and it is transferred into about 2800 words. There are lots of interruptions and overlapping in the debate video. So this paper concentrates on the interruptions and overlapping.

3. Data analyses

3.1 Interruption and overlapping

Sacks (1974) Sacks alludes of the plausibility about overlapping, expressing that overlapping may occur. "by competing self-selectors for a next turn, when each

projects his start to be the earliest possible start at some possible transition-relevance place, producing simultaneous starts” (Sacks, 1974). Levinson (1983), on the other hand, develops Sacks’s contention and differentiates “inadvertent overlap” from “violative interruption”. This refinement between “overlap” and “interruption” is vital, since the mentioned externally carries negative meaning, whereas the previous does not fundamentally do so; alternately, its utilize in discussion might some of the time be translated as a flag appearing alternately, its utilize in discussion might some of the time be translated as a flag appearing co-operation or support. Another comment to be made here is that whereas “overlap” tends to be broken up before long by one party yielding the floor normally (Levinson, 1983; Kumiko, 1994).

Overlaps have a tendency on happen at a “transition relevance place” (TRP) (Sacks, 1974), in which conversational interactants aid qualified for detract turns; in this way, overlaps ordinarily resolve instantly, but interruptions appear to require put at non-TRPs, too, and final for a few time, the interactants contending for the floor.

Interruption as a rule leads to a alter of conversational themes or turns, whereas overlapping does not ordinarily involve this. This is on account of same time interruption regularly occurs due to the interrupter’s clear purposeful to require the floor or alter subjects, overlapping can happen inadvertently, for case, due to the misprojection of TRPs (Sacks, 1974).

Interruption more often than not goes with a point or turn alter, and takes put at non-TRPs. It regularly takes the frame of overlapping, but interruption can moreover take put without genuine overlapping.

Kumiko (1994) classifies interruption into two primary sorts: co-operative and intrusive. Intrusive interruption may be further isolated under three sorts: topic-changing, floor-taking, and disagreement interruptions. He views interruptions as deliberate activities about interrupting the partner’s utterances at non-TRPs, inasmuch as overlaps would viewed likewise unintentional infringements. Those same wonder might make deciphered on a completely diverse way, contingent upon which quality the particular society emphasizes a greater amount. The understanding might additionally vary relying upon those diverse sorts about interruption .

3.2 Identification & classification of the data

This paper classifies the data according to the role of the speaker. The turn-taking is with the speaker’s role changing. This paper focuses on clarify the turn-taking operating models in debating and the phenomena of the interruption and overlapping.

Following the criterion pointed by Kumiko (1994), this paper classifies the turn into overlapping and interruption, and the interruption is further divided into cooperative interruption and intrusive interruption. The overlapping always occurs at TRP or any risk to the speaker’s progressing conversational subject: it can appear solidarity or participation of the interrupter; subsequently, it may be an agreeable

interruption (Kumiko, 1994). The term “intrusive” is utilized to be compared with “cooperative”, since this sort of interference appears to be more forceful than CI, pointing at subject changing, floor-taking, or difference, hence debilitating the ‘territory’ of the speaker. Hence intrusive interruption can be subdivided into three sorts: topic-changing, floor-taking, and disagreement interruptions (from this time forward TCI, FTI and DI separately)

4. Discussion

4.1 Statistical analysis: frequency and distribution

Table 1 The frequency and distribution of turns

Type		Frequency	Percentage	
interruption	cooperative	7	11.86%	
	intrusive	topic-change	0	0.00%
		floor-taking	12	20.34%
		disagreement interruption	7	11.86%
overlapping		33	55.93%	
total		59		

Table 2 The frequency and distribution of the different topics

Topic	Type	Frequency	Percentage
greeting	overlapping	7	11.86%
	floor-taking interruption	2	3.39%
	disagreement interruption	3	5.08%
trade	overlapping	3	5.08%
	floor-taking interruption	2	3.39%
IP right	overlapping	5	8.47%
Hua Wei	overlapping	3	5.08%
	disagreement interruption	4	6.78%
disagreement on developing China	overlapping	2	3.39%
tariffs	overlapping	9	15.25%
	cooperative interruption	2	3.39%
	floor-taking interruption	6	8.47%
Chinese characteristic market economy & state capitalism	overlapping interruption	4	6.78%
	cooperative interruption	5	8.47%
	floor-taking interruption	2	3.39%
total		59	

From the table 1, it is clear to see that turns’ frequency and distribution in the text. The text has about 2800 words with 59 turns. According to Kumiko (1994, 385), the interruption is divided into cooperative interruption and intrusive

interruption. In the text, the further intrusive interruptions: topic-change, floor-taking and disagreement interruption, are distributed with 0, 20.34% and 11.86%. The cooperative interruption is 11.86%. From the result, the floor-taking interruption's distribution is the same as the cooperative interruption's distribution in the text, which means the debate or talk is peaceful between Regan and Liu Xin and they respect with each other. The overlapping is the highest of the turns, 55.93%. These different types of turns will be analyzed as below 3.3.

From the table 2, the overlapping is distributed in all topics. Considering the time limitation, the greeting, 11.86%, performing the phatic function, is a little hurry so that they can talk more. Tariffs is a so sensitive topic that the both sides want to get turns to express their own idea, therefore there are lots of overlapping, 15.25%. The other distributions and topics will be discussed as below.

4.2 Interruption

Interruptions always occur at non-TRP to change topics or turns so it is a little negative compared with the overlapping. Describing as above, the interruption is divided into cooperative interruption and intrusive interruption. These different classifications are analyzed one by one.

4.2.1 Cooperative interruption (CI)

Cooperative interruption (CI) occurs at a such time that a conversational accomplice joins the speaker's expression by providing a word or a state for which the speaker is looking, or considerably completes it for him/her.

Example 1 (tariffs):

Turn1 Liu Xin: I mean don't you think for American //consumers'// products from China would be even cheaper,.....

Turn2 Trish Regan: // consumers'//

In above conversation, Liu Xin's speech is interrupted by Regan when Liu Xin mentions the consumers' products. Considering the non-native speaker of English, Regan wants to keep a smooth conversation by supplying a word "consumers" to remind Liu Xin and complete the topic. There's no deliberate on the interrupter's side to alter subjects or trespass on the speaker's territoriality; Regan is in reality collaborating with the speaker in making the discussion stream by providing a word which the speaker is attempting to discover, in spite of the fact that externally her articulation hinders Liu Xin's. Consequently, it should be called the interruption "cooperative".

Example 2 (Chinese characteristic market economy & state capitalism):

Turn1 Trish Regan: =You can go back to the trade agreementHow do you define state capitalism?

Turn2 Liu Xin: //You mean, how do I define....sorry, I didn't hear the last words. The foster technology transfer? //

Turn3 Trish Regan: //No No the state capitalism//

In example 2, Liu Xin is interrupted by Regan because Liu Xin misunderstands Regan's topic. Liu Xin talks about the foster technology transfer all the time and Regan wants to talk about the state capitalism and keep the topic. So Regan has to interrupt Liu Xin. To some extent, the interruption in example 2 shows that Regan wants to know more about China and most of American hold prejudice to China and Chinese. Through the topic-changing, Liu Xin can explain something about China and eliminate the misunderstanding, so that the conversation makes sense. Regan's interruption is not implied to be intrusive at all or maybe agreeable, demonstrating to premium furthermore real cooperation in the discussion.

Shown as the table 1, the cooperative interruption is 11.86%, from which we can conclude that Regan wants to cooperate with Liu Xin when talk about tariffs (3.39%) and Chinese characteristic market economy & state capitalism (8.47%) according to table 2.

4.2.2 Intrusive interruption

The concept of "intrusive" is more aggressive than "cooperative". Because this type of interruption aims at changing topic, taking floor or disagreement, it threatens the speaker. The intrusive interruption can be further divided into three types: topic-changing, floor-taking, and disagreement interruptions (Hence TCI, FTI Furthermore DI individually).

1) Topic-change interruption (TCI)

TCI progressions the present speaker's subject of the interrupter's subject. This interruption brings about annulment of the speaker's subject and within the presentation of a modern theme by the interrupter. It may subsequently be called 'intrusive' in that it undermines speaker's conversational floor, and constrains speakers will permit a outlandish point progress. Table 1 shows that the debate text excludes topic-change interruption. Through that, the debate atmosphere is good and respectful with each other.

2) Floor-taking interruption (FTI)

Example 3 (greeting):

Turn1 Liu Xin: //I need to correct I need to correct...Trish I have to get it straight, I am NOT. I am NOT a member of the Communist Party of China//

Turn2 Trish Regan: //Yeah, it isn't..... and hang on, because I'm asking you...would you tell me...//Ah, forgive me.

At the beginning, Regan introduces Liu Xin as a member of the Communist Party of China to the American audience and Liu wants to say something for CCP. The misunderstanding leads to the explanation that Liu is not a member of CCP and what she said just stands for herself. Regan, as a news host, should say something true, but she doesn't. Thus, Regan wants to cover the mistake she made and turns the topic when Liu is correcting. Meanwhile, Regan is ready to express something else

and she thought Liu's turn is over, however actually it is not. Out of that situation, Regan says: "Ah, forgive me." when she realized. This interruption does not lead to a total alter of subject but the role-changing. Subsequently, I classify this sort of interruption as "floor-taking".

Example 4 (trade):

Turn1 Liu Xin: Otherwise I think we might be facing a prolonged period of process for both sides. //That's my personal guess. //

Turn2 Trish Regan: //And I I would stress that trade wars are never good. They're not good for anyone. //

Example 5 (tariffs):

Turn1 Liu Xin: = If you don't like the// rules, //

Turn2 Trish Regan: //We show..... //

In above two examples, Regan's interruptions are for expressing her comments, so I see it as the backchannel, which is the vocal indications of attention, when someone else is talking. Speakers expect their conversational partners to indicate that they are listening. At the same time, Regan wants to take turns to talk about her opinions. This type of interruption's fundamental objective is to get the conversational floor in arrange to keep a adjust of turn-taking, but not to alter the subject totally; it frequently leads to a advancement of the progressing conversational subject. So interruptions like example 4 and example 5 are "floor-taking".

3) *Disagreement interruption (DI)*

Example 6 (greeting):

Turn1 Liu Xin: So please don't assume that I'm a member and I don't speak for the Communist Party of China, and //I'm here today I'm only speaking for myself as Liu Xin, a journalist working for CGTN. So, if anyone wants to quote me or anything, please put my name there at least, OK? //

Turn2 Trish Regan: //But it doesn't work. Well, right, but CGTN is a part of CCP //=
=

Turn3 Trish Regan: =Okay appreciate it. Do you believe a deal is possible?

Example 7 (Hua Wei):

Turn1 Trish Regan: I mean you know... And you don't want anyone stealing your valuable information that you've spent decades working on.=

Turn2 Liu Xin: =No.

When it comes to talk about CCP and Hua Wei, Regan interrupts to show her opposite idea and denies Liu's speech and view. Seeing from table 2, the disagreement interruption occurs highly when taking about CCP and Hua Wei. Such phenomena show Regan's negative attitude and doesn't want to cooperate in terms of Hua Wei and CCP.

Intrusive interruption happens not just when the another speaker changes the subject or needs to require the conversational floor, but also when s/he wants to oppose this idea with what the current speaker' idea (Kumiko, 1994). Therefore, the changing turns in example 6 and 7 are disagreement interruptions.

4.2.3 Overlapping

Example 8 (greeting):

Turn1 Trish Regan: It's helpfulMy guest, however, is part of the CCP and that's fine. It's good to have you here. =

Turn2 Liu Xin: =Thank You. Trish Thank You Trish for having me it's a great opportunity for me unprecedented

Example 9(trade):

Turn1 Trish Regan: =Okay appreciate it..... Do you believe a deal is possible?

Turn2 Liu Xin: Um, It is true that the satellite connection is not very good.
=

Turn3 Trish Regan: =heehaw

Example 10(IP right):

Turn1 Liu Xin: Well I think Trish..... And basically that's the reason why I wrote that rebuttal because I think this kind of blanket statement is really not helpful really not helpful.=

Turn2 Trish Regan: =Well it's not just a statement it's multiple reports including evidence from the WTO.

Example 11 (Hua Wei):

Turn1 Trish Regan: =.....You got to share it with us." Would that be okay?

Turn2 Liu Xin: I think it is if it is through cooperation, I think it's absolutely fine. Why not? I think everybody should do that and that's how you get better, right? =

Turn3 Trish Regan: =But you mentioned something pretty important, which is that you should pay for the acquisition of that But I think you bring up some good points.

Example 12 (disagreement on developing China):

Turn1 Trish Regan: Let me turn to stop borrowing from the World Bank?

Turn2 Liu Xin: =Well I think this kind of discussion is going on and I've heard very live discussions about this.....

Example 13(tariffs):

Turn1 Liu Xin: So I think we are doing,.... because we know we have to grow up And Trish thank you for that reminder.=

Turn2 Trish Regan: = Hmm Hmm Let's get to the tariffs.....So what do you say about this? What do you think about“ Would that work?

Turn3 Liu Xin: =I think that would be a wonderful idea.

Example 14(Chinese characteristic market economy &state capitalism):

Turn1 Liu Xin: Well, we would like to define a socialismBut not everything is state-control, state-run, it's not like that. We are actually quite mixed, and very *dynamic* and actually *very very open* as well. =

Turn2 Trish Regan: = Well I think you need toAnd so then you get a win-win.

Turn3 Liu Xin: =Absolutely

Compared with the interruption, the overlapping is positive and often occurs in the conversation. And overlaps happen during a transition relevance place (TRP) (Sacks, 1974) and there is no gap between the two turns. In example 8, “It’s good to have you here—thank You” is a contiguousness combine, an arrangement of two articulations by distinctive speakers in discussion. The second is a response to the first. Liu Xin’s talk can be viewed as a feedback; In example 9, 11, 12 and 13, they are about the trade between China and the U.S., Hua Wei, disagreement on developing China, tariffs respectively. Regan asks Liu questions, and then Liu gives answers, which show the messages have been received. Example 10 and 14 are IP right and Chinese characteristic market economy & state capitalism respectively, in which the next turn is the comment of the last one, and the overlapping shows they are active to join in the conversation and talk about the topic.

5. Conclusion

According to the research and the result shown in table 1 and table 2, it is clear that the debate text is cooperative although the other side threatens the speaker to keep turns but the overlapping is the most type of distributions. So I make a conclusion that the phatic function could be performed by overlapping. And the second is the disagreement interruption to show the different or even opposite view. At the same time, the cooperative interruption is also 11.86% as the disagreement interruption to show their cooperation when they talk about the tariffs and Chinese

characteristic market economy. When it comes to Hua Wei and Liu Xin's identification, there are disagreement interruptions in the conversation.

There is a defect that this paper doesn't put the different cultures into consideration. Language is the carrier of the culture, so the cross cultural difference is a key point in analyzing the linguistic phenomena. Given to the different cultures and rules in conversation between Chinese and American, the result shown in this paper may be questionable. Since these contrasts appear to include the diverse values of the two social orders, it is fundamental that conversational members in cross-cultural communication are aware of this. Overlooking the contrasts in conversational style might prompt a misconception of conversational partners' abilities and personalities.

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