

Coordinating Conversation

Prosody and Strategy of Turn-Taking in Dialogue

How do speakers coordinate turns in spontaneous dialogue? Alexey Tymbay examines turn-taking as a central mechanism of dialogue organization, focusing on the role of prosody, communicative strategies, and participant interaction in shaping conversational flow. Drawing on an experimental phonetic study and a communicative-pragmatic framework, he proposes an integrated model and offers a systematic account of the linguistic and prosodic resources that structure spoken interaction. The study thus contributes to contemporary research in the fields of discourse analysis, pragmatics, and speech communication.

1. Why did you choose this topic? My fascination with dialogue began at university in 2000-s, when I first learnt about prosodic signals «hidden in conversation». The more I studied them, the more I realized that smooth dialogue is less a linguistic accident and more a remarkably coordinated social achievement. 2. What new perspectives does your book offer? The book brings together dialogue analysis, pragmatics, and phonetics to show that turn-taking is not merely a technical exchange of speaking rights. I argue that prosody, communicative intentions, and interactional strategies work together to shape conversational flow. Even interruptions and overlaps are treated not as errors, but as meaningful communicative choices ? sometimes strategic, sometimes cooperative, and occasionally both. 3. What makes your topic relevant for current research debates? At a time when communication increasingly involves online meetings, AI systems, and intercultural interaction, understanding how people coordinate conversation has never been more important. Turn-taking sits at the intersection of linguistics, psychology, communication studies, and technology. If we want machines to converse naturally ? or humans to misunderstand each other less ? we first need to understand how conversational timing actually works. 4. Choose one person you would like to discuss your book with! I would choose Harvey Sacks, whose work laid the foundations of modern turn-taking research. I would be curious to know what he thinks about the role of pragmatics (intentionality) in speaker transitions. And, if the discussion became too lively, I would finally have an excellent opportunity to observe interruptions and overlaps in real time ? purely for research purposes, of course. 5. Your book summary in one sentence: A study of how prosody, intentions, and interactional strategies help speakers know when to talk ? and when not to.



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