A Conversation Analysis of an Overseas Visitor's Extended Service Interaction in an English Environment: Focusing on Shifting Participation Frameworks

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ABSTRACT

Using conversational data from a Japanese visitor's extended enquiry at a railway terminus in London, this paper shows through multimodal microanalysis how shifting participation frameworks can have consequences for verbal interaction, how verbal aspects of interaction can have consequences for participant frameworks, how participants' interaction involves mutual elaboration among multiple semiotic fields, and how participant roles can transcend the conventional speaker-hearer divide. Educational implications and methodological issues are also discussed.

1　Introduction

The traditional role-pair of speaker versus hearer in Saussurean linguistics has been criticized by many scholars of communication, including Goffman (1981), whose notion of footing and taxonomy of participant roles in conversation have been particularly influential (speaker: animator, author, principal, etc.; listener: ratified bystander, non-ratified bystander, etc.). Levinson (1988) further elaborated Goffman's taxonomy, and Larson (1996) applied such a taxonomy in investigating how a kindergarten teacher and her class displayed a set of roles in developing independence in journal writing. However, Goodwin and Goodwin (1986) and Goodwin (2007a, 2007b) have provided strong arguments against participation taxonomies which are divided along large-scale lines of the speaker versus hearer, arguing particularly that in face-to-face conversation hearers often play significantly active roles in the development of their interlocutors' utterances, as shown by microanalysis of multimodal data. In addition, Goodwin (2007a) proposed five stances of participation: cooperative stance, affective stance, moral stance, epistemic stance and instrumental stance.

2　The data

The data in this paper comes from one interaction which was recorded as part of a larger project to build a corpus of recorded English conversations between Japanese and non-Japanese speakers. To date, the project has accumulated over 50 hours of recorded data. One subset of this data was collected on a visit to the U.K. by the researcher and a Japanese participant, Kōtarō (KOT/kot), recording interactions in English between the Japanese visitor and local residents in various situations, along similar lines to Theodórsdóttir (2011a, 2011b), and consists of 12 hours of recorded data. In this interaction, Kōtarō has just arrived in London for an independent two-day stay, after a four-day stay in a provincial town. In order to find out general information about traveling around London on public transport, he makes an enquiry at

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an information desk at a railway station that he has arrived at, and is attended to by a station clerk (CLK/clk). This interaction may be considered as a type of service encounter. Following a very simple consultation with the researcher (RES/res), who had overall control of the whole UK visit, it was loosely agreed that Kōtarō would enquire about three things: a suitable ticket for using public transport in London for two days, the availability of baggage lockers at a different railway terminal in London (in case he was not able to check in early and leave his bags at the youth hostel near that station), and the exact times of the planned London Underground ("Tube") strikes, which the researcher had heard about. The researcher had approached the desk first to ask for permission to record, then stood to the side to hold the video camera. In fact, the researcher made utterances seven times in the whole interaction, five of which were recorded, and one of which appears in the first excerpt. Four extracts from the interaction are presented and analyzed. In addition to Kōtarō, the researcher and the clerk on duty, the potential participants in this event include other travelers who may approach the information desk, other staff who may enter the same area behind the desk as this clerk, staff who are not physically present but who may communicate with this clerk through his radio, and the imagined audience of the video recording.

2.1 Excerpt 1: Opening

Figures 1 to 7 display the events in the 3.5-second period between the start of recording and Kōtarō's initial entry into his enquiry. At first, Kōtarō is already at the counter with his right hand tentatively resting on it, but has not engaged in any verbal interaction or eye-contact with the clerk, suggesting a tacit nonverbal mutual ratification between the two. There are also two people standing behind him, who appeared after the researcher initially approached the clerk, displaying waiting postures, a woman with hands on hips gazing at the researcher (or camera) and a man standing within touching distance of her gazing at the clerk or desk. These two walk away during line 8. The researcher says "okay" and fleetingly gestures with his left hand towards Kōtarō (line 2; Fig. 2), but instead of Kōtarō beginning to speak, there is a 2.7-second pause (from Fig. 3), during which he shifts his gaze around the counter area (Fig. 4), raises his left elbow onto the counter, touching his glasses and hair with his hand (Fig. 5). He then looks sideways at the researcher, who makes a second hand signal to start (Fig. 6). Then, in a synchronized move, he lowers his left hand and elbow to have both hands on counter again, makes eye-contact with the clerk and opens his enquiry (line 4; Fig. 7).

Fig. 1. Recording time: 0'00.0"

Fig. 2. Line 2. RES: okay

Fig. 3. Line 3(1)

Fig. 4. Line 3(2)

Fig. 5. Line 3(3)

Fig. 6. Line 3(4)

Fig. 7. Line 4. KOT: er:

```
1              #(0.5)
       fig#  #1
2      RES:  +#+(o)kay
       resL  + + (flitting hand gesture towards KOT)
       fig#   #2
3              {#   #        # *    + # /(2.7)}
       kotG                 ..*,,,-->((glances at RES))
       resL                    +(supine hand gesture towards KOT)
       fig#   #3 #4        #5      #6
4      KOT:  =>Right< #er: so: ↑what's the best (.) way: the ↑cheapest way:
       kotG  ,,,,,
       fig#            #7
5             to: (0.4) use the transportation uh: here
6             like bus or: (0.5) best *↑ticket #.
       kotBH            ........         *--> ((both hands open towards CLK))
       fig#                                #8
7             (1)
8      CLK:  d'↑best *way: is to #use your Oyster: °which is°=
       kotBH ,,,,,   * ((closes fingers & thumbs on both hands))
       fig#                   #9
9      KOT:  =↑Oyster,
10            (0.3)
11     CLK:  Oyster car:d
12     KOT:  [uhuh  ]
13     CLK:  [If you] use tha:t
```
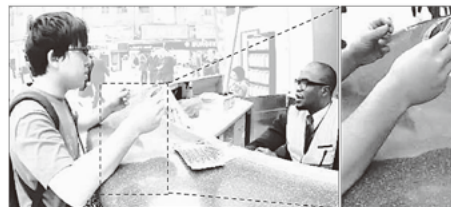
Fig. 8. Line 6. KOT: ticket.   **Fig. 9.** Line 8. CLK: best

Kōtarō's synchronized moves at the start emphasize the role of embodied participation opening. The use of the word "right" as an opening, rather than a greeting, suggests that the interaction and current participation framework does not commence here, but was at least partly set up before the recording when the researcher approached the clerk. Kōtarō's opening enquiry is somewhat elaborate, with several perturbations, pauses and instances of self-repair by substitution. There is also a one-second pause in the turn transition space. Nevertheless, the clerk responds by taking up one of Kōtarō's initial key phrases（"best way"）in an affirmative sentential turn-constructional unit（TCU）containing a predicate that refers to a specific kind of re-usable re-chargeable travel card（"Oyster Card"）used in London, suggesting that he treats Kōtarō's enquiry as a legitimate and coherent one, at least to some degree. By line 13, Kōtarō and the clerk are fully engaged in normative turn-taking to co-construct intersubjectivity, collaborating in a repair sequence concerning the term "Oyster"（Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977）, a continuer from Kōtarō in line 12, and a discourse-intrinsic deictic reference（"that"）used by the clerk in line 13. In addition, Kōtarō has begun using the counter surface as a platform to stage his hand gestures, here embodying emphasized self-repair（"ticket"）with a double-handed baton (line 6; Fig. 8), and then closing his fingers embodying a listening posture as the clerk begins to speak in line 8 (Fig. 9). The two people who had been standing behind walk away at this point. The clerk has his own desk surface behind

and below the counter, on which his hands are rested together. In this way, the participation framework reflects the physical features of the environment and how the participants orient to them.

2.2   Excerpt 2: More active orientation to the physical environment

Between Excerpt 1 and Excerpt 2, the clerk offers a two-way choice of either getting a "Travel Card" or an "Oyster Card" ("one of the two"). However, in line 39, Kōtarō's question uses the singular "this", gesturing towards the clerk, thereby collapsing the binary choice into a single entity. The clerk at first takes this singularity up using "it" in line 41 and begins to point towards the ticket office behind Kōtarō (Fig. 10), but cuts himself off before reaching a possible completion point, inserts the confirmation-soliciting "your ticket?" in line 44, then proceeds to distinguish again between the two options. This process leads into references to other station staff as relevant agents ("they") and instrumental orientation to the physical environment by pointing to the two different places for purchasing the two different cards. Kōtarō aligns himself to the clerk's pointing both verbally (continuers in lines 42, 45 and 47) and physically (Figs. 11 & 12), while keeping at least one hand anchored on the counter, in an example of how participants mutually elaborate the multiple semantic fields of their interaction and environment.

```
39     KOT:          [Wh wh where] WHERE: can I buy: (.) this:
40                   (0.2)
41     CLK:   >You can< ↑buy it  #from:=
       fig#                      #10
42     KOT:   =mhm
43             (0.4)
44     CLK:   yer ↑ticket? (.)  #You can buy from (.) the ticket office?
       fig#                     #11
45     KOT:   #uhun
       fig#   #12
46     CLK:   ↓You ↑want the Oyst↓er: you have to go downstairs↓
47     KOT:   [uhun  ]
48     CLK:   [to the] underground↓ so they do your Oyster
```


Fig. 10. Line 41. CLK: it #from:

Fig. 11. Line 44.

Fig. 12. Line 46. CLK: downstairs

2.3   Excerpt 3: Reversal in initiative for topic management

Between Excerpts 2 and 3, the clerk launched into an unsolicited narrative about how Kōtarō can reclaim the money from the unused credit on his Oyster Card when he leaves London. In Excerpt 3, K makes several attempts to close the topic opened at the end of Extract 3, finally forcing a topic change in lines 95 to 97, but saving face at the same time with a positive assessment. Figures 13 to 16 show how different the participation framework is at this point from the beginning of the enquiry, with the clerk's embodiment of his narrative through raised hands (approaching the space above the counter) and sideways head movements. However, Kōtarō's "okay" responses become increasingly perfunctory and eventually conclusive.

```
85     CLK:   #>So what you do is you can< gi- (0.3#)
       fig#   #13                                    #14
86            give in your- o-  they  #give you back (.) all your change
       fig#                           #15
87     KOT:   Ah:↑[ok↓ay:     ]
88     CLK:       [of money:]
89     KOT:   ↑o:k↓ay
90     CLK:   when you return your card
91     KOT:   uhun
92     CLK:   >You don't need to take your card a lot of (waste)  #going back
       fig#                                                       #16
93     KOT:   okay: okay: thank ↓you. #[An-]
94     CLK:                           #[You] ↑get your money ↓back.
       fig#                           #17
95     KOT:   >Yeah? (.) Alright  #(.) Thank ↓you ↑that's ↓ni#ce<
       fig#                       #18                        #19
96            An:d um #(0.4) are ↑there some:  #(0.4) um: >kind of<
       fig#           #20                      #21
97            (.) ↑lo:ck↓er:s (0.4) um in Kings Cross Station?
```


Fig. 13. Line 85. CLK: `you can`　　　　　Fig. 14. Line 85. CLK: `give in`

Fig. 15. Line 86. CLK　　　Fig. 16. Line 92. CLK　　　Fig. 17. Lines 93-94. KOT: `an-`

Fig. 18. Line 95　Fig. 19. Line 95　Fig. 20. Line 96　Fig. 21. Line 96. KOT: `some`

　　　Figures 17 and line 94 show how he has withdrawn to a straighter standing posture from the forward-leaning listening posture, and also how he attempts a turn entry by saying "And" and raising his hands. The clerk seems to orient to this withdrawal by returning to his neutral posture with hands resting on his desk and lowered gaze（Fig. 18）. In fact, just before this excerpt, Kōtarō had produced a change-of-state claim of understanding（"Oh I see. I see."）in the context of this narrative. Finally, in lines 95 to 97, Kōtarō

definitely closes down this topic with a rush-through positive assessment (accompanied by another double-handed baton, Fig. 19), leading into a perturbation ("And um") which projects a substantial turn, leading further into a "thinking face" with averted gaze (Fig. 20), only returning his gaze when the new topic is under way ("Are there some:"; Fig. 21). In this way, Kōtarō has demonstrated interactional competence in readjusting the participation framework to take control of the topic flow.

2.4　Excerpt 4: Closing

Just before Excerpt 4, another station clerk entered the area behind the counter, silently and without initiating any kind of interaction. Both Kōtarō and the clerk briefly glanced sideways at him but continued their own interaction regardless. He was thus partially ratified as a bystander in the sense that his presence did not provoke any undue reaction and was thus accepted. Excerpt 4 itself shows a relatively elaborate closing sequence for a train station enquiry, in which Kōtarō adjusts his participation framework from one of inward-leaning close attention and engagement (Fig. 22) in relation to the enquiry about the planned London Underground strike, towards the closing in an extended sequence of graded steps. In line 155, he says "okay" for the first of four times.

Fig. 22. Line 154. CLK: erm:

Fig. 23. Line 159. KOT: Okay.

```
154    CLK:   overground  [a nd ]#erm:
       fig#                        #22
155    KOT:               [okay  ]
156    CLK:   tram line dee el ar ((DLR))
157    KOT:   [okay   ]
158    CLK:   [an- and] ↑every other service ↑just(.)underground
159    KOT:   #Okay.
       fig#   #23
160           (0.5)
161    KOT:   Ok#ay.=
       fig#      #24
162    CLK:   =[Alright  ]
163    KOT:   =[↑THANK you] very MUCH.
164    CLK:   You're [ welcome  take  care       ]
165    KOT:          [£Thank(h) you very m#uch£ ]
       fig#                                #25
166           [°£Thank you£°]
167    CLK:   [  Bye bye        ]
168    KOT:   #£(y)eah? Bye bye.£ (0.5)#
       fig#   #26                      #27
```

Fig. 24. Line 161. KOT: `Okay.`

Fig. 25. Line 165. KOT: `m#uch. Thank you.`

Fig. 26. Line 168. KOT: `Yeah? Bye bye.`

Fig. 27. Line 168. 0.5s after final utterance.

His first two "okays" (lines 155 and 157) turned out to be overlapped with the clerk's concluding remarks about which transport services are or are not affected by the strike (lines 154 and 158). While these were uttered with continuing intonation, his next two "okays" (lines 159 and 161) are characterized by an intervening pause (line 160) rather than overlap, and not only are they uttered with conclusive falling intonation, they are also accompanied by modest but stepwise embodied withdrawal (Figs. 23 & 24). The clerk then orients to this with "alright", a token which simultaneously acknowledges the start of a closing and elicits confirmation that no further service is necessary. This is followed by three varied utterances of "thank you" (the second one ends on line 165; Fig. 25). In line 165, he simultaneously withdraws his hands from the counter and bows, thus emphasizing the withdrawal from the overall participation framework while also concluding it with a display of moral and affective stance. Final greetings take place with a mutually acknowledged distance (Fig. 26), after which Kōtarō breaks eye-contact, picks up a bag (Fig. 27) and leaves the counter.

3   Discussion and concluding remarks

3.1   Observations

This study has demonstrated how participants can adjust their participation frameworks and associated micro-contextual roles through language use and multimodal embodiment in a single interaction.

3.2   Methodological issues

The use of video and image-enhanced transcripts significantly enriches the analysis of talk-in-interaction. The role of the researcher in recording sessions needs to be carefully considered for future data gathering.

3.3   Implications for the development of communicative competence in a foreign language

These extracts show that acquiring communicative competence in a foreign language is not simply a matter of learning generic vocabulary, grammar structures, pronunciations and the like, but at some point, an acquisition of frame-switching practices using appropriate phrases and prosody in the target language. Even in what are presumed to be situations of institutional talk such as service encounters (Ventola, 1983, 2005), second language users can capitalize on the achievements in intersubjectivity to develop their language skills and interactional competences (Kurhila, 2004; Rine & Hall, 2011; Theodórsdóttir, 2011a, 2011b).

3.3　Concluding remarks

This kind of service encounter has shown itself to have promise as a perspicuous type of interaction. The findings of the study need to be corroborated with comparisons from a wider collection of recorded interactions.

Acknowledgements

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Transcription conventions

Talk has been transcribed according to conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (Jefferson, 2004; see also Brown & Elderton, 2016, 2017).

Multimodal details have been transcribed according to the following conventions (see Mondada, 2007, 2011, 2013):

* *	each participant's actions are delimited by the use of the same symbol
*--->	action described continues across subsequent lines
*--->>	action described continues until and after excerpt's end
--->*	action described continues until the same symbol is reached
>>--	action described begins before the excerpt's beginning
....	action's preparation
,,,,	action's retraction
kot	participant doing the action is identified in small characters when he is not the current speaker or when the gesture is done during a pause
resL	researcher's left hand
resR	researcher's right hand
kotG	Kōtarō's gaze
fig	figure; screen shot
#	shows the exact moment at which the screen shot has been recorded