# Developing Conversation Analysis by Using Video Clips in the English Language Classrooms

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**Abstract**
This study aims at developing and integrating Conversation Analysis (CA) to enhance the interactional competence of the students and to improve teaching and learning in the English language classrooms. In order to do such a thing, two video clips are specifically chosen to teach undergraduate students, majoring in Airline Business Management, on the 'English for Aviation Communication' course at a university in Thailand. Both video clips focus on the conversation between a ground service officer and a passenger during the check-in process at the airport. By using Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's (1974) framework of Conversation Analysis to identify patterns and explain it from an emic perspective in turn-taking, sequence organization and also repair phenomena; as a result, it can be seen that not only has integrating such activity into speaking classes raised the interactional awareness of the students with a focus on the conversations as contextualized actions, but also students have opportunities to perform a task and enhance their interactional competence from the specifically selected materials to the classrooms.


Keywords: Conversation Analysis, audio-visual teaching materials, Interactional Competence, English classrooms

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**Introduction**

Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) is considered as an approach in which language and social interaction are analysed. It was originally emerged from the cooperative work of three sociologists; Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s. Since then, there are many researchers studying about CA. Seedhouse (2004) defined CA as a tool used to examine and analyse naturally occurring talk through recording and transcribing human talk-in-interaction.

Furthermore, Sidnell (2010) stated that CA is based on observing people closely regarding what they do in their daily lives. With the goal to illustrate the rationality and logic that underlies human practice, CA shows how language plays a role in the organization of talk.

Normally, CA focuses on three main types of data; 1) naturally occurring data, 2) transcribed data and 3) analysed data (Wong and Waring, 2010). Sidnell (2010) stated that methods used in CA include collecting, organizing and analysing patterns of talk in order to identify what is being accomplished. The structure of conversation analysis can be divided into turn-taking, adjacency pairs, sequential organization, preference organization and repair organization.

Turn-taking is a central concept to CA. According to Sacks et al. (1974), it has been observed that there is one and only one person speaking at the time, while speaker change recurs with minimal gap and minimal overlap. They accomplish on a turn-by-turn basis, at any 'transition relevance place' (TRP), at the end of any 'turn constructional unit' (TCU). The single words, clauses, phrases, and sentences can be received as a TCU as long as they are recognizable to complete at a particular point, TRP, where the transfer of speakers occurs.

Obviously, a turn-taking system is organised to minimize any overlap in people conversation, or any gaps where no one talks. Trudgill (2000) also mentioned that interactants speak one at a time alternatively taking turns, providing the turn taker not only the right but also the obligation to speak.

Adjacency Pairs are one of the major instruments for analysing a conversation. They are two parts; showing the sequential organization such as question-answer, greeting-greeting and invitation-acceptance or refusal. After the completion of the first pair-part, the second pair-part responds relevantly. However, Seedhouse (2004) argued that if the second part of the pair is not immediately produced, it may remain relevant and accountable and appear later, or its absence needs to be accounted for.

During an interaction, speakers may encounter problems such as difficulty of understanding or hearing; therefore, those problems are usually fixed to avoid communication breakdowns by repair mechanisms. There are four main types of repair: 1) self-initiative self-repair; 2) self-initiative other-repair; 3) other-initiative self-repair and 4) other-initiative other-repair. With all of these methods used in CA, we can create a sense of reality through interaction.

This study aims at developing and integrating Conversation Analysis (CA) into the English classrooms by using video clips with undergraduate students at a private university in order to improve teaching and learning English, especially as a speaking skill. By using Sacks,

Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974) framework of CA to identify patterns and explain it from an emic perspective in turn-taking, sequence organization and also repair phenomena.

**Data Analysis**

Both extracts are selected from the YouTube website. They are interactions between the ground service officer and the passenger, showing the check-in process at the airport. The first extract lasts approximately one minute and thirty seconds and the other one which was originally from the American 'Friends' sitcom series on television and lasts for about one minute.

Both interactions reflect real life situations and ordinary conversations; therefore, they can be used to supplement as authentic materials in language classroom settings.

The following extract, taken from one of the video clips in this study, demonstrates the interaction between the ground service officer and the passenger at an airport.

**Extract 1. Checking in at an airport [00.01-01.30]**

| 1 | Officer: | good afternoon? (.) where are you flying today |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | Passenger: | I'm (.) <flying to Stockholm> |
| 3 | Officer: | may I see your passport, ∘please∘ |
| 4 | Passenger: | Ye::s. |
| 5 | (2.0) | |
| 6 | Passenger: | .hhh <here you are> |
| 7 | (3.0) | |
| 8 | Passenger: | >do you need< to see my boarding <u>pass</u> |
| 9 | Officer: | ah (.) no, I don't. |
| 10 | (5.0) | |
| 11 | Officer: | un::fortunately, your <u>flight</u> has been delayed (.) |
| 12 | | it's now scheduled to depart at six p.m. |
| 13 | Passenger: | ah well (1.0) that's not too bad |
| 14 | Officer: | I'm so sorry for any inconve<u>nience</u> = |
| 15 | Passenger: | = that's okay |
| 16 | Officer: | er, are you checking any bags today |
| 17 | Passenger: | .hhh (1.0) <u>yes</u>, I have one bag to <u>check</u> (.) and:: one bag to carry on |
| 18 | Officer: | have you left your bags unattended at any time |
| 19 | Passenger: | no (.) I've al<u>ways</u> had my bags with me = |
| 20 | Officer: | = okay that's good |
| 21 | (6.0) | ((typing sound)) |
| 22 | Officer: | right now, you have a <u>middle</u> seat would you <u>prefer </u>a window seat or an aisle seat |
| 23 | Passenger: | um (1.0) an aisle seat (.) please |
| 24 | (4.0) | ((typing sound)) |
| 25 | Officer: | ↑okay here's your new boarding <u>pass</u> and your baggage claim |
| 26 | Passenger: | thanks |

| 27 | Officer: | go through security (.) and your flight to Stockholm will depart |
| | | from gate b twenty-five (.) the flight boards at (.) <u>five</u> thirty |
| 28 | Passenger: | gate b twenty-five |
| 29 | (2.0) | |
| 30 | Passenger: | okay <thank you> |



**Figure 1: Checking in at the airport, 00:05**

The extract starts with a greeting, 'good afternoon' with the rising intonation. It is the first pair-part of the adjacency pair and is supposed to be followed by the second pair-part of a greeting – greeting pair; however, the officer continues to hold the floor with a micro pause and then asks a question as the first pair-part of a question – answer sequence in line 1. The passenger responds in the second pair-part of the adjacency pair with the faster speech preceded by the normal speech of the utterance 'I'm' in line 2.

The officer takes the turn and starts a request as the first pair-part of the adjacency pair in line 3. The passenger responds in the second pair-part of the adjacency pair by stretching the word 'yes'. There is a 2-second pause while he is looking for his passport in the pocket. In line 6, he then produces an extended turn with the faster talk after inhalation.

There is another long pause for 3 seconds without any reply from the officer and then, the passenger continues to take the floor by initiating the first pair-part of a question-answer of the adjacency pair with the slow pace of his talk in the beginning of the sentence and then emphasises on the last word 'boarding pass' in line 8. The officer responds with an acknowledgement token (ah) and completes his turn with the second-pair part of the adjacency pair.

Following a long pause (5 seconds) in line 10, the officer still holds the floor and performs the extended turn until line 12. In line 13, the passenger responds with the acknowledgement token and discourse marker (ah well). The officer then starts the new adjacency pair with the first pair-part as an apology and he is eventually interrupted (indicated by a latched turn at

line 15) by the passenger who replies with the acknowledgement token (that's okay) as the second pair-part of the adjacency.

In line 16, the TCU contains a hesitation marker (er), and the first-pair part of a question-answer adjacency pair. Then, the passenger takes the floor by responding with the second-pair part with the emphasis markers in 'yes' and 'check', preceded by a 1-second pause in line 17. Then, in line 18 the officer passes a turn by asking a question as the first-pair part while the passenger answers as the second pair-part of the adjacency pair, followed by a micro pause in line 19 and the passenger continues to hold the floor and performs an extended talk with the emphasis marker in 'always'; however, he is interrupted by a latched turn in line 20 with the acknowledgment token (okay that's good).



**Figure 2: Checking in at the airport, 01:10**

Following a long pause (6 seconds), the officer takes the floor, giving the information and then passes the turn by asking the question as the first pair-part. In line 23, the passenger replies with the hesitation marker (um), a 1-second pause and the second-pair part as an answer of adjacency pair. Another long pause (4 seconds) follows at line 24 without any utterances from either the officer or the passenger. The officer uses the acknowledgement token (okay) with the high intonation and the emphasis marker in 'boarding pass' to signal the mutual understanding at line 25. The officer takes the floor and continues his turn with micro pauses in line 27. The passenger takes the turn by a confirmation check in line 28, following by the 2-second pause in line 29 and then the passenger uses the acknowledgement token (okay) in order to clarify the information in line 30.

**Conclusion**

Both extracts portray the same scenario about the checking-in process at the airport between the ground service officer and the passenger. It is obvious from both video clips that one of the basic rules of conversation is achieved; only one person speaks at a time. However, overlapping or a latching turn can be also found in the conversation and they probably occur in everyday conversations. The analysis also shows that nervous speech can be noticed from the pace of talk or repetitions. Other interesting features which can be found in the analysis are the dispreferred answers with the discourse markers and pauses, showing hesitation or delay. Non-verbal behaviours are also considered as one of the features of conversation, projecting the completion of interaction.

Furthermore, lexical choices are also formed sequences and patterns of the interaction of the interactants in both video clips. For example, in the beginning of these two sample video clips, after greeting the passengers, both ground service officers request to see the passengers' passports, which can be considered as the kind of action that normally occurs in the institutional interaction.

It is very noticeable that in both video clips, those who appear in charge of the conversation mostly have the authority to hold the floor in the conversation. The ground service officers from both video clips have obviously showed that they have more authority to ask questions and require the passengers to answer them, which shows the asymmetry of roles in the institutional interaction (Heritage, 2004).

These two video clips are considered as a useful material in teaching and learning English, especially for non-native learners. Apart from the dialogues in textbooks, using related audio-visual recording videos is much more exciting and entertaining. The conversations in both video clips are similar to those in real life situations, so bringing these audio and visual recordings into the classrooms would help develop learners' interactional competence.

CA has attracted many researchers and teachers, using this approach to help their students become more proficient in interaction competence. Sert (2009) suggested that CA be integrated into English classrooms by using TV series as a material resource for language teachers in Turkey whereas Fujii (2012) claimed that CA is essential for understanding language and helping leaners to learn the target language more easily.

It is stated that there is considerable potential for researchers, textbooks designers and teachers to take advantage of the new millennium technology for embedding context in understanding and interpreting oral interactions as a fundamental prerequisite for improving students' productive conversation skills (Moreno Jean, M. and Peres Basanta, C. 2009 cited in Sert, O. and Seedhouse, P. (2011)).

In this study, the CA approach is adapted to material development in the English classes, with an aim to teach conversational phenomena by precisely building the links between the context in video clips and naturally occurring discourse in everyday lives.

Integrating CA in teaching and learning English can be a powerful tool to improve and identify interactional problems especially for non-native English learners in Thailand by using CA to point out the similarities between ordinary conversations and interactions in video recordings.

The feedback from all students who have studied the CA notion in this recent study has been very positive since they saw the clips and have a much better understanding of the conversation and interaction in real lives using the CA approach. CA can actually broaden students' views and help them clearly understand how people normally interact in everyday life.

It can be seen that not only has integrating such activity into speaking classes raised the interactional awareness of the students with a focus on the conversations as contextualized actions, but also the students have opportunities to perform a task and enhance their interactional competence from the specifically selected materials to the classrooms.

When comparing dialogues in textbooks and real life conversations through CA approach, it is apparent that dialogues in most textbooks do not show how each turn really occurs naturally as an actual conversation. Hence, bringing authentic audio or video materials into classrooms can help students develop an awareness of conversational structures and patterns.

Apparently, since CA has been introduced, it has attracted many researchers and teachers trying to help their students become more proficient, as well as a contribution to language teacher training. It could be said that CA is considered as one of the most useful tools for raising leaners' awareness of the interactions and also an invaluable contribution to teaching and learning English language.

In conclusion, CA can serve as an effective teaching tool for raising learners or students' awareness of natural interactions and enhancing their language proficiency; furthermore, it can be considered as a useful tool to be utilized for aiding teachers in identifying studying problems in regard to English language proficiency within the classrooms and incorporating CA as part of their methodology powerful visual and audible learning tools.

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