

The Use of Conversation Analysis Data as Authentic Input*

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This paper attempts to

- show how naturally occurring talks as Conversation Analysis (CA) data can be adopted in second/ foreign language classrooms as authentic learning materials.

I. Conversation Analysis and Second Language Learning

Conversation Analysis:

- in its origin, was initiated by sociologists Sacks and Schegloff
- seen as a sociological 'naturalistic observational discipline that could deal with the details of social action rigorously, empirically and formally' (Schegloff & Sacks 1973, p. 289).

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In its development, taking second language classrooms as the settings, CA has had a growing impact on

- studies of second language talk, classroom interaction and second language learning (Gardner, 2002), and
- the field of language learning and language teaching as well as Applied Linguistics (Seedhouse, 2005), such as teaching languages for specific purposes, language teaching materials design, language proficiency assessment, language classroom interaction, NS-NNS (native/non-native speaker) talk, and code-switching .

To exploit CA data for the learning and teaching in Language for Specific Purposes classrooms, Jacoby (1998) suggests the following ways:

- First, CA data can be extracted for pedagogical content and to inform learners of criteria for communicative success.
- Bring in data samples to class for the students to observe, analyze and appreciate.
- Finally, it is suggested that CA data be used to compare commercial Language for Specific Purposes teaching materials with the natural reality observed in the data.

II. What Do Conversation Analysis Data Inform?

A. Organization of Sequences

- grounds for **adjacency pairs**, which are inevitably connected to the preference organization system, such as preferred response, for example accepting an invitation, or dispreferred response, for example declining an invitation.
- CA data provide information on **how a conversation should be organized** in accordance with the social functions.
- CA data are in place **to well picture the gap** between dialogues presented in textbooks and naturally occurring interactions.
 - à Wong (2002) à telephone dialogues in textbooks did not reflect naturally occurring telephone dialogues.
- CA-based materials equip learners with **interactional skills**, e.g. producing a coherent turn and adopting appropriate turn taking system.

Consider the following transcript

1. *Paul* : hi Jan how are you
2. *Jan* : g'day Paul I'm good
3. *Jan* : gee it was cold this morning though, wasn't it
4. *Jan* : it was really hard getting out of bed
5. *Paul* : it certainly was I really didn't want to get out of bed and to
6. *Paul* : work
7. *Jan* : no: still it is Friday
8. *Paul* : I know isn't it great
9. *Jan* : [yeah
10. *Paul*. [and it's supposed to be good on the weekend the weather
11. *Jan* : yeah barbeque weather thirty degrees_
12. *Paul*. fantastic
13. *Jan* : yeah, great

Baraja-Rohan's (2011)

Some resources of adjacency pairs of, among others, response tokens:

- 'I'm good' (line 2) made as the response to 'how are you',
- 'it certainly was' (line 5) as the response to utterance made by Jan in line 3 and 4, and
- 'g'day Paul' in line 2 → knowledge of sociocultural norm

In brief, explicit explanation about the ideas of adjacency pairs is very important as that will raise learners' awareness on how to respond to certain prior utterance.

B. Real life language

- CA data are taken from real life conversations in authentic situations → the data contain languages used in real life situations.
- Employing CA data in classroom will then benefit learners in that they will be exposed to authentic languages used in target situations.

Referring back to the previous transcript (Barraja-Rohan, 2011):
→ some useful expressions are worth learning.

The linguistic elements:

- the use of a question tag of **'wasn't it'** (line 3) as the alternate use of 'yes' or 'right'
- **'it certainly was'** (line 6), **'no'** (line 7), **'yeah'** (line 9, 11, 13), **'fantastic'** (line 12) and **'great'** (line 13), which show a sense of agreement → as alternate ways of expressing acknowledgement or agreement instead of simply 'yes' or 'okay'
- a token of **'no'** in line 7, made to agree with negative expression of 'didn't want' in line 5.
- → This pattern employs different rules from that in Bahasa Indonesia in which 'yes' is used to express agreement with any expressions including negative ones.

Sociocultural knowledge: (taking place in Australian context)

- an expression of **'g'day Paul'** (line 2) made as a response to a greeting 'how are you' (line 1)
- **'yeah'** as response (line 9, 11) and follow-up (line 13), discussed to explain which context of situation the conversation took place.

- Important to note that Quinten's uses of gap fillers apparently assist him in searching for ideas and thus formulating his utterance, as seen for instance in the use of 'I don't know' (lines 7-8,14-15) and 'so' (lines 14, 19).
- With regard to foreign/ second language learning à the transcript potentially informs learners of the use of fillers as a strategy to maintain the floor à how, when and which filler to say.

III. Concluding Remarks

This paper has shown that CA data can potentially be incorporated in foreign/ second language classrooms in that:

- First, CA-based pedagogical approach is adopted to teach interactional competence, raise learners' awareness of rules and structure of conversations so that learners can manage to be effective conversationalists.
- Second, CA data or findings can be considered authentic materials as they provide real life language.
- In brief, CA data provide language teaching learning process with discussion of not only *how* but also *what to say* in order to appropriately construct talk.
- For the implications to foreign/ second language pedagogy, using CA based teaching materials indeed requires teachers' and material designers' analysis skills and adequate knowledge on principles of CA to make sense the data as the bases of the material designs.

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