TURN-TAKING IN AMERICAN ENGLISH:

**A case study of turn-taking patterns in a
native speaker/ non-native speaker
English conversation**

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by

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Abstract - The ability to participate in conversations is an important skill in a second language; however, it is difficult to teach language learners exactly how to participate in conversations. Turn-taking is one particular aspect of conversation that many ESL students have difficulty with.This case study analyzes data from a native speaker/non-native speaker English conversation to determine what difficulties the non-native speaker has with turn-taking in the second language. Next, oral skills texts used in the Minnesota English Center (the M.E.C.) are reviewed to see if they teach turn-taking skills. Finally, based on the data obtained from the conversation and the text review, recommendations for teaching turn-taking are made for oral skills classes at each level in the M.E.C.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

In order to be fluent in a second language, a learner must be able to read, write, speak and comprehend spoken language. However, for centuries the field of second language teaching has focused primarily on reading and writing instruction. Only within the last part of the twentieth century has the focus of the field broadened to include greater emphasis on spoken language (Brown and Yule, 1983a).   One important goal for many second language learners is to be able to participate in conversations with native speakers of that language.   However, conversation is one area which teachers sometimes avoid teaching because the concept of conversation is not clearly defined.

Conversation changes depending on what context it occurs in and what dialect of English is used by the participants, and so it is difficult for teachers to know what to teach. This paper will attempt to add to the growing body of literature on the teaching of conversational skills in English as a second language. First, I will give a general definition and discuss some component parts of a conversation . Second, I will look at problems that non-native speakers of English experience specifically with turn-taking; a major component of conversation. After a review of the relevant literature in this area I will examine a transcript of a conversation between one particular non-native speaker and a native speaker, to determine what problems this non-native speaker experiences. Third, I will examine current oral skills textbooks that are used in the Minnesota English Center (the M.E.C.) to see whether or not these texts address issues relating to conversational English in general, and turn-taking in particular. Finally, I will make recommendations for teaching conversational English at the M.E.C. based on the problems that non-native speakers experience and the availability of teaching materials.

PART II: COMPONENTS OF CONVERSATION

Conversation is made up of many elements. First, according to Brown and Yule (1983a) the maintenance of the social relationship between speakers is often more important than the specific information that speakers exchange. Relatively little of what is said in a conversation might be important information, but the talk itself is important because it shows the level of involvement between the participants and their feelings about the relationship. The reflection of the unspoken feelings is called the "metamessage" and it is what people react most strongly to when conversing with others. A great range of choices exists for what to say and how to say it, and the way we choose reflects our personalities and our values within the framework of the culture that we come from (Bonvillain, 1993, p. 112). However, given the range of possible choices, Goffman (1976, p. 264, also in Hatch, 1992) has proposed eight underlying components that exist universally in conversations:

1)   *Signals to show that a conversation is beginning or ending*

These signals exist in all cultures, but are not the same across cultures. For example, one commonly used signal is a form of greeting or closing that is given by one person and returned by another. While every culture has such greeting and closing signals, the length of the greeting/closing differs depending on how participants in a culture show politeness and respect for each other.

2)   *Signals for backchanneling*

These signals are ways to show that the message the speaker is sending is being received by the listener(s) and that the message is valued, even if the listener does not agree with the speaker. Examples from American English are "yeah", "uh huh", nodding the head, etc. We expect others to want to have a conversation with us and part of the way we judge how much others want to con-

verse is by their use of back-channeling signals (Hatch, 1992, p. 49). According to Goffman (1976, cited in Hatch, 1992), all cultures have backchanneling forms, but these forms differ in type and/or in placement as well as in length.   It is important to note that back-channeling is not a full turn of talk, but in some cultures the length of an appropriate backchanneling signal can be much longer than in others. Within a culture, the form used varies depending on the roles of the speakers. A mismatch in feedback signals can cause participants to drift apart and become more distant (Hatch, 1992, p. 49).

3)   Signals to allow for a smooth exchange of speaking turns.

If participants are conversing face-to-face there is a wide range of choices to indicate the end of a conversational turn. In American English, for example, these signals might be a dropping intonation, a lower volume of voice, nonverbal signals like looking away from the listener, etc. According to Bonvillain (1993, p. 113), in a two-person conversation, the exchange of turns is automatic, with each person having roughly the same number, and each speaking when the other is finished[1].   However, in a multi-party conversation the turns don't have a fixed order and so are arranged in one of two ways: a) *current speaker selection-* the person speaking indicates the next speaker by a device such as a question, request, invitation, offer, or, most directly, by naming the next speaker. b) *next-selection* - the speaker focuses a topic of conversation so that a certain person is likely to speak next. If a speaker finishes a turn without indicating the next speaker, then any participant can "self-select" by starting to speak first and using a device to indicate that they want to speak next.   An example of such a device from American English is "well" or "but" used to start an utterance.

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[1]In contrast, Sacks, et al. (1974, p. 711) say that in a multi-party conversation this isn't necessarily the case.

4)   A message that is well organized and understandable.

In Goffman's words (cited in Hatch, 1992, p. 21), the message must be "acoustically accurate". If the message is not understandable, it must be re-paired or communication will break down. Gumperz (1979, cited in Hatch, 1992, p. 22) states that participants do not have to agree on meaning in order to have a conversation, but they must have a common theme, or topic, to their talk. Each participant may have their own topic within the general topic (Brown and Yule, 1983b) and topics within a conversation are constantly being negotiated so that sometimes participants are talking about very different things. Usually, one speaker will realize that such is the case and change his/her topic to be more compatible. In certain kinds of talking, such as that done primarily for the pur-pose of maintaining a relationship (for example, "chatting"), there may be fre-quent topic shifts. However, in other types of talk, frequent topic shifts may not be appropriate (Brown and Yule, 1983a). Between cultures there may be a large amount of variation as to what is considered adequate for this component, but there are usually clear social consequences for someone who breaks the norms within a culture (Hatch, 1992, p. 55).

5)   Signals to show when an utterance is not directly connected to the main topic of the conversation.

Goffman uses the term "bracketing signals" (cited in Hatch, 1992, p. 26), and says that these are a little like instructions for putting the main task on hold so that participants can come back to it.   Below is an example of a bracketing signal from American English[2]:

EXAMPLE 2-1

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[2]All examples of conversation that were taken from other sources have been left in their original transcription style.

LF (reading a lecture paper): ..to the tota:l ((<u>looks up and directly at audience</u>)) I'm reading this as fast as I can because I bet you're as hungry as I am. I didn't eat any breakfast this morning ((audience laughter, <u>looks back down and continues reading from the text)).</u>

(example from Hatch, 1992 p. 26)

In the example above, the speaker used gaze to indicate that they were going to leave the topic and again to indicate that they were going to return to the topic. There are both verbal and nonverbal bracketing signals, but again, these are different in each language. Cultures may vary with regard to how much bracketing is allowed. In some cultures, it is the mark of an educated person to construct conversational turns that use a great deal of bracketing and which require the listener to be skilled at making inferences in order to see the connections between ideas. In other cultures, it is considered the mark of an educated person to construct turns that are very straightforward, without much bracketing. In addition, the use of humor in a language may often be connected to these bracketing signals. Understanding the humor requires that the listener recognize the existence of the bracketing signals (Hatch,1992, p. 28).

6)   *Ways of keeping other people and other messages out of the conversation.*

Goffman (cited in Hatch, 1992, p. 27), calls these "nonparticipant constraints". Each language has different signals that show whether an individual has participant or nonparticipant status in a conversation.   An individual who does not have participant status may indicate that they wish to be given that status as in the example below (Hatch, 1992, p. 28):

EXAMPLE 2-2

(Setting: A coffee shop; two men are speaking together and a woman at the next table is listening in)

A to B: .. like someone from California

B: Yeh

C (woman): <u>Someone from CaliFORnia?</u> I mean, I'M from California and...

In the example above, the woman indicates that she wants to enter the conversation by repeating a line that the speaker had already uttered and adding question intonation.

Also included in this category would be signals for showing that you do not want to be included in a conversation. An example of this type of signal from American English would be a student looking away from a teacher when they do not wish to be called on (Hatch, 1992, p. 29).

7)   *Ways to interrupt an ongoing conversation.*

In order to interrupt a conversation, the hearer must know two things. First, the hearer must know an appropriate signal for interrupting. In the example below, the hearer uses a lengthened vowel sound to successfully interrupt the speaker:

EXAMPLE 2-3

(a tutor and a student are meeting to discuss a science project)

S: And then the mass. (.8) I need the mass of an electron.(.2)

T: Mhm (1.8)

S: And that's in my book (1.7) And th//en

T: [E-e-e what units are you going to put that in?...

(example from Hatch, 1992, p. 30)

Second, the hearer must know that their participation in the conversation will be valued by the others and that the interruption will not be seen as rude. In the example above, the student had gone to the tutor for assistance and pre-sumably welcomed the tutor's questions and advice.

8)   *The Gricean Norms for Communication (Grice, 1975, cited in Hatch, 1992, and Bonvillain, 1993)*
         There are four major criteria for a cooperative conversation.

   a. Relevance - A speaker should make their contribution to the conversation

      relevant to the negotiated theme. It is not necessary for them to make the

statement tie in to the immediately preceding statement.   There may be a reason for ignoring the prior statement and linking a new statement to one made earlier.

b. <u>Truthfulness</u>- If this maxim is violated, participants are expected to use a signal to indicate that they are violating it. It is assumed that the speaker is truthful unless he or she marks the speech.   In American English, the most commonly used signal for this violation is the use of special intona-tion to indicate teasing, irony, joking, etc. as untruthful, but untruthful ut-terances may also be marked by certain words or phrases. The following is an example from American English where the untruthful utterance is marked by the phrase "for pretend":

EXAMPLE 2-4

(a mother and child are talking)

P: Mommy?
M: Mmhmm
P: How old are you <u>for pretend?</u>
M: Ohh (.8) I'm about 12 years <u>for pretend.</u>
(example from Hatch, 1992, p. 34):

c. <u>Quantity</u> - Participants are expected not to take more than their "fair" share of turns in the conversation unless they request to have more turns.

d.   <u>Clarity</u> - Participants are expected to be clear.

Other Issues Related to Grice's Maxims

There are a few issues that need to be considered when thinking about Grice's maxims. First, all of Grice intended his maxims to be universal ideals that talk about what conversation would be like if communicating information

were its only point (Tannen, 1986, p. 34). The maxims do not take into account the social nature of conversation, and the fact that it is used for purposes other than communication of information. A second issue is that, according to Kaserman and Altorfer (1989, cited in Hatch, 1992, p. 41), the maxims are for conversations where the participants are cooperative, but this cooperation tends to break down when there are more than two people conversing. The researchers feel that a "noncooperative principle" might be needed as well for larger groups where some participants might choose not to cooperate in order to achieve their personal goals in a conversation. A third issue to consider is that the definition of words like "truthful" or "informative" is relative to the context of a conversation, the purpose of the conversation, and participants' culture (Tannen, 1986). In many cultures, it might be a value not to tell the truth in certain situations to avoid hurting the other person's feelings, or because possession of knowledge is a status-related issue (those with certain knowledge possess more power, and so they choose not to give it up).

A fourth issue to consider is that the overriding factor of human need should be taken into account (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 63, and also Tannen, 1986, p. 33). Humans have two conflicting needs: a) to be close to others, and   b) to be independent. In every interaction, people try to balance these two needs, but different cultures place different emphasis on the needs. In Western culture, independence may be more highly valued than in some Asian cultures so the balance of needs might emphasize independence more than closeness. During an interaction, when people try to balance their need for closeness with their need for independence, anything that they do to serve one need automatically violates the other one. For example, in a conversation, a person does not like to create bad feelings between the participants. If the speaker says something that

serves their need for independence but could be seen as being too distant, they will temper the statement to show that they are also involved with the other person. If what the speaker says shows involvement but could be interpreted as an imposition, they will temper the statement to show that they are not trying to impose by being too close to the other person (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 236, and also Tannen, 1986,   p. 34). This action of adjusting what is said to take into account the effect of our words upon others is called "politeness".[3]

According to Lakoff (1973, cited in Bonvillain, 1993, p. 131, and also Tannen, 1986, p. 35), there are two underlying rules of pragmatic competence: 1) be clear 2) be polite. Ideally a speaker should try to do both things in a conversation, but if conflict between them is unavoidable, politeness is a priority. It is more important not to offend others than it is to be unclear. Lakoff developed a set of rules to describe the motivations behind politeness: a) does not impose (keep your distance); b) give options (let other people have their say), and c) be friendly (make others feel good). The way that these rules are actualized in conversation depends on the cultural values of the participants (Bonvillain, 1993, p. 131). There are also factors such as use of intonation, volume of voice, facial expressions and gesturing which can be used to convey politeness as well as words.

In conclusion, a general definition of conversation has included the following points: 1) that it is talk used to maintain social relationships as well as to convey information 2) that this talk reflects both not only the participants' personal characteristics and values, but also the values of the participants' culture 3) that there are eight basic components of conversation which are believed to

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[3]For a more complete discussion of politeness phenomena, see Brown and Levinson (1978).

exist in any language but which are used in different ways in each language and

4) that the eight underlying components do not exist in a vacuum; the issue of

politeness affects how participants use the eight components.

PART III: CONVERSATION PROBLEMS THAT NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH EXPERIENCE

Taking into consideration all of the aspects of conversation that are listed above, it is possible to see the difficulties that can arise when two or more people have different styles of communicating. Chen (1985, cited in Farmer, 1992, p. 1) surveyed Chinese graduate students at the University of Minnesota and found that these students noticed the differences between the Chinese style of conversation and the style required in American classrooms. The students felt that instruction in English conversation and discussion skills was of great importance to their success in American classrooms. More specifically, many non-native speakers that I have taught report that turn-taking, Goffman's third component of conversation is especially difficult for them.   Students ask many questions: When is it appropriate for them to take a turn in an English conversation? Why do Americans frequently cut them off and interrupt while they are speaking? Why do small group conversations with native-English speakers frequently end once they try to join in? Negative feelings towards Americans and American speech styles sometimes arise when a student brings these questions to an ESL teacher. "Americans are so rude!" students complain. A teacher is faced with the difficult task of helping students deal with these frustrations and helping them learn to see past the stereotypes to the turn-taking behaviors that are causing the communication problems. It is important for teachers to base their discussions of turn-taking styles on actual data of how native speakers and non-native speakers structure their turns in an English conversation rather than going by intuition.

PART IV: REVIEW OF TURN-TAKING LITERATURE

A detailed discussion of the available literature on turn-taking is included in the following section so that the information can be compared to the data obtained from the case study of a non-native speaker in Part V.   This type of detailed comparison will provide the basis for evaluating oral skills textbooks on the basis of how much turn-taking information they provide, and for making recommendations for how to teach conversational skills.

Turn-taking between native speakers of English

The major theory of how turn-taking works in a conversation between native speakers of English belongs to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). The researchers developed a set of basic observations about turn-taking in American English conversations between native speakers:

1) Speaker change happens within a conversation and may happen more than once.
2) Usually one person talks at a time.
3) Times when more than one speaker talks at once are common but brief.
4) It is common to find transitions between turns occurring without a gap or an overlap.
5) Turn order is not pre-set.
6) Turn size is not pre-set.
7) The length of the conversation as a whole is not pre-set.
8) What speakers should say is not decided in advance.
9) The distribution of turns is not decided in advance.
10) The number of people in the conversation can change.
11) Talk may or may not be continuous.
12) Turn allocation techniques are clearly used. The current speaker may select the next speaker or someone who wants to be the next speaker may self-select.
13) The length of turn units can vary from one word to many phrases.

14) There are ways to repair the conversation if there are violations of turn-taking rules.

These turn allocation "rules" apply to every turn taken in an English conversation and therefore, the turns can be said to be "locally managed" (Levinson 1983, p 297) within the context of the conversation. Special issues such as how the participants feel about one another, how they feel about the topic and their social status within the group may have some effect on how these rules are brought into play. For example, if the participants are discussing a topic that they care about a great deal, there might be a greater frequency of interruptions and instances where more than one speaker talks at once as each tries to make a point. However, according to Sacks (1974, p. 700) the general rules for turn-taking structure still hold true.

Turn Units

Another important concept in Sacks, et al.'s model is that of a "turn unit" (see rule 13). The researchers state (1974, p. 703) that the end of such a unit is a place where speakers may change, and they call this point at the end of a unit a "transition relevance place" or "TRP". At a TRP there are rules for the transfer of speakers, if indeed speakers do change.

1) The current speaker may select the next speaker by calling on them by name, asking a question[4] for someone to answer, etc. That selected speaker has an obligation to speak at the next TRP and no other speaker has the right to speak at that place. The current speaker must stop at the TRP.

2) If the current speaker does not select the next speaker, then any person can select themselves as the next speaker by being the first person to start at the next TRP.

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[4]Fishman (1978, p. 400) found that in seven hours of recorded conversations, women asked nearly three times as many questions as men did. In her opinion, the women did this to keep the conversation going and to get the men to respond as the next speaker.

3) If rules one and two above have not been applied, then the current speaker may continue at the TRP.

Inherent in this model is the belief that the floor is a valuable item which speakers desire to control, and that they will compete to have control of it. A hearer who wishes to speak next must be ready to begin right away at a TRP. So while a speaker is talking, hearers will be trying to project a possible TRP and formulate the utterance that they wish to insert at that TRP. In the opinion of the researchers,   (p. 719) a speaker needs to structure their turn so that hearers can predict what form it will take and know where the end of a unit will come. As a result, the syntax and intonation of an utterance become important issues in this model of turn-taking. For example, if the speaker begins an utterance with a question word such as "What", the listener knows that the utterance will probably be marked by an inverted subject and verb with a predicate that follows. The hearer can then try to locate the end of the predicate in the speaker's speech and insert their utterance at that point.   In addition, Hatch (1992, p. 16) cites other factors that aid in the prediction of TRPs: slowing of tempo, vowel elongation, and falling intonation.

Overlapping frequently arises when for some reason the hearer misprojects where the TRP will come. There are three possible reasons for misprojected TRPs. First, a tag question or address term has been added to the sentence after the turn unit appeared to be finished (Levinson, 1983, p. 299).

EXAMPLE 4-1

A: Uh you been down here before//havenche].
B: [Yeah].
(this example from Sacks et. al., 1974 p. 707)

Second, a sound may be lengthened or the word as a whole may be drawn out causing the hearer to misproject when the sentence will finish (Sacks, et al., 1974, p. 707):

EXAMPLE 4-2

A: Well if you knew my argument why did you bother to a://sk].
B: [Because] I'd like to defend my
    argument.
(This example taken from Sacks et. al., p. 707)

Finally, according to Fiksdal (1990), non-native speakers may start to speak at a spot that is not a TRP due to a mismatch between their rhythm of speech and the rhythm of the previous speaker. Fiksdal states that each conver-sation has an underlying rhythm or beat to it which is maintained through stressed syllables as well as non-verbal movements such as nodding (p. 72). The researcher believes that this rhythm is negotiated between the participants because in her case studies each conversation between native and non-native speakers had a different tempo. Speakers create pauses at regular intervals in their speech so that listeners can backchannel (Fiksdal, p. 60). As listeners, non-native speakers of English frequently are not aware of the timing of a conversa-tion, so they do not try to match their rhythm of backchanneling to the speaker's rhythm. The mismatch in rhythms may cause the non-native speaker to enter the conversation too quickly or too slowly and miss the TRP[5]

Overlaps

If overlaps do occur at a misprojected TRP and one person misses the beginning of the next speaker's turn because of the overlap, it may be hard to

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[5]An example of tempo in conversation can be found in Fiksdal (1990, p. 75). It could not be reproduced here due to the fact that it is written in musical notation.

analyze the syntax of the utterance and decide where the next TRP will be. If this happens, a participant may request a repair and ask the current speaker to repeat, or the current speaker may repeat without being requested to do so. It is important to note that not all overlaps happen because of misprojected TRPs. Sacks et. al. mention that some of them occur when the current speaker does not select the next speaker and two speakers attempt to self-select by starting at the same time:

> EXAMPLE 4-3
>
> Mike: I know who d'guy is.=
> Vic: =//He's ba::d.]
> James: [You know the] gu:y?
>   (example taken from Sacks, et. al. 1974, p. 707)

In the above example, it was crucial for the speaker to recognize the fact that he had signaled a possible TRP and that he should stop speaking because other speakers had selected themselves as the next speaker. Yngve (1970, p. 575, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 15) states that one signal that American English speakers sometimes use to indicate that they want to speak next is a "slight opening of the mouth and intake of breath accompanied by a slight tilting of the head". The implication of Yngve's statement is that a speaker needs to be sensitive to such non-verbal signals that indicate a hearer is about to take a turn as speaker.

Repair of Simultaneous Speech

The previous discussion of overlaps helps one to discriminate between overlaps that happen without intention, and instances, such as the example below, where the next speaker intentionally does not wait for a TRP to begin their turn:

EXAMPLE 4-4

C: We:ll I wrote what I thought was a a-a rea:s'n//ble explanatio:n]
F: [I: think it was a very rude le:tter]
(example from Sacks, et al.., 1974, p. 16, cited in Levinson, p 299):

According to Tannen (1984, cited in Smith, p. 8) instances such as the
one above may be viewed as either an "interruption" where the first speaker
wasn't allowed to finish what they wanted to say, or as a kind of co-construction
between the two speakers. In other words, the simultaneous speech may also
be interpreted positively as a sign that the second speaker is highly involved with
what the first speaker was saying and wanted to indicate their level of involve-
ment. The interpretation of the simultaneous speech depends on such issues as
the context of the conversation as well as the relationship between the speakers
and whether or not this type of overlapping speech is expected.

In any case, when simultaneous speech occurs, there are ways of repair-
ing the breach in the rule which says "Usually one speaker talks at a time"
(Sacks, 1974, p. 699). First, as the example below illustrates, if two speakers
talk at the same time, one of them usually drops out quickly:

EXAMPLE 4-5

D:..He's got to talk to someone (very sor) supportive way towards you (.)
A: //Greg's got (what-)
G: Think you sh- think you should have one to: hold him
(example from Levinson, 1986, p.300):

In the example above, G's speech overlaps A's, so A drops out and lets G
have the floor. Because the first part of G's utterance overlapped the beginning
of A's and therefore wasn't clearly heard by the other participants in the conver-
sation, G repeats the part that was overlapped.

   If two speakers talk at the same time and one of them doesn't drop out immediately, there is a second way of resolving the issue. In such a case the speakers may compete to see who can gain control of the floor by "upgrading" (Levinson, 1983, p. 301): using a louder voice, a slower rate of speech and lengthened sounds, etc.

   EXAMPLE 4-6

   J: But dis//person thet DID IT IS] GOT TO BE::
   V: [If I see the person]
   J: .hh taken care of.
       (example from Sacks, et. al., 1974, p. 707)

   In the example above, J successfully keeps control of the floor (even after V starts speaking) by upgrading.

Other features of turn-taking

   Having looked at some general features of turn-taking which were de-scribed by Sacks, et al.. and Levinson, it should be observed that there are other more specific features that also need to be discussed in turn-taking (Smith, 1986, p.8). The first feature is backchanneling. Smith (1986, p. 10) states that "Back channeling can be used to encourage (Tannen, 1984, p. 118) or discourage (McLaughlin, 1984, p.102) the speaker, confirm that references are indeed famil-iar (Yngve, 1970, p. 574), and indicate sarcasm (Scarcella, 1983, p.315.)" The amount and kind of backchanneling that the hearer gives to the speaker may have an effect on aspects such as turn length, construction of turn units, how many turns at talk a person gets, etc. For example, Fishman (1978, p. 402) has documented the fact that women are more likely to use words like "yeah" "ummmm" and "uh-huh" as a method of supporting a male conversational partner while men are more likely to use them to indicate they are disinterested in the

topic that a woman is talking about. Fishman found that when women used these backchanneling signals, the signals occurred frequently, were well-timed and rarely overlapped the men's speech. The men were allowed to continue to hold the floor and take an extended turn without having to request one, and the conversation continued to flow smoothly. Men used the same backchanneling signals, but they occurred much less frequently and didn't encourage the woman to continue talking. As a result, the conversations often didn't develop further because of the apparent lack of support from the hearer.

The second specific feature related to turn-taking is pauses of different lengths that occur within and between turns (Smith,1986, p 8). Silence may be used by the speaker to indicate a possible TRP, but many times the exchange of turns flows smoothly from one speaker to the next with no perceptible gap (Smith, 1986, p.11). Hatch (in Smith, 1986, p. 12) says that this smooth exchange of turns with no gap is a characteristic of American turn-taking and that if a silence of more than three to five beats is allowed to occur, the speaker may view the silence as having a negative meaning. For example:

EXAMPLE 4-7

A: Is there something bothering you or not?

(1.0)

A: Yes or no

(1.5)

A: Eh?

B: No.

(example taken from Levinson, 1983, p. 300)

In this situation, speaker A could interpret B's silence as indicating that something is indeed wrong but that B does not want to say so. Levinson (1983, pp 320-321, cited in Smith,1986, p. 12) confirms this idea by saying that there is a preferred response to a question. In the example above, the preferred re-

sponse to the question "Is there something bothering you?" would be "no".   If a hearer delays too long in giving that preferred response, they might find that the silence gives the speaker a negative message that they may not have intended. At the same time, Hatch (in Smith, 1986, p. 12) says that allowing too short of a pause (in many cases this would be overlapping the other speaker) is seen by Americans as being "pushy" and "aggressive." It is clear that speakers and hearers in a conversation must then not only analyze the structure of an utterance and locate possible TRPs, but they must also be aware that allowing too much or too little time between the previous utterance and their own could send the other participants a negative message.

Summary of American English turn-taking rules

The discussion above of the literature for turn-taking in an English conversation between native speakers indicates that the turn-taking rules for Americans in particular are based on the idea of the floor as a precious commodity. It is desirable to have control of the floor for a time, but a speaker should share this control with other participants and allow them to take a turn when they indicate, perhaps non-verbally, that they wish to do so. Competition for a turn as speaker is acceptable and the system rewards those who are the quickest to self-select by giving them control of the floor next. However, if a person is selected or selects themselves to be the next speaker and then responds with silence at the point where they have an obligation to speak, that "misuse" of the floor may be interpreted very negatively by other participants.

Cross-Cultural differences in turn-taking

Before comparing the rules for turn-taking in native speaker conversation to the way that a specific non-native speaker takes turns in English, it would be

useful to know what other studies have found in this area. A search of the litera-
ture for studies specifically dealing with cross-cultural differences in turn-taking
uncovered two especially interesting pieces of research.

Transfer of first language turn-taking style

First, Wieland (1991) did a study comparing French conversations be-
tween native speakers of French and Americans who were fluent speakers of
French as a second language. The length of time that the Americans had lived in
France varied anywhere from two to twenty-six years.   Wieland found that the
Americans were all transferring the turn-taking behavior of their native language
into conversation in their second language because of influence from their native
culture.

The French valued a much more collaborative style of conversation which
included frequent overlaps and simultaneous speech and they interpreted this
simultaneous speech positively. They felt that it was polite and showed not only
the hearer's involvement with the topic, but also the hearer's personal connection
to the speaker. The Americans saw the simultaneous speech as rude because it
took away the speaker's right to have the floor alone. In general, the Americans
followed the American English principle of "one speaker speaks at a time"
(Sacks, et al.., 1974, p. 699) and they waited until they were sure the native
speaker was finished with a turn before selecting themselves to be the next
speaker. This style of turn-taking behavior was evident even in the speech of
Americans who had lived in France for many years and were aware of the differ-
ences between American and French styles of turn-taking. These individuals
knew that they could interrupt a native speaker, and that to do so would not be
viewed negatively.   However, the Americans felt frustrated and uncomfortable
with the French style and so did not use it.

Wieland's study is significant because it documents the fact that non-native speakers were not using the turn-taking style in their second language because it didn't fit in with their cultural beliefs about polite behavior. These cultural beliefs did not change with exposure to the second language and culture.   In Wieland's study, the French and American participants became frustrated with each other and communication problems developed out of their frustration.

The Effect of Cultural Beliefs

Another significant study in the area of cross-cultural turn-taking was done by Smith (1986). Smith looked at turn-taking in academic discussions and found that non-native speakers had difficulty participating because of the high degree of participation that was required as both a listener and a speaker (pp 19-20). She tape recorded her non-native students having a discussion together and found that one student in particular, a Vietnamese man, was not participating as much as the other students. Smith related the difficulties that the Vietnamese student was having to three important cultural factors. First, there is a continuum of stylistic differences between languages that looks something like the following (Tannen, 1984a, cited in Smith, 1986 p. 16):

X_____X__
high-considerateness   <------------------------>   high- involvement
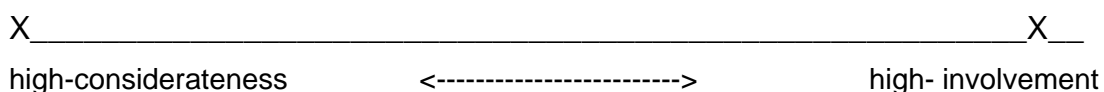
Both languages and individual speakers within a language fall along this continuum. If a person is a "high-considerateness" speaker, they want the other participants to allow them enough time to finish their thoughts, so that they can be appreciated, understood, and taken seriously. In turn, the person also shows these attitudes in their behavior as a listener. On the other hand, if a person is a "high-involvement" speaker, they want others to show their interest and enthusi-

asm through co-construction of utterances and overlapping speech. This type of speaker also reflects the same attitudes towards others when they are in the hearer role. When two speakers of the same language or of different languages have styles on opposite ends of the continuum, communication problems may occur as each feels frustrated by the behavior of the other. Smith's Vietnamese student appeared to be a high-considerateness speaker from a high-considerateness culture. He both expected and gave time for utterances to be finished while the other, more Americanized, students tended to be farther toward the high-involvement end of the continuum. As a result, the Vietnamese student may have experienced difficulty entering the conversation and taking a turn when the other speakers didn't give him as much time as he was used to.

A second important factor that Smith discusses in her work is the idea of monochronic and polychronic cultures (Hall, 1983, p. 230, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 17). People in monochronic cultures think of time as a straight line that is divided into pieces. These people generally feel that sticking to a schedule or time limit and accomplishing tasks within a given amount of time is extremely important even if humans have other needs which conflict with the task. In contrast, people in polychronic cultures generally place a higher value on relationships than they do on accomplishing tasks within a time frame. In polychronic systems, the contributions of the participants in a conversation and the satisfaction that those participants feel are more important then the length of turns or any time limitations (Hall, 1983, p. 220, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 17). The U.S. is more of a monochronic culture, and if a non-native speaker of English from a polychronic culture attempts to participate in a conversation with a monochronically oriented American, communication problems may frequently arise because of the value differences between the two systems. In the case of Smith's student, he

appeared to be from a polychronic culture where, in a conversation, there is much less competition for the floor because a speaker has the right to keep the floor as long as they have contributions to make. Even though the student had lived in the U.S. for a number of years , he was unable or unwilling to compete for the floor because of his cultural beliefs. He only spoke when he was called on, and as a result, he did not take many turns as the speaker.

Finally, Smith also brought up the factor of high context and low context cultures (Hall, 1983, p. 229, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 18). Generally, in a high context culture such as Japan, much of the meaning of an utterance is found in its context and not in the actual words themselves. In such a culture it is believed that an intelligent hearer should be able to find the main point of the utterance without being explicitly told what that point is. An example of such an utterance was not available for Japanese, but for the purpose of illustration, an example of high context speech from American English is given below:[6]

EXAMPLE 4-8

(A group of relatives are sitting around a kitchen table after a meal,There is a cold pot of coffee on the table.)

1 G: Rita, aren't you gonna have a cup of coffee?

2 Ri: Oh, I don't know. Anybody like some cookies? Should I bring the cookies out?

3 G: Marge's famous cookies.

(("That coffee" in the next line refers to a pot of coffee made several hours earlier; "a cup of coffee" above refers to instant coffee))

4 Ri: ((to T.)) Would you like me to warm up that coffee?

5 G: Don't eat them you guys. If you eat'em, there'll be less for me.

6 T: No.

7 Ri: No, that would be pretty awful, wouldn't it?

8 T: No, it's just that I don't need it.

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[6]This example was taken from a study of separable phrasal verbs in which transcription symbols were not used. The example is written down exactly as it appears in the study.

9 M: You mean the ones that she brought home a week ago from golfing?

10 G: Well, we were saving 'em.

11 Ri: I tried to save 'em for company but he ate most of 'em.

12 G: Not most of 'em, some of 'em. Marge would be disappointed if I didn't eat 'em.

13 M: That's right. You betcha. I brought some more today, George.

14 G: I know you brought lettuce.

15 M: You gotta bake'em though. I brought cookies that are...

16 Ri: You want to, you want a cup of coffee; I understand that's why he's asking....

(example taken from Swierzbin, 1996 p. A6)

In the example above, the husband, George (G), asks his wife, Rita (Ri), if she is going to have any coffee. Taken at face value, this line appears to be a simple question; however, sixteen lines later his wife realizes that he was really asking the question as his way of telling her that he wanted a cup of coffee. George believed that his wife would understand his intended meaning from the context of his utterance and Rita does figure it out. In a culture that is generally more high context than American English, perhaps the wife would have under-stood her husband's meaning much more quickly.

Although the example above was taken from American English, English is generally a low context language. In a low context culture it is generally be-lieved that information must be given explicitly to the hearer because the hearer should not be expected to search for the main point of an utterance[7]. When people from a high context and a low context culture have a conversation togeth-er and they don't receive information in the way that they expect to receive it, a breakdown in communication may occur. In the case of Smith's student, he ap-peared to be from a high context culture and he may have felt the need to say

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[7]In some situations, this might not be true for Americans, but Hall states that it is generally true for Americans to a greater degree than it is for Japanese.

less because he thought the other participants in the conversation could infer his intended meanings from the context of his utterances.[8]

All of Smith's examples point to areas of cultural differences that the student in question had not been able to adapt to simply by being exposed to a more western, academic style of conversation[9].   As important as Smith's data is, however, it only examines conversation between non-native speakers of the language. Her study does not take the further step of examining conversation between native speakers and non-native speakers of English. Therefore, the next section of this paper will focus on turn-taking in native speaker/non-native speaker English conversations.

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[8]There are no clear examples of such inferences in Smith's transcript, but because I am of a different culture and am a different sex than the student in question, I may have inadvertantly overlooked them.

[9]Smith says that this student had been in the U.S. for several years and had had some previous American educational experience.

PART V: DATA FROM A NATIVE SPEAKER/NON-NATIVE SPEAKER CONVERSATION

This examination of a six minute segment of audio tape and a transcript of that segment will attempt to determine some areas of turn-taking in which the speech of the non-native speaker differs from the model of native speaker turn-taking that was discussed in the literature review.

Background information on the participants

A married couple provided the taped conversation for analysis. The hus-band, Lih, is an upper-middle class Chinese male in his early thirties and has re-ceived a Master's degree and a Ph.D. in science from American universities. He has lived and studied in English-speaking countries for more than six years and before that, as an undergraduate at a Taiwanese university, he read scientific journals and textbooks in English. He is currently working for an American com-pany and speaks English every day with his co-workers. Karla is a middle class white American woman in her early thirties who was born in the Midwest. She holds an advanced degree in an education-related field and is currently working as a teaching assistant at a university.

Method of taping and context of discussion

To obtain the data, an English conversation between the couple was tape recorded while the participants were driving home from work together. The speakers sat in the car with a microphone next to each of them. Lih was in the driver's seat and Karla sat next to him in the passenger's seat. Since it was dark outside and the participants were wearing seat belts, they were able to see few of the nonverbal signals that the other may have used during the conversation.

Because Lih's attention was partly on the road, sometimes he was not paying full attention to the conversation. Lih and Karla were asked to speak for a total of about 30 minutes on any topics that they would normally discuss, and Karla turned the tape recorder on when they began talking.

Selection and transcription of tape segment

Out of the thirty minutes of available conversation, a segment approximately five minutes long was chosen for transcription. It was chosen because it was bounded on one side by silence and by a change of topic on the other side. Penelope Eckert's style of transcribing conversation[10] like a musical score was used because it shows the placement of utterances in time relative to each other. Utterances which begin on the left hand side of the page were spoken before utterances which begin farther to the right   Utterances on two adjacent lines which start in the same vertical position were said at the same time. In this way, turn-taking can be seen more clearly. A complete list of the transcription symbols used is included in Appendix A.

Results/ Discussion

Simultaneous speech

The first aspect of Lih's turn-taking behavior that I examined was that of overlaps and interruptions. Levinson (1983, p. 299) defines an overlap as simultaneous speech which occurs accidentally because two speakers start at the same time or because one misjudges the placement of a TRP and starts to speak in the middle of another's utterance. In contrast, an interruption is purposely simultaneous speech.

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[10]See Eckert (1990), Cooperative competition: Adolescent girl talk. *Discourse Processes*, 13:1, 101-103 for the sample which I consulted when transcribing my data.

Lih reports that he feels frustrated in conversations with Americans because they frequently interrupt him. In this six-minute segment of talk[11], his wife interrupts him four times at places where there is no TRP. As the examples below show, she does this either to ask for clarification or for more information[12], or she appears to have a delayed response to the first part of Lih's utterance. In the following examples, TRPs in Lih's speech are marked with an asterisk (*).

EXAMPLE 5-1

(Lih is talking about his company's willingness to hire foreign students over qualified American students)

87 Lih: An' then:: they goin' do-y'know rip them off!!!* Because I.N.S. doesn't like xx SEE - y'know. * They jump around the job. * So:: apparently they try to rip tho//se people off.*

88 Karla: [How did-] how
              did those guys all apply if there wasn't an opening?

EXAMPLE 5-2

61 Lih: Because they wanna hire- (#) the::-not the- that- the guy- he show me few resume. * One of them is // xxx]

62 Karla: [Oh.} So they've already got somebody in mind.

In example 5-2 above, Lih's syntax is complicated and difficult to predict because he breaks off in the middle of phrases and starts over again.   My hypothesis is that because of the complicated syntactical structure of Lih's utterance, it takes Karla some time to process what he has said and realize that there was an identifiable TRP after the word "resume". By the time she self-selects and indicates that she wants to speak next, Lih has already passed the TRP and has gone on with his next turn-unit. This explanation could account for the times

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[11]See the appendix for a complete transcript of this six-minute segment.

[12]Wieland (1991, p. 105) indicates that the Americans in her study interrupted native speakers of French for the same purposes of clarification or of requesting more information.

when Karla interrupts him at unpredictable places. Sacks et. al's model of turn-taking for native speakers is based on the assumption that the participants structure their speech clearly and with relatively few grammar problems that get in the way of understanding. In the case of native speaker/non-native speaker interaction, as with Lih and Karla, such might not always be the case.

The effect of unclear syntax is evident in another type of simultaneous speech which occurs in the data. Eleven times, Lih reaches a TRP in his speech, Karla self-selects at the appropriate point to take a turn, and Lih either cuts her off by continuing to talk, or allows her only one turn-unit before he begins to talk again. In example 5-3 below, Lih has indicated the end of a syntactic unit in line 141 with dropping intonation on the words "interface". Karla recognizes the phrase-final intonation as a possible TRP and begins to speak. Lih appears not to realize that there was a TRP or that his wife has self-selected, and he continues to speak. He adds more information after his first turn-unit without paying much attention to whether or not his addition makes sense or is syntactically well-structured:

EXAMPLE 5-3

(Lih is talking about his job in the computer science industry)

141 Lih: =When I have uh six months I already finish at least uh one interface.*=(#)
142 Karla: But it-
143 Lih: =restructure one interface and this is then seven months I- went went out redesign the whole I- another interface.

Lih reports that when he has a conversation in English, much of his cognitive effort goes into figuring out what he wants to say next. It may be that the demands of 1) processing what the native speaker says, 2) formulating what he wants to say, 3) looking for a possible TRP, and then 4) actually saying what he

wants to say are so great that he cannot pay much attention to issues like syntax or whether or not another speaker is talking at the same time that he is talking.

Another factor may be that Lih is a high-considerateness speaker (Hall, 1983, cited in Smith, 1986) who comes from a polychronic culture which values the contributions that speakers make to a conversation without keeping track of how much time the speaker has had the floor. Lih does in fact report that in a Mandarin conversation between participants with different status, the higher status speaker can have the floor for as long as they want it. The lower status hearer does not take a turn until after the speaker has finished everything they want to say and has indicated completion of a turn by a long pause (Liu, 1996, confirms this tendency in Mandarin speakers). Lih believes that when conversation takes place between participants with equal status (i.e. a married couple) these pauses may occur less frequently or be shorter but might still happen. However, a search of the available literature turned up no evidence to support this hypothesis. If Lih's hypothesis is correct, this lack of competition for the floor in conversations in his native language could be another reason why Lih is not paying attention to features like the predictability of turn-units, TRPs, and whether or not another speaker is self-selecting at a TRP. He may be transferring some characteristics of Mandarin conversation into English conversation and it would be logical for him to have difficulty paying attention to aspects of turn-taking in English that don't exist in his first language. The model for native speaker turn-taking assumes that participants come from the same culture and share the same cultural knowledge, which in my data, is clearly not the case.

In addition to syntax, the way that the participants select the next speaker in the conversation may also cause the native speaker to interrupt the non-native speaker more frequently. Sacks et. al. (1974) state that the current speaker may

select the next speaker by calling on them by name or by asking a question directed at them. If the current speaker does not choose the next speaker, then a hearer may self-select and start to speak at the closest TRP. This rule appears to be more applicable to group conversations with more than two participants, and the question arises as to whether it pertains to two-party conversations where participants do not have to worry about getting to take a turn before the topic changes. However, if the rule also applies to two-party conversation, it may be significant that Karla asks her husband a total of twenty-one questions throughout the six-minute conversation as a method of getting him to respond and to be the next speaker, while Lih asks only eight questions. Furthermore, the majority of Lih's questions are not intended to get his wife to take a full turn as speaker. They are either rhetorical questions which do not require an answer, or they are questions which ask for a brief statement of clarification or confirmation such as "yeah." Lih's lack of questioning to elicit Karla's participation puts her in the position of having to select herself as the next speaker. Lih may do this because he knows that Karla, as the only other party in the conversation, will respond no matter what form his utterance takes. Fishman's study (1978) has shown that in American English, this type of interactional support of asking questions to keep the conversation going and get the other participant(s) talking is related to gender. Women tend to do the support-work more than men do. However, the fact that Lih does not ask his wife any questions nor provide any support for her to continue the conversation may also indicate that he is focusing all of his attention on the production of utterances which are relevant to his wife's questions and which express what he wants to say. As a result, he may not yet be able to pay attention to ways of shaping the conversation.

Given the fact that Lih frequently has syntactically confusing utterances and that he makes his wife choose herself as the next speaker, it is not surprising that she sometimes begins to speak in unpredictable places within a turn-unit. In spite of these overlaps and interruptions, the couple does not appear to have any serious communication problems in the six transcribed minutes of conversation. This may be partly due to the fact that Lih and Karla have a history of communicating with each other and have come to an understanding of some basic style differences between them. However, a native speaker who is less familiar with Lih's style of speaking might experience much more difficulty understanding him and much more frustration too.

Repairs

The second area of Lih's turn-taking behavior that I examined was that of repairs when simultaneous talk occurred. Sacks et. al (1974, p. 717-718) report that if simultaneous speech occurs, one of the two speakers will usually drop out of the conversation. Lih believes that in general conversations in Mandarin, if a hearer overlaps a speaker, the speaker must stop and give up the floor. If, indeed, Lih's sense of Mandarin is correct, it is possible that he is transferring this repair behavior into his second language. In the data, I found twenty-two instances where Karla overlapped or interrupted Lih. In twelve of those instances, her overlap/interruption is a brief word or two, such as a backchanneling response, that does not attempt to take control of the floor, and in these situations Lih continues to speak:

EXAMPLE 5-4

(Lih is talking about a strange car in front of the neighbor's house)

14 Lih: Yeah. (#) It not their car.=

15 Karla: Yeah.

16 Lih: =Park in front the garage. So probably stay there
            overnight.

However, in ten of the instances, Karla uses a longer word or phrase which either overlaps the end of Lih's sentence or interrupts him in the middle of a turn-unit. In these cases, Lih stops and gives up the floor to his wife:

EXAMPLE 5-5

(Lih is talking about his manager, who is interviewing prospective employees)

61 Lih: Because they wanna hire- (#) the::- no the - that- the guy - he show me a few
            resume. One of them is//xxx]

62 Karla: [Oh.] So they've already got somebody in mind.

63 Lih: Sort of. (#) Y'know-=

In comparison, when Karla is overlapped or interrupted by Lih, more than 50% of the time (four out of seven instances) she does not give up the floor. In the following example, Karla has indicated a possible TRP at the end of her question (An' why did he pick Chinese?) and Lih comes in at an appropriate time. However, Karla adds an additional sentence for clarification and keeps on talking even though Lih has self-selected.

EXAMPLE 5-6

(Karla asks Lih about the prospective job candidates the manager is interviewing)

92 Karla: [An' why] did he pick Chinese? (#)//Is there a lot of other-]=

93 Lih: [I don't know.]

94 Karla: =of other-...

If Lih finds that Americans interrupt him frequently in conversation and his general habit is to give up the floor to the interrupter, it is possible that his frustration comes from the fact that he is following Chinese norms of politeness by giving up the floor (Liu, 1996, verifies that giving up the floor to the person who interrupts/overlaps is considered polite in Mandarin). Lih doesn't always get a chance to finish his utterance at a later time because the topic has changed before he can get back to what he wants to say. Again, the native speaker model of turn-taking assumes that the participants share the same cultural norms for appropriate and polite behavior. When speakers come from two different cultures, this may not be true.

Pauses and Gaps

The third aspect of Lih's turn-taking behavior that I examined was his use of silence in the conversation. Sacks et. al. (1974, p. 715) define silence within a turn that does not occur at a TRP as a pause, and silence after a possible completion point as a gap. Lih appears to have both pauses and gaps in his speech. The pauses occur in the middle of a turn-unit as he is trying to find the words to express his idea. In the following example, Lih pauses four times in the middle of a phrase:

EXAMPLE 5-7

(Lih is talking about a conversation between himself and his manager regarding a new employee. 'XDB' means the data base for company X. Lih is currently in charge of the XDB but wants to work on something new.)

46 a Lih: An' then he say (#) he say "ok". An' I say "when the new guy come on

   b   board then we can- I can help out train (#) this new one. -hhh- so he

   c   can do the XDB. I can turn over that." then he say "no. The X-:" he want

   d   either me or Mike doing that. (#) XDB. An' apparently Mike doesn't

   e   want it. So- SUCK. ((disappointedly)) Will stuck there. (#) An' then-

   f   (#) then he say "Oh." he say "Oh:: we wanna hire somebody is new

g   graduate. ENTRY LEVEL..”

The pauses in the example above (indicated by (#)), added to Lih's awkward syntax, may appear very awkward to the reader of the transcript, but in fact, the native speaker does have a few similar pauses in her speech:

EXAMPLE 5-8

(Karla is speaking about two female neighbors who live in the same house)

23 Karla: But y'know our (#) theory about them might be wrong.

Occasionally, when Lih pauses after what appears to be a turn-unit, his wife does select herself to speak at that point and simultaneous speech occurs:

EXAMPLE 5-9

(Lih is speaking about a co-worker who is not fitting into the office well)

127 Lih: Y'know. Those thing. (#) So. He's lucky otherwise (#) if I'm the manager he
            fire(d). You out. Y'know. You wanna //(#)xxx]
128 Karla: [Because he] doesn't know what he's doing.

In the example above, Lih pauses in the middle of a turn unit (after the word "wanna"), and Karla, perhaps feeling uncomfortable with the silence, fills it with a comment of her own which is uttered simultaneously with the continuation of Lih's utterance. While Karla has similar occurrences of pauses in her speech which get filled by her husband, she only has a few cases of pauses within a turn-unit. Therefore, the likelihood of having simultaneous speech at a pause is much lower when she is the speaker than it is when Lih is the speaker. The literature on turn-taking between native speakers in a conversation did not discuss this type of pause nor the possible effects that it could have on turn-taking. Clearly, Lih's habit of continually pausing in the middle of turn-units may play an important role in the interruptions that he frequently receives from native speakers of English.

A second type of silence that is noticeable in Lih's speech occurs after Karla finishes speaking and before Lih begins to speak ; a "gap," in Sack's terminology:

EXAMPLE 5-10

(Lih and Karla are discussing Lih's manager)

104 Karla: [I'm] surprised that he hired you in the first place. He really must not have known
               what he was doing. ((humorously))

105 Lih: (#) He's- he just- when he hire me is just uh
               what. Be the manager- he just become manager for two months or three months.

In the transcript there are eleven occurrences of this utterance-initial gap. One possible explanation for this gap is that Lih is still processing what his wife has said in her turn, and is trying to come up with a response to it. This explanation may very likely be true, since Lih says that he spends a great deal of mental energy on trying to figure out how to say the idea that is in his head. A second possible explanation is that Lih's habit of waiting for the floor-holder to finish speaking and pause before he selects himself as the next speaker is a transfer from his first language turn-taking style. As previously mentioned, this habit would be part of a polychronic culture (Hall, 1983, cited in Smith,1986) which values the contributions of participants in a conversation more than it values a quick response and competition between speakers to gain control of the floor.

 As predicted by Hatch (cited in Smith, 1986, p. 12) and Sacks, et al.. (1974, p. 700), Karla follows the American style of making the beginning of her turns fit smoothly with the end of Lih's utterance, with little gap between them. In fact, in the data, there were no occurrences of an utterance-initial gap in Karla's speech. Again, the Sacks et. al. model of turn-taking seems to be culture/language specific and doesn't include room for differing norms about the value of silence. In this two-party conversation, Lih's pauses don't create many

communication difficulties because he and Karla have previous experience communicating together and there are only two people conversing. However, in a multi-party conversation, Lih may miss out on opportunities to speak if he waits before self-selecting and other participants successfully self-select before he begins to speak.

Backchanneling

A fourth and final area of Lih's turn-taking that I examined was that of back-channeling. Smith (1986, p. 8) has cited the works of several researchers who say that backchanneling can be used for many purposes. Fishman (1978, p. 402) has shown that the women in her study use backchanneling much more frequently than men do. They use it to support their male conversation partner and get him to continue talking. In addition to sex-based differences in the use of backchanneling signals, there may also be cross-cultural differences. Tao and Thompson (1991), in a study of backchanneling behavior in English and Mandarin, found that Mandarin speakers tend to use backchannels much less frequently in their native language than English speakers do in their language. When backchannels are used in Mandarin, they tend to be signals of understanding, confirmation, or acknowledgment of agreement and they tend not to occur within a speaker's turn. In contrast, the backchannels in English tend to be "continuers" (Tao and Thompson, 1991, p. 211) such as "uh huh" and "mmhmm", which signal the primary speaker to continue talking.   These continuers usually occur within a speaker's turn at places where the listener judges that there hasn't yet been a TRP. Lih backchannels only seven times.   Two-thirds of these backchannels (4 out of 7) occur after Karla's utterance has finished, and he tends to only use the words "oh" and "yeah" to backchannel. In comparison, 1/4 of the time (5 out of 20) Karla backchannels within Lih's turn and uses a variety of backchannelling

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signals like "hmm", "o.k." and "yeah." In this six minute segment of transcribed

tape, Karla's backchannel responses do appear to have the effect of drawing Lih

out and making him elaborate on the situation he is describing, so Karla does

appear to be doing the support work that Fishman talked about:

EXAMPLE 5-11

(Lih is talking about a new employee that the company has recently hired. This employee went to the same university as the manager.)

113 Lih: ..An he is uh graduate from Moorhead State.
114 Karla: Oh really.
115 Lih: Yeah. Moorhead State is
         (#) Terry. He graduate there..

Similarly, Lih does seem to use his backchanneling in a less supportive

way. On one of the few times that he backchannels he changes the topic after-

wards:

EXAMPLE 5-12

(Lih and Karla are talking about why all of the applicants that are being inter- viewed for a position in Lih's company are Asian students who have just graduated from American universities.)

74 Karla: [But y'know.]=
75 Lih: Yeah.
76 Karla: =They're doing this for their record.
77 Lih: Yeah. *ANYWAY. But I
         think uh- they' not doing for the record only. They:: try to rip the:: foreign student
         off. ANYWAY!! An I tell David I say "David ya better watch out. He probably hire
         ONE an then- train it and then re-fire y'know- kick out one of us.."*

This less frequent and less supportive use of backchanneling by Lih may

be related to a few factors. First, it may be partly due to Lih's gender , and would

support Fishman's findings that men used backchanneling in a less supportive

manner than women did. Second, it could also be related to transfer from Man-

darin. If Lih is transferring turn-taking and backchanneling behavior from his first language, it would be logical that the backchanneling forms he chooses in English ("yeah", "oh", etc.) would reflect the functions of the commonly used backchannels in Mandarin. It is significant that continuers are not commonly used in Mandarin, and Lih is not using them in English either. However, continuers are common, and perhaps expected by native speakers of English. Lih's non-use of continuers could be interpreted as a lack of support by a native-English speaker who is holding the floor, and it could cause a breakdown in communication.

Another factor which could be influencing Lih's backchanneling behavior is his difficulty with language learning, and in particular, a problem with short term memory.   Lih reports that language learning has not been easy for him. He struggled to pass Mandarin language classes as a child because he could not remember the correct characters to use for certain words. He also struggled with remembering formulas and equations for his chemistry major (although he knew the content of the formulas) when he was in college and had to change majors to a field which was more accommodating. While at the university, he read many computer science textbooks and journals in English, and has mastered this type of technical academic language. However, he says that he struggles with everyday English and still has trouble remembering the names of common things he sees. A memory difficulty with certain aspects of language would partially explain why Lih puts so much effort into creating his utterances and doesn't seem to be able to analyze the finer points in a conversation, such as who self-selects at a TRP in his speech or what kind of support he, as the listener, can give to the speaker to help the conversation flow more smoothly. He doesn't yet seem to have a sense of his responsibilities towards the conversation as a whole, or, if he does have some sense of these responsibilities, he cannot meet them.

To sum up, the model for turn-taking in the speech of native-English speakers creates a good base line for comparing Lih's turn-taking behavior to the turn-taking behavior of an American. However, because the model doesn't take into account any difficulties with language, any influence from a first language, or any differing values that participants may have, it doesn't go far enough in explaining Lih's turn-taking behavior as a non-native speaker of English. Lih experiences several difficulties: 1) He shows evidence of transferring his turn-taking style from his first language into his second language 2) He uses unclear syntax and continues to add thoughts together without necessarily making a complete sentence; making it difficult for a hearer to predict a TRP in his speech. 3) He doesn't select his conversational partner as the next speaker, and she is forced to self-select, sometimes in inappropriate places because of his unclear syntax. As a result, sometimes she appears to be intentionally interrupting when this may not be the case. 4) When simultaneous speech occurs while Lih has the floor, he tends to give up the floor to the other speaker and may lose a chance to speak. 5) Lih uses pauses differently than the model for native speakers of English predicts, and as a result, he may be interrupted more frequently by native speakers because of the position in which those pauses occur. 6) Lih does little backchanneling, and the backchannel signals he uses are of a different kind than what is common in English conversations between native speakers. This different use of backchanneling signals may sometimes give the native speakers the impression that he is uninterested in the conversation and cause it to stop. 7) Lih doesn't seem to be aware of, or is unable to fulfill, his responsibilities as a participant in a conversation. These seven areas of difference are persistent in his speech even though he has lived in English-speaking countries for eight years and has been exposed to many native speakers of the language. It seems clear that he has not picked up a majority of the American English norms for turn-

taking and his different style could potentially create communication problems for him when he talks to native speakers of the language.

Based on the difficulties that Lih experiences with turn-taking, the discussion will now turn to whether or not there are oral skills textbooks for ESL students that address some of these problem areas.

PART VI. REVIEW OF ORAL SKILLS TEXTBOOKS USED IN THE MINNESOTA ENGLISH CENTER

Results

       Four oral skills textbooks that are currently being used in the Minnesota English Center were reviewed to see whether or not they address any issues related to Goffman's components in general, and turn-taking in particular. The criteria for review were as follows: 1) Does the text contain any general information about any of Goffman's eight principles? All of the principles were considered since several of them are related to turn-taking. 2) Does the text contain any information about politeness? Table 1 below summarizes the results of surveying the texts for information about any of Goffman's components:

Textbooks

Goffman's Components of Conversation	Interchange: English for International Communication, Jack C. Richards	Get It? Got It! Listening to Others/ Speaking for Ourselves, M. Gill, P. Hartmann	Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn, R. LeBauer	Speaking Solutions, C. Matthews
#1 - signals for beginning and ending	*yes*	*yes*	*no*	*yes*
#2 - backchanneling signals	*no*	*yes*	*no*	*yes*
#3- signals for exchange of turns	*no*	*no*	*no*	*some*
#5 - bracketing signals	*no*	*no*	*no*	*no*
#6 - non-participant signals	*no*	*no*	*no*	*no*
#7 - signals for interrupting	*no*	*no*	*no*	*no*
#8a - Grice Relevance	*no*	*no*	*no*	*no*

Goffman's Components of Conversation	Interchange: English for International Communication, Jack C. Richards	Get It? Got It! Listening to Others/ Speaking for Ourselves, M. Gill, P. Hartmann	Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn, R. LeBauer	Speaking Solutions, C. Matthews
#8b - Grice Truthfulness	*no*	*no*	*no*	*no*
#8c - Grice Quantity	*no*	*no*	*no*	*some*
#8d - Grice Clarity	*no*	*no*	*no*	*no*

.   *Table 1 Goffman's Eight Principles of Conversation in Textbooks*

Table 2 summarizes the results of surveying the texts for material on politeness:

Textbook	Any Aspects of Politeness Covered?
1. Interchange: English for International Communication, Jack C. Richards	Yes * topics that are polite and impolite in American culture * polite/impolite language
2. Get It? Got It! Listening to Others/ Speaking for Ourselves, M. Gill, P. Hartmann	Yes *polite and impolite tone of voice *understanding meaning from intonation *how to express emotion with intonation
3. Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn, R. LeBauer	None
4. Speaking Solutions, C. Matthews	Yes *identifying relationships between speakers *formal versus informal language *varying language style with context of conversation *ways to speak to a teacher

Table 2 Politeness in Oral Skills Textbooks

Discussion

The survey results for each text will be discussed individually.

1) Interchange: English for International Communication
   Jack C. Richards, Cambridge: England, Cambridge University Press, 1990.
   (Beginning level)

This set of books and tapes for the beginning level comes with the following goal statement: "The primary goal of the course is to teach communicative competence - that is, the ability to communicate in English according to the situation, purpose, and roles of the participants" (p. ix). The preface to the book emphasizes that teaching conversational language is a big part of the course; however, a review of the books and tapes reveals that only one of Goffman's components of conversation, signals for opening and closing a conversation, is covered. This one element is presented in the form of phrases to say for beginning and ending a conversation. Students learn these phrases through the sample dialogues which they hear first on tape, then read in their book and finally learn to produce from memory. Politeness is dealt with in much the same way. Students learn polite phrases to use in various situations such as when they want to borrow something or turn down a date, and then they incorporate these phrases into a dialogue.   However, there is one discussion activity on polite and impolite topics of conversation in which the students compare politeness in their native language to politeness in English.

Interchange is generally well liked by students and teachers at the beginning level because it does a good job of introducing students to the language that they need to know for basic survival in the United States. However, the book does have some drawbacks when it comes to the presentation of conversation. First, the model dialogues are scripted and, although the speech on the tapes is

somewhat natural sounding, students do not get any sense of the spontaneous nature of true conversation and of how participants help to shape that conversation as they speak. Second, the dialogues are fairly short and very few misunderstandings between participants arise in them. For example, students do not experience what it's like to try to have a conversation with a person who doesn't understand them. In addition, because students are repeating a pre-scripted dialogue, they do not get much sense of how they are responsible for maintaining the conversation and keeping it going. Third, the majority of the dialogues that are presented take place between two people, so the students rarely get to participate in a small group conversation where issues like turn taking and back-channeling become more crucial to the functioning of that conversation. Fourth, the pre-scripted conversations do not resemble real speech in which backchanneling occurs, participants sometimes overlap or interrupt each other, and speakers are frequently disfluent. The four areas mentioned above are places where a teacher might need to supplement the book with additional materials in order to present a more realistic picture of American English conversation.

2) Get It? Got It! Listening to Others/ Speaking for Ourselves
   Mary McVey Gill, Pamela Hartmann with Rebecca Oxford and Robin Scarcella, Heinle and Heinle Publishers, Boston, MA, 1993 (Intermediate level)

       This text states that it "...Helps to connect intermediate ESL students to the real English-speaking world and involve them with authentic language..:" (p. xi) and it aims to improve the cultural fluency of non-native speakers of English who are studying in the U.S. Like the previous textbook, Get It? Got It! includes material on just two of Goffman's components of conversation; signals for beginning and ending a conversation and backchanneling. The activity on backchanneling is especially useful because the book presents backchanneling as a way for the listener to express encouragement for a speaker. However, the book only

mentions backchanneling as a response a listener makes to a story the speaker tells, and it does not cover the wider range of situations in which backchanneling occurs in everyday conversation.   A strength of the book is that it includes quite a bit of information on politeness in American English. In one activity, information about signals for opening and closing a conversation in English is combined with information about politeness and there is a chance for students to make some cross-cultural comparisons about the way politeness works in different lan-guages. Related to politeness and turn taking, the book also presents a simpli-fied version of some of Deborah Tannen's work on differences between men's and women's talk. This information is clear, easy to understand, and provides a starting point for some good discussion as well as an opportunity for a teacher to build on the topic by bringing in other materials.

It can be seen that Get It? Got It! is fairly strong in the area of politeness, but it does have some shortcomings in the way it presents conversational skills. First, the book emphasizes listening to conversations and understanding what is said over what to do when you participate in a conversation. Second, when ma-terial about how to speak in a conversation is presented, that material is largely based on a topical/functional idea. The students learn phrases for accomplishing various tasks such as making small talk or ending a conversation and, like Inter-change, the book doesn't go on to talk about the responsibilities of participants in a conversation or ways in which the participants help to shape the conversa-tion. Third, only two of Goffman's components are covered, and by the time stu-dents reach the intermediate level, they are generally able to understand more than just the basic survival English that they learn in the beginning class.

Clearly, the students are capable of dealing with more information about Goffman's components, but this text does not provide materials on components 3

through 6. A teacher using this text would need to create their own materials on things such as turn-taking, bracketing, etc.   However, it is important to note that the book is just one in a series of books that will continue up past the advanced level to what the authors call the "Bridge" level. The other books in the series have not yet been published and it would be worth evaluating all of the books to get a more complete picture of how conversation is presented throughout the series.

3) Learn to Listen: Listen to Learn
      Roni S. LeBauer, Prentice-Hall Regents, Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey, 1988 (High intermediate level)

This book does not include any conversational skills because note taking and lecture comprehension, are the primary focus of the high-intermediate level classes in the M.E.C. Learn to Listen is the primary textbook, but an additional pronunciation book has been required during some previous quarters. In past quarters, M.E.C. oral-skills teachers at this level have supplemented the text by having students work on academic oral presentation skills and by teaching the students how to disagree politely with other participants in a conversation. In the M.E.C., the focus of instruction at the intermediate and advanced levels does switch to academic preparation and so it is logical that academic skills like notetaking and presenting take priority. There is not enough time in one term to cover all aspects of oral skills.   However, given the trouble that my research subject, Lih, clearly has in participating in conversations, and given the potential for misunderstanding that can arise between participants from different cultures, I feel that the study of conversational skills and conversational styles should not be dropped entirely from the advanced-intermediate-level curriculum.

4) <u>Speaking Solutions: Interaction, Presentation, Listening and Pronunciation Skills,</u>
   Candace Matthews, Prentice Hall Regents, Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey, 1994. (Advanced level)

   This book says that its purpose is "to develop the oral communication skills of intermediate through advanced ESL/EFL students in academic and professional settings" (p. xi) While much of the book is designed to work on academic speaking, one specific goal is that students will learn to participate successfully in conversation and small group discussions. Four of Goffman's components are covered in <u>Speaking Solutions</u>: 1) signals for beginning and ending a conversation 2) signals for backchanneling 3) signals for the smooth exchange of turns, and indirectly, 4) Grice's third maximum - don't take more than your fair share of turns in a conversation. Again, much of the information that is presented to students tells them what phrases to say when they want to take control of the floor in a conversation or when they are backchanneling. However, there is one small section that discusses the responsibilities of participants within a conversation, and in particular, ways to keep a conversation going. In addition, the book does ask students to participate in many small group conversations with other students and to analyze the way their small group functions. In particular, students are asked to count the number of turns that each participant takes in a conversation and this may be a very useful way to approach the idea of "taking your fair share of turns".   Politeness seems to be the issue that this book covers in the most detail. <u>Speaking Solutions</u> asks students to identify relationships between speakers in model dialogues by looking at the ways language is used and the level of formality and politeness in each dialogue. The book also mentions ways that a speaker varies a style to suit a particular conversational context and ways to speak politely to a professor.

Speaking Solutions, like the others that have been reviewed, does have drawbacks in the way it presents conversation. Again, it deals with conversation on a surface level and teaches phrases to say in order to accomplish certain conversational tasks. It does not go beyond this surface level and include much in-depth analysis or discussion of conversational styles and how those styles differ across cultures.   It asks students to analyze the conversational style of their classmates but it does not emphasize the importance of becoming familiar with the style of the target culture (i.e. American academic culture).

The results of the textbook survey indicate that some of Goffman's components (usually the same three or four) and some aspects of politeness are touched on briefly in each book.   However, the books mostly focus on giving phrases to accomplish language functions within a conversation, rather than attempting to explain the characteristics of American English conversation and to show students how to participate in one. There is not much in depth discussion of differences in conversational style, and how those style differences can affect communication.   As a result, these books do very little to address the problem of ESL students who have difficulty participating in conversations because they are inadvertently transferring their conversational style from their first language into their second language. The books also do not address problems they are experiencing because of issues related to their interlanguage.

PART VII: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING CONVERSATION

The textbook review above indicates a lack of available material for teach-ing conversation. Based on these negative findings, and based on the type of problems that my subject, Lih, experiences with turn-taking, I propose the follow-ing suggestions for teaching conversation in oral skills classes in the M.E.C:

Beginning Level (200)

Students at the beginning level may vary a great deal in their ability to comprehend spoken speech and to read written material. Because of this large range of ability levels, teachers at the beginning level must keep supplemental materials for teaching conversation very simple. I believe that materials could be designed to add to the text in two major areas.

First, since the text and tapes are designed around model dialogues that the students hear and then read and practice, I believe that teachers should cre-ate their own dialogues that cover some of Goffman's more easily explainable components related to turn-taking. For example, the idea of backchanneling is a part of turn taking, and it is a concept that beginning students could grasp. A teacher could write a sample dialogue that included backchanneling signals, ask another native speaker to help them perform the dialogue and audiotape the per-formance. Students could then listen to this teacher created dialogue, read a written version and learn to imitate it in just the same way that they do with their text. Such a dialogue, while still scripted, would be more representative of real life conversation than those found in the textbook.

If a teacher is concerned about providing the students with more natural, unscripted dialogues, the teacher could invite another native speaker into the classroom, and have a brief, unrehearsed conversation with that native speaker.

Students could be given a handout with a list of possible backchanneling signals and asked to circle the signals that they hear used during the conversation. In addition to writing dialogues to illustrate backchanneling, it would also be useful for the teacher to write practice dialogues which involve more than two people. The textbook concentrates on dialogues between two people, and issues of turn-taking become more obvious when there are more than two people conversing and the choice of the next speaker is not predetermined.

Second, materials should be developed to illustrate the concept of rhythm and timing in spoken English[13]. As a former teacher of beginning-level ESL students, I successfully used Rita Wong's ideas for teaching rhythm, syllable length, pauses and thought groups, and linking sounds (1987, pp. 21-53). I suggest that teachers follow her idea of beginning with the concept of rhythm in music, moving on to identifying rhythm in taped conversations, learning to show syllable length with a rubberband for a visual aid, and then learning to link together final consonant sounds with vowel sounds beginning adjacent words. These exercises help to make speech more fluent and to eliminate some of the pauses that occur at awkward places in the speech of non-native speakers. These elementary exercises in rhythm and timing not only help to improve pronunciation, but they also develop some basic skills which teachers at higher levels can build on.

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[13]See Fiksdal (1990) for a discussion of how the rhythm, or pace, of a conversation regulates turn taking in American English.

Intermediate Level (210)

At the intermediate level, a teacher can assume that students have a certain basic level of reading ability, so more written material could be introduced to supplement the text. Again, I recommend that teachers supplement the text with materials in two areas.

First, I recommend that teachers do more work on linking and syllable stress as detailed in Wong (1987, pp. 21-53) in order to prepare for more detailed exercises on rhythm and the timing of utterances. Farmer (1992, p. 37) suggests that teachers use jazz chants[14] to work on timing, and I have done this in my intermediate classes by following the method below: First, the jazz chant is marked with Wong's symbols for syllable stress (a large 0 above a stressed syllable and a small dot above an unstressed syllable) and linking (a curved line connecting sounds to be linked). Next, marked copies are passed out to the students and the jazz chant is gone through line by line, adding in the stress and linking. Then a metronome is turned on and the jazz chant is rehearsed again, until students can recite in unison and stay in time to the beat (this step and those that follow are recommended by the author of jazz chants). When students can recite the chant in this manner, then the group is divided into two sections and the small groups alternate reciting lines with the metronome in an A-B-A-B manner that resembles turn taking in conversation. Going through a jazz chant in this manner can help students to improve their ability to come in at a TRP on time and to keep the rhythm of the conversation because the metronome makes it immediately obvious if students are off beat.

Second, I feel that the teacher at this level should build on the backchanneling information that is included in the text. I recommend that the students go

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[14]See the work of Carolyn Graham for a complete discussion of jazz chants.

out and observe conversations between Americans, making note of the back-channeling signals that are used. Students could sit in a corner of the student union or a restaurant and "eavesdrop" on a conversation, writing down back-channeling signals that they hear. They could also take a tape recorder with them and ask some American friends for permission to tape record a short sample of their conversation. This tape could be brought into class for further analysis. In the tapes, students could count the number of turns each speaker takes and develop a list of signals that Americans use when they want to take an extended turn.

Advanced-Intermediate Level (220)

Currently, instruction at this level focuses on academic skills because the M.E.C. is an academic preparation school. Teachers at the advanced-intermediate level typically focus on: a) oral presentations b) pronunciation c) comprehension of lectures and notetaking skills. In addition, there are available materials for working on the comprehension of spoken English in American television shows and for understanding American humor. I would like to propose that working on conversational skills is also important for academic success. It can be argued that good conversation skills could help students communicate more effectively with professors, other university personnel and other students as well. My research subject, Lih, successfully completed his Master's degree and his Ph.D. in the U.S. without explicit instruction in academic presentation skills. However, he still shows difficulty with conversational skills. Students have the option of studying academic presentation skills once they are admitted to the university. There are speech communication classes for undergraduate students and the T.A. English program for graduate students who will be teaching university classes. In comparison, there are no classes in how to improve conversa-

tional skills, so I feel that this is an area where ESL teachers have an obligation to help their students. In my opinion, the advanced-intermediate level is the level at which students can begin to study conversation in detail because they are more comfortable with English and they have the ability to communicate with Americans at more than a basic level.

I recommend that instruction at this level be built around research that the students do themselves. I believe that hands on experience is the most useful way to deal with conversation for the advanced-intermediate students because, according to Farmer (1992, pp. 12-13), it is hard to teach students the meaning of some of the less clearly defined concepts like a TRP. In addition, making the students into researchers involves them in the creation of materials and makes those materials practical because they are related to real situations that students encounter in daily life. Students can be asked to go out and collect taped samples of conversations between Americans. These samples can be brought into the classroom where the teacher can select the ones that are most appropriate. All oral skills classes in the M.E.C. have access to the equipment in the language labs on campus, so students have the ability to compile a tape of conversation samples and to take home a personal copy. Because a part of doing research on conversation is knowing how to transcribe the data that is obtained, I recommend that teachers show students some simple transcription symbols for things like pauses, gaps, overlaps and interruptions. In the process of transcribing their taped samples and discussing them, students can learn to 1) look for places where speaker change takes place and identify some TRPs, 2) understand the differences between pauses and gaps, 3) understand the differences between interruptions and overlaps, 4) recognize signals that participants use to interrupt the speaker and take control of the floor, 5) recognize signals that speakers use

to show that they want to take a longer turn as the speaker, 6) identify ways that speakers keep the floor while they look for a word or try to think of what to say next.

Student generated materials are important, but a teacher may need to supplement those materials by bringing in a videotape of a conversation between native speakers for use in studying nonverbal behavior. Nonverbal signals may be used to signal openings and closings, and to signal that a participant wants to interrupt or wants to come in at a TRP and be the next speaker. The ways that Americans signal such things may be very subtle and if non-native speakers are involved in a conversation, they may not be able to pay attention to these signals in addition to trying to comprehend the words that are being said. With a vide-otape, the teacher can turn off the sound and ask students just to concentrate on observing the nonverbal behavior of participants and for what purpose different nonverbal signals are used.

All of the activities mentioned above would help students understand possible ways that native speakers of English behave when they converse with each other. I don't believe that ESL teachers should talk about "the" American style of conversation, because conversational styles vary depending on the context and the participants who are involved. Rather, teachers can show students the range of possibilities that exist.

Advanced Level

At the advanced level ESL students need to be given experience having conversations with Americans instead of just conversing with other non-native speakers in the class (Meyers, 1996). In the advanced-intermediate level they have built up a base of knowledge about ways that Americans behave in conver-sation, and they now are ready to examine their own conversational behavior. In

my opinion, the focus at this level should not be on changing students' conversational styles because Wieland's research (1991) has shown that these styles are strongly connected to cultural beliefs that aren't likely to change much over time. Instead, I believe that the class should give students the opportunity to compare and contrast their conversational style in their first language with their conversational style in their second language for the purpose of getting them to understand why conversation problems might arise in English. Students could determine for themselves whether or not certain types of turn taking behaviors are effective in their second language and how their turn taking style affects native speakers of English.

Again, I feel that the best way to design the course is to have students do the data collection. As a starting point, It would be useful for teachers to assign the reading of the article "Conversational Ballgames" (Nancy Sakamoto, Encountering Cultures, ed. Richard Holeton, Prentice Hall, 1992). The article was written by a Japanese as a second language learner and it addresses turn taking and style differences in the author's first and second languages. While the information about the Japanese language may not be completely accurate, the article is fairly short, easy to read and interesting. I used this article successfully with ESL students to develop their interest in the topic of style differences and it promoted a great deal of discussion on the topic of style differences between languages. It could be a good beginning point for an extended research project on turn taking.

In such a research project four types of data would be useful for each student: 1) an audiotape or videotape of that student in conversation with other speakers of their native language (perhaps other students in the class or in the program) 2) a videotape of the student in conversation with native speakers of

English in an academic setting (native speakers could be invited into the class-room to have conversations with the students, and these conversations could be taped) 3) an audiotape of the student in conversation with native speakers of English in a non-academic setting. In the conversations with native speakers of English, students could be asked to add in some silences occasionally or be asked not to backchannel for a few minutes in order to see how the native Eng-lish speaker reacts 4) an audiotape or videotape of conversation between native speakers of English.

The three conversations mentioned above could provide data for compar-ing and contrasting several aspects of turn taking. First, the students could ex-amine their taped samples to see how many turns they take as the speaker when they converse in their first language, how many turns they take as the speaker when they are using English to converse in an academic setting and whether or not the amount of turns varies when they converse in English in a non-academic setting. Student could plot their conversational behavior for each situation on a continuum like the following:

_X_____X_
too little   too much
participation   participation

Second, students could examine their tape for issues related to overlap-ping and interruption. They could transcribe the overlaps and interruptions in each tape and compare the results to see what the differences are between a conversation in their first and second language, and how the overlaps and inter-ruptions vary across settings in their second language. For example, a student might find that overlapping speech is much more common in the conversation in their first language than in their second one, but that they tend to interrupt a speaker more in English when conversing in a non-academic setting. Again, this

information could be plotted on a graph so that the results can easily be seen. Third, related to interruptions and overlaps, students could analyze the silence in the three conversations and see if more pauses and gaps occur in one language over another and in one setting over another. Student could also compare the placement of the pauses and gaps, the relative length of each of them, the reasons for them, and how the other participants respond to the silence. For example, a student might notice that they pause in the same places in conversation in both their first and second language, but that native speakers of English rush to fill those pauses while speakers of their first language do not.

PART VIII: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

      This case study allowed us to discuss research findings from one non-native English speaker conversing with one native English speaker in one specific setting. It points out the importance of such a careful analysis of a single speaker. Therefore, the recommendations for teaching are based on a limited view of turn taking problems that a non-native speaker experiences. To gain an understanding of the frequency of these problems among other learners of English, further research needs to be done in two major areas. First, more investigation needs to be done with native Mandarin speakers conversing with native English speakers in settings other than the one used for this study.   While conversation that took place in a car provided some interesting data, the data did not include any information about nonverbal communication.   An accurate description of turn taking problems needs to include information about nonverbal signals that participants use. Second, studies similar to this one need to be done with non-native speakers from other language groups in order to provide a bigger picture about turn taking difficulties and to help teachers plan an oral skills course that would be useful for students from many language backgrounds.

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APPENDIX A
TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

The transcription symbols used in this paper are listed below.

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
//]	a place where the speaker was overlapped by another speaker
[ ]	the overlapping speech of the second speaker
(#)	a short pause; untimed
(4)	length of pause [in seconds]
CAPITAL LETTERS	stressed words
-	words are broken off by the speaker
=	latching
xxx	incomprehensible speech
(( ))	transcriber's comments
::	a lengthened sound
a different font	a place where the speaker changed voices
(m)	a sound that was deleted from the spoken word but was put in the transcription for clarity
.	falling intonation
?	rising intonation
!!	laughter
-hh	intake of breath