STARKEY DUNCAN, JR. & DONALD W. FISKE, *Face-to-face interaction: Research, methods, and theory*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (distributor Halsted (Wiley)), New York, 1977. Pp. 361.

The face-to-face interaction examined in this work is restricted to conversation, though it includes detailed analysis of non-vocal as well as vocal behavior of participants. The core of the book consists of studies of videotaped, two-person conversations from two very different perspectives: first, an 'external variable study' correlating selected actions of each participant with other acts that he or she performed, actions of the partner, and a range of measures obtained from self-reports; secondly, a 'structural' study investigating sequences of actions as an organized system with reference to the issue of how turns are exchanged in conversation. There is, in addition, a preliminary methodological section in which the authors argue against attempts to control variables by manipulating confederates' actions and in favor of an empirically based, naturalistic research strategy. A concluding section proposes a 'metatheory' focusing on the study of conventions, situations, and interaction strategies.

One of the very strong points of this work is the comparison its two studies provide of alternative approaches to the study of face-to-face interaction. External variable studies are, of course, the mainstay of much research in the contemporary social sciences, including some approaches to sociolinguistics. The study reported here is more comprehensive than most, including almost 50 variables and 88 subjects and leads to a variety of substantive findings (for example, very little correlation between self-reports and observed behavior). The authors, however, find that it tells them far less about the structure, organization and details of the phenomena being investigated than the structural study, stating explicitly (123): 'Our substantive findings from our studies of correlates of acts in interaction do not impress us.' They argue (131–2) that among the major failings of a study of this type is the fact that it separates acts from the specific acts preceding them, thus treating context as a global variable, when, in fact, the most relevant context for the production of a particular action would seem to be the immediate interactive one and especially the acts that the other participant has just performed.

In an attempt to deal with such issues, the structural study took as its point

of departure the detailed, naturalistic analysis of human interaction by investigators from a number of different disciplines eventually reported in *The natural history of an interview* (McQuown 1971). Work began with the careful, syllable-by-syllable transcription of both the speech and the body movement of participants in a two-person conversation (an initial interview at a counselling center). It was found that many of the phenomena being transcribed tended to cluster together at points of speaker transition. Analysis then focused on turn-taking and culminated in the development of a model for this process. The model, designed to provide for the avoidance of overlap at speaker transition, contains a number of different components, including (1) postulated participant states (speaker and auditor) and interaction states (the four possible speaker–auditor combinations); (2) hypothesized states of participant transition readiness; (3) a set of cues described in terms of specific actions, location restrictions on those actions, and specifications of the time for which a cue is active; (4) rules organizing the signals and specifying permissible sequences of actions; (5) moves; and (6) units of interaction. A speaker prepared to yield the floor displays one or more of the following signals: rising or falling (but not sustained) pitch at the end of a phonemic clause, drawl in the final syllable of a phonemic clause, the termination of a hand movement used during the turn, a number of stereotyped expressions such as 'you know' which may be accompanied by a drop in pitch, and the termination of a grammatical clause. It is found that the more cues displayed by a speaker, the greater the chance that transition to a new speaker will occur. The speaker has, however, the ability to negate the force of any of these cues with another action, the speaker gesticulation signal, which consists of a hand gesture continuing over the place where the cue is displayed. It is argued that the turn system is permissive rather than coercive, i.e. that after the appropriate signals are displayed the auditor has the opportunity to take the floor but is not required to do so.

The model for turn-taking proposed by Duncan & Fiske is but one of several that have appeared in recent years, the most notable alternative analysis of this process being that of Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974). It is therefore possible to compare the present work with other analyses of the same process.

In order to be able to examine in detail the specific predictions the different systems make about phenomena found in conversation, the structure of the Sacks model will be briefly described. The system consists of two components and a set of rules. The Turn-Constructional Component specifies some of the properties of unit-type usable for the construction of turns, including projectability of both the unit-type under way and what will constitute appropriate completion of that unit. In beginning a turn, a speaker is initially entitled to only one such unit. The first possible completion of that unit constitutes an initial place where possible transition to another speaker becomes relevant. The Turn-Allocation Component distinguishes two groups of techniques for allocating the

next turn: those where the current speaker selects the next speaker and those where the next speaker self-selects. The first of the two rules in the system operates at an initial transition-relevance place and provides for three possibilities: (a) that if a 'current speaker selects next' allocation technique is used, then transfer to the party so selected occurs at this place; (b) that if such an allocation technique has not been used then self-selection is permitted but not required at this place; and (c) that if another does not self-select then current speaker may, but need not, continue. The second rule provides that, in those cases where current speaker continues into a new turn-constructional unit, the rule set reapplies at the next transition-relevance place and others that follow it until transfer to a new speaker occurs.

The two systems are quite different. Like a number of other investigators, Duncan & Fiske see transition to a new speaker as being accomplished via the use of specific signals just prior to the point of transition (for a particularly clear statement of this view, see Jaffe & Feldstein 1971: 17) and focus their analysis on the discovery of these signals and the specification of their properties. For Sacks and his colleagues, however, displays indicating that a unit has come to a point of possible completion are subordinate to the alternative possibilities for action created at such a point by factors such as the use of different speaker allocation techniques.

The systems can lead to different statements about the phenomena they seek to come to terms with. For example, Duncan & Fiske argue that the turn-system is permissive rather than coercive. The system of Sacks and his colleagues includes places where transition to a new speaker *is* required (after the use of a 'current speaker selects next' technique) as well as places where it is not (when such a technique has not been used). This latter analysis would appear to be more accurate. For example, if, after a first pair part such as a greeting, question or summons (the most common type of 'current selects next' technique), silence occurs, that silence is heard to belong not to the current speaker's turn but to that of the party selected to speak next (consider, for example, the silence of a student after a teacher has addressed him a question). A first pair part thus has enough coercive power to transfer speakership even prior to the point where its addressee produces talk.

By distinguishing different types of turn-allocation techniques, Sacks and his colleagues provide not only a more accurate description of the turn-taking phenomena encountered within conversation, but also a more detailed study of the machinery involved. For example, the systematic study of Adjacency Pairs, the most general type of sequence implicated in the selection of next speaker by current speaker, has revealed the presence of common patterns of organization in a range of apparently diverse sequences, from greetings to insults, that occur pervasively in conversation (for some analysis of adjacency pairs see Schegloff & Sacks 1973: 295–99; as well as Sacks 1972).

Differences in both analytic power and the detail with which phenomena are described are apparent in other areas as well. For example, Duncan & Fiske's analysis of the phenomenon of a next speaker finishing a prior speaker's sentence is restricted to examining it as a type of 'back channel' behavior (201–2). For Sacks, phenomena such as this led to the detailed specification of procedures for tying a subsequent utterance to a prior one (Sacks 1966, 1967) as well as the argument, deep in its implications for anyone interested in the relationship between language and society, that sentence structure is a form of social organization (Sacks 1968: 5–7). Among the syntactic phenomena dealt with by the turn-taking system of Sacks and his colleagues are decisions between left-embedded and conjoined sentence structures (1974: 708, 720–1), and the extension of sentences past initial completion points, including the production of a tag question as a way of closing this expansion by requiring that the other take the floor (*ibid.*: 718). Such phenomena lead to the argument (for example, *ibid.*: 709) that the relevant syntactic objects oriented to by participants are not sentences but *possible* sentences (a distinction quite crucial to any theory purporting to account for how human beings construct sentences but one rarely if ever dealt with by linguistic theories that analyze sentences as fixed, static objects, divorced from the interactive context within which they emerge in the natural world). The system of Duncan & Fiske includes the possibility of a current speaker continuing past a possible completion point, but the authors do not address the syntactic and large theoretical implications of this phenomenon. Neither do Duncan & Fiske investigate gap (silence between turns), stating (178) that it did not occur in their data. It would, however, seem that in so far as gap is one of the basic sequential possibilities arising at turn-transition, a structural alternative to both smooth transition and overlap, it cannot be ignored in any general theory of turn-taking. The system of Sacks and his colleagues does provide for gap, including the possibility that a gap may be transformed into a within-turn pause when a current speaker continues after a period of silence during which a recipient does not self-select (1974: 715, footnote 26). The rules proposed by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson are also found to provide organization for a range of phenomena that initially appear quite unrelated to turn-taking. For example, orientation by participants to the provision that a speaker is initially entitled to only one turn-constructional unit produces one of the characteristic shapes taken by the telling of stories in conversation. In order to systematically produce a multi-unit story, a speaker first produces a single-unit story preface offering to tell the story. The recipient then answers in a second turn and only then, if the offer is accepted, does the speaker produce the multi-unit turn (for analysis of this process see Sacks 1974). The system of Duncan & Fiske does not provide for the orderly production of multi-unit turns in this fashion, only the admitting possibility that a speaker can negate the effect of possible transition points with the speaker-gesticulation signal.

Sacks' treatment of stories also demonstrates some of the differences in methodology underlying the two systems. For Duncan & Fiske, the presence of sequences is established by statistical regularities (142–3). For Sacks, the relevance of a candidate phenomenon is demonstrated by showing how the participants orient to the proposed feature in the details of their talk (for an example of this mode of analysis applied specifically to the determination of the presence of sequence, see Schegloff's (1968: 1083) discussion of 'conditional relevance'). Finally, the turn-taking system of Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson contains the possibility of describing in a highly ordered way, not only conversation but also a range of other speech-exchange systems, such as debates, interviews, and ceremonies, in terms of specific constraints on, or transformation of, basic turn-taking rules for conversation (Sacks 1974: 729–31). In essence, the system of Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson would seem to provide a more precise, detailed and accurate analysis of the phenomena relevant to turn-taking found in conversation than that of Duncan & Fiske.

The core of Duncan & Fiske's analysis is directed toward specific phenomena at turn-transition, and their work here is both admirably thorough and solid. Some questions may, however, be raised about ways in which some phenomena are handled. Consider, for example, their treatment of terminal intonation contours. In their system, a sustained terminal contour is considered unmarked, while clauses with both rising and falling contours are lumped together as intonation-marked clauses (184). While both rising and falling contours do mark points of possible speaker transition, there are, nevertheless, significant differences between them (see, for example, Schegloff 1977: 433), differences that may on occasion be implicated in phenomena such as displaying the presence or absence of 'a current selects next' technique. Lumping these contours together makes disentangling such distinctions difficult, and this may be relevant to the failure of Duncan & Fiske to distinguish alternative speaker-allocation techniques and their argument that the turn-system is essentially permissive. The particular way in which the contours are divided into marked and unmarked clauses is also open to question. Lieberman, after analyzing in detail processes involved in the production of the breath-group, argued that the falling contour should be considered unmarked (1967: 26–7), while both the sustained and rising contours constitute variants of the marked breath-group (*ibid.*: 105). Viewing the sustained contour as something other than 'unmarked' might be quite relevant to analyzing its function in the process of speaker-transition. The possibility then arises that this contour, rather than being some sort of base state is, like the speaker-gesticulation signal, doing special work to actively negate the possibility of turn-transition otherwise relevant at the end of a phonemic clause. Thus Lieberman argues (*ibid.*: 168) that this contour 'serves as a phonetic cue that helps to tell the listener that the sentence is not yet over'.

In addition to their work on the turn-system, Duncan & Fiske also examine

a variety of auditor behaviors, such as head nods and requests for clarification, and investigate some of the communication that occurs between speaker and hearer within the turn. Among their more interesting findings in this area is the description of cues distinguishing 'back channel' verbalizations by an auditor from those claiming speakership.

Despite questions that can be raised about aspects of the analysis this book remains an important work, one that provides solid, fruitful and interesting study of a range of phenomena. It should certainly be read by anyone interested in the detailed organization of face-to-face interaction.

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