

University of Tikrit

College of Education for Humanities

English Department

M.A. Candidates



Applied Linguistics

Conversation Analysis (Part Three)

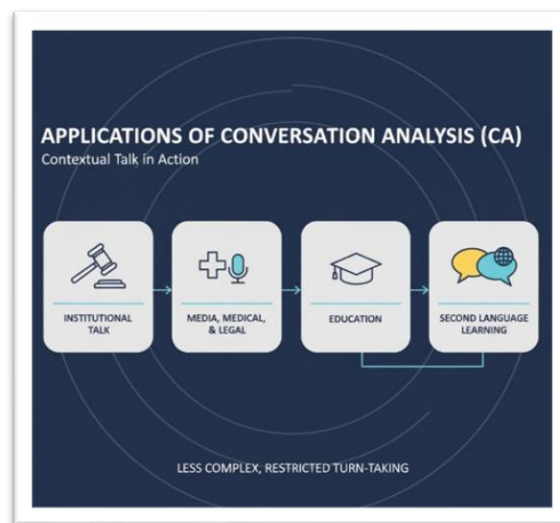
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5. Applications of CA

5.1 institutional talk

- **Institutional talk occurs** when people engage with organizations as agents, professionals, clients, patients, or customers, and it is the means by which practical tasks are accomplished in pursuit of organizational goals.
- In CA, the institutional setting is not a pre-given “bucket,” but something **participants *create and display through their talk***. Speakers enact institutional identities through turn-taking and action types.



- CA examines how participants manifest their institutional conduct through their talk. **This is shown through three main features:**
 1. Orientation to Institutional Goals: Participants have an understanding of the task's objectives.
 2. Special Inferential Frameworks: Participants make inferences in specific ways (e.g., interviewers withholding response tokens).

3. Interactional Constraints: Constraints are placed on participants, with varying degrees of formality.

Specific resources create this institutionality, including:

- How speakers refer to themselves and others.
- Lexical choice (specialist vocabulary).
- Turn-taking and sequencing practices.

These resources are used in certain frequencies and combinations, creating a unique "fingerprint" for that type of interaction. CA research on institutional talk now covers many settings like medical, legal, and educational encounters.

5.2 CA and media, medical, and legal talk

Conversation analysis shows that talk in media, medical, and legal settings has special rules. **In these institutional settings, speech exchange systems vary.** Usually, one participant, like an interviewer, doctor, or judge, has special rights to choose the next speaker. The **activities** of participants are also **constrained**; for example, interviewers ask questions but do not give answers, and witnesses give answers but do not ask questions.

Certain communication practices are common in each setting. For instance, doctors have techniques for breaking bad news, and news interviewers strategically use the first part of their turn to provide background or set up claims before asking a question. Interviewees generally wait for a question before speaking.

A general trend is that **very few practices are exclusive to one type of institutional talk.** In fact, what seems to happen is that the frequency of a practice is adapted—higher or lower—to meet the institution's demands. These adaptations are

simplifications of ordinary conversation, resulting in more restricted turn-taking and types of actions.

5.3 CA and education settings

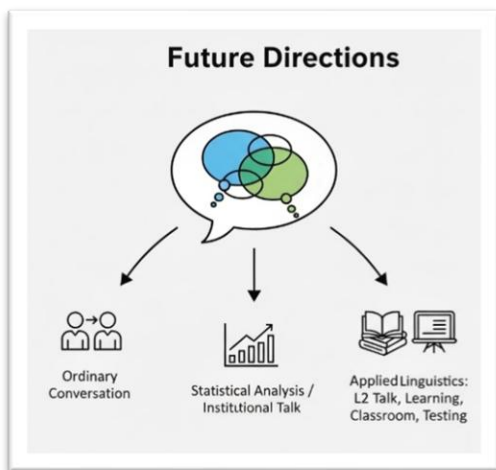
Early studies, like McHoul's, used CA to establish **turn-taking rules in formal classrooms and** analyzed **repair patterns**, finding teachers frequently initiated correction. Other researchers investigated the structure of classroom discourse, including in non-English contexts.

More recently, CA has been applied to other educational domains. **Research has focused on language proficiency interviews (LPIs) and testing environments**, examining miscommunication, repair, and preference organization. Studies have also analyzed the sequence of actions in oral proficiency interviews. Furthermore, CA has been used to **evaluate teaching materials**. Researchers have found that textbook dialogues often lack the authenticity of natural conversation, with features like dispreferred responses being inadequately represented.

5.4 CA and second language learning and second language talk

For many years, Conversation Analysis (CA) used monolingual, native speaker talk as its data. Recently, there has been an emergent interest in second language talk and second language learning. This raised a challenge to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies, criticizing their conceptualization of interaction. SLA researchers argued that acquisition is a psychological phenomenon, and interaction is secondary. **A challenge was made for conversation analysts to demonstrate how talk and interaction might be important to SLA.** Since then, research has appeared, including a book on SLA and CA and a collection of papers on second language talk and second language learning.

6. *Future Directions*



Conversation Analysis (CA) is about explicating the complexities and local nature of talk. Future directions include **a continuing attention to ordinary conversation**, building upon the groundwork of establishing basic practices in talk-in-interaction. Empirical findings will support statistical analysis, and **studies of talk in institutional settings will continue**. In applied

linguistics, studies on second language talk, learning, classroom language, and language in testing environments will increase.