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While work analyzing the structures of conversation has predominantly been carried out under the methodology of Conversation Analysis (hereafter called CA), which seeks to explore the interactional accomplishment of the participants in a particular context as it develops turn-by-turn, Tsui's approach to analyzing conversation in *English Conversation* is one which proposes a descriptive framework for the sequential patterning of conversational utterances. Based on the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) model in which interactional coherence is considered at the level of exchange structures, in particular the initiation-response-feedback (I-R-F) exchange, Tsui develops a taxonomy which both classifies utterances and predicts which classifications of utterances can follow others based on an utterance's (1) structural location, (2) prospective classification, and (3) retrospective classification. Throughout the book, Tsui argues that her framework, because it is based on both the sequential patterns of conversation and linguistic features, is more valid and comprehensive than other approaches.

In her Overview (Chapter 1), Tsui discusses two different sets of units of conversational description—*turn, pair*, and *sequence*, used in CA, and those which she favors—*act, move*, and *exchange*, proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). In her arguments both against the terms used in CA and in favor of the Sinclair and Coulthard terms, Tsui demonstrates some misunderstanding of both frameworks, as well as a lack of understanding that the two approaches to analyzing speech are seeking to answer very different questions.

Tsui's adaptation and expansion of the Sinclair and Coulthard model confuses conversation with formalized institutional talk. The Sinclair/Coulthard model, with its terms *act, move*, and *exchange*, was developed to describe classroom interaction, specifically, that classroom interaction which is often referred to as "traditional," in which "the teacher [is] at the front of the class `teaching', and therefore likely to be exerting the maximum amount of control over the structure of the discourse" (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, p. 6). The overall structure of this type of discourse is vastly different from, and certainly

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much more constrained than ordinary conversation, and even other types of classroom interaction.

Tsui argues that the terms *turn* and *sequence* used in CA are invalid because they are not well defined. For example, when Tsui argues that the term turn, while an easily identifiable unit, is not well-defined, and gives as her reason that in any one turn, a speaker may "do" more than one thing, she is imposing a speech-act-y definition on a term for which CA not only makes no claims of how many things are "done" within that turn, but often points out that very fact (e.g., Schegloff, frth.). Tsui's strongest objection is with the term sequence—she states that sometimes a sequence is actually a pair, while at other times it is actually made up of three or four turns. But again, a sequence in CA is not defined by the number of turns of which it is constructed, but rather by the interactional achievement accomplished by the participants.

Based as Tsui's taxonomy is, on the three-part exchange structure of Initiation-Response-Followup, Tsui devotes all of Chapter 2 to elaborating her dissatisfaction with the CA term pair, and argues, instead, that the basic unit of discourse is a three-part unit. Clearly, Tsui does not understand what is meant in CA by the term adjacency pair; while an adjacency pair is considered to be a basic unit of discourse, there is no claim made that all utterances are part of such a pair. Tsui seems to be considering only minimal, two-turn adjacancy pair sequences, and is overlooking entirely the sizable literature which discusses the various expansions of adjacency pairs (Sacks, 1992 [1972]; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Schegloff, 1988; Schegloff, 1990; Schegloff, 1992; Schegloff, in process), which can occur in a variety of positions: "preexpansion before the first part of the pair, insert expansion between the first and second, and postexpansion after the second pair part" (Schegloff, 1990, p. 59). In this literature it is demonstrated that a great number of turns may occur, all of which are built around a single adjacency pair.

Rather, building on Berry's (1981) claim that a third part is obligatory in some types of exchanges, Tsui states that some type of follow-up, either verbal or non-verbal, is the norm (for all discourse), thus making a three-part exchange the fundamental conversational unit. To make her argument, Tsui offers examples of conversational data, some of which are invented, and some of which are naturally-occurring. However, it must be pointed out that a number of the naturally-occurring data are taken from Sinclair/Coulthard, and are thus examples of institutionalized, classroom discourse. Nontheless, if we adopt the view that the three-part unit is indeed the "basic unit," then we must have an explanation for the noticably-lacking third part from those two-part sequences (of which there are plenty) which are found in naturally-occurring data. Unfortunately, Tsui offers no such explanation. However, if we adopt the view that the two-part unit

is the "basic unit," then the third part is accounted for by adjacency pair expansions (Schegloff, in process).

At any rate, Tsui builds her taxonomy on the three-part unit, and, after a brief outline of the taxonomy in Chapter 3, she develops her framework in great detail over the next 6 chapters. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 explicate the Initiating acts of *elicitation, requestive, directive,* and *informative*, respectively. Each of these subclasses of Initiating Act contains a number of (sub?)-subclasses; for example, *elicitation* contains *inform, confirm, agree, commit, repeat,* and *clarify.* Tsui's classification of Initiating acts are the most detailed and clear-cut in her taxonomy. In these chapters, she argues against some of the other approaches for classifying these discourse acts, for example, the study of questions by Quirk, et al., (1972, 1985), which divides questions into the following three categories: yes/no, WH-, and alternative. Through examples (again, some naturally-occurring and some invented), Tsui shows that her subclasses more thoroughly cover the range of possibilities in various conversational situations.

Chapter 8 details the subclasses of Responding acts, which Tsui first categorizes into the three main subclasses of *positive, negative,* and *temporization.* Further categorizations are made of each of these subclasses, depending on the type of initiation the response follows. Basically, a positive response does what the initiation requires—if the Initiation were an elicit:confirm, then a positive response to such an initiation would provide the confirmation sought. A negative response is one which in some way challenges the pragmatic presuppositions of the initiation; for example, the respondant may not have the information required to confirm the initiation. A temporization is a response which in some way puts off both positive and negative reponses until some later time. While the classifications of initiation acts seem quite thorough, once we have confined ourselves to a finite set of initiation acts, the responding acts which follow must be even more constrained. Consequently, the categories of responses do not seem to cover as thoroughly all of the possibilities which can, and do, occur in conversation.

In Chapter 9, Tsui develops the subclasses of the third move, the Followup. She divides these acts into only three subclasses, with no further dividion beyond that level. According to Tsui, an *endorsement* follows a positive response, a *concession* follows a negative response and the third category, *acknowledgement*, is a cross subclass which can follow all three subclasses of resposne. A second followup act may occur, in a position subsequent to the first followup, but this will consist solely of an acknowledgement token such as *yeah, okay,* or *alright*; this second followup is seen as a turn-passing act. Again, given a finite set of initiations, and a smaller set of responses, we end up with a very small and restricted set of followups.

In Chapter 10, after applying the framework to an actual telephone call, and detailing the "systems of choices" available, and the choices actually made at each turn of the call, Tsui turns her attention to some of the shortcomings of her taxonomy. She gives examples of naturally-occurring conversation which operate beyond the exchange level, such as openings, pre-closings, insertions sequences, and sequence-final follow-up moves. Tsui states, "In order to account for the structural function of this kind of utterance, we need to look at the structure of the unit above the exchange, possibly a *sequence* [emphasis added]" (p. 243). With this one statement, Tsui deconstructs her entire framework, for she not only points out its inability to account for a number of common conversational practices, but she also proposes the very term which she describes as the "least well-defined" in CA as the one which may, after all, be appropriate to describe conversational interaction.

While Tsui's approach to integrating linguistic features, discourse functions, and the sequential aspects of conversation is an heroic effort, and her reasoning for the inadequacy of other attempts to categorize utterance types as discourse acts is often sound, *English Conversation* perhaps tries to do too much. A framework such as this has definite applications for describing the systems of choices in very particular institutuional contexts, such as the so-called traditional classroom setting for which the Sinclair/Coulthard model was designed. However, the aplication of this kind of formalism to a wide variety of contexts, both institutional and "ordinary," seems to lose sight of the social relations and the ways in which the participants show their orientation to the context in which they are interacting.

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