

A Conversational Analysis of Speech Overlap Found in Communication Classroom

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Abstract: *This study aimed to explore the categories and types of speech overlap used in communication classrooms at Cagayan State University – Carig Campus, specifically under the College of Humanities and Social Sciences – Department of Arts and Humanities. The study used the descriptive-qualitative method. The data were gathered from the eight recorded communication classrooms through audio-recording. The study used the four-part analytic method: Record-View/Listen-Transcribe-Analyze (R-V/L-T-A). Moreover, conversational analysis was utilized. Recorded classroom discourses were transcribed and analyzed through the use of frequency counts and percentages. Based on the model developed by Scghegloff (2000) and Adda (2007), the study shows that the category of speech overlap that manifested most was Non-Competitive overlap while the type of speech overlap that occurred most was Complementary overlap. Although several proponents negatively perceive speech overlaps, this study views the occurrence of speech overlaps positively as it displays the engagement of the students in the classroom discussion. The interlocutors provide answers and assist each other's utterances which make the interaction interactive and collaborative. With this, the study concluded that the interlocutors are motivated to express their ideas and engage themselves in classroom discussions. This implies that the interaction in the communication classroom is indeed dynamic and communicative for it centers on students' maximum participation.*

Keywords—Speech Overlap; Competitive Overlap; Non-Competitive Overlap

1. INTRODUCTION

Every living creature in this world has its means of communicating. However, only humans can communicate using a language. Language is the expression of ideas using speech sounds combined into words. Humans can manipulate language to share or express themselves in a conversation.

According to Nolasco (1987), the purpose of conversation includes the exchange of information, the formation, and maintenance of social relationships such as friendship, the negotiation of status and social roles, and the decision and execution of joint actions. Collaboration and participation between speakers and listeners are essential for effective communication.

There are two types of conversational style, according to Coates. One is the 'cooperative style of communication.' It encourages other speakers and uses language to emphasize their solidarity with the other person (2004). It builds on each other's good ideas and collaborates to create something good by encouraging other speakers. The other type of conversational style is the 'competitive style of communication.' Their competitive style emphasizes their individuality while emphasizing the hierarchical relationships they form with others.

For a smooth flow of conversation, Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson proposed a model of turn-taking where the speakers and listeners have their designated turn or floor (1974). The current speaker should be at the point of completion before another speaker can take a turn on the floor. However, when it comes to communication, there are a myriad of irregularities that could occur. People, especially

during a natural conversation, would not know who among them has the right to start the topic or be the next speaker. If the first speaker is unspecified in the group of interlocutors, they could only resort to self-selection. This self-selection will only encourage other speakers to speak once the current speaker reaches his or her completion. As observed in this type of situation, one of the noticeable irregularities that could happen is an overlap. Consequently, overlaps were considered as a violation of the fundamental rule of turn-taking (Sacks et al, 1974). Johnson (1997) added that overlap is considered a violation of the current speaker's turn at a talk, specifically of their right to speak.

Overlaps are instances of slight over-anticipation by the next speaker (Coates). Instead of immediately following the current speaker, the next speaker speaks at the end of the current speaker's turn, overlapping the last word or a portion of it (2004). Furthermore, speech overlapping occurs when two or more people attempt to speak at the same time as the current interlocutor. Actual overlap occurs when two interlocutors begin their turns simultaneously, and neither passes (Levinson, 2013).

Classroom discussion is a procedure in which the instructor and students share their perspectives on a topic that is currently or has been tackled. Students may benefit from learning from one another and greater understanding and retention of the lecture by participating in and contributing to classroom conversations. A classroom is one example of a place where students can share their knowledge and ask questions about a particular topic. Traditionally, classroom discourse as observed by Sinclair and Couthard, has very ordered turn-taking controlled by the teacher, and students seldom speak out of turn. However, due to the recent trends

in classroom organization in pair and group work, the classroom became one of the places where speech overlap could occur. There is no importance in telling the learners that speakers take turns because they know this is as natural as their language. Conversely, according to Nunan and Bailey (2009), classroom discourse is the distinctive type of interaction that occurs between and among learners. It is an approach in which learners are encouraged to use the language in different contexts. With this, the teacher must create an environment in which learners are free to express their thoughts and share their ideas, thus, making the L2 classroom more meaningful and interactive. In this way, analyzing classroom interaction is deemed vital.

A student's speech could interrupt their teacher or vice versa, or students could overlap each other's speech. Cagayan State University (CSU), which provides different programs catering to thousands of students, is still not excused for speech overlaps. These speech overlaps are evident during classroom discussions at CSU, especially if the discussion requires engagement and interaction between the teacher and the students. Interactive classroom discussions could disrupt the flow of talk of the teacher or the student/s. Could this perhaps have a positive or negative impact on the classroom discussion?

In this premise, the researchers observed and analyzed categories and types of speech overlaps that occur in communication classes.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore how speech overlap occurs in the ESL classrooms at Cagayan State University.

Specifically, it intended to identify and categorize the types of speech overlap manifested by communication students during class discussions in ESL classrooms at Cagayan State University and to investigate the occurrences and patterns of speech overlap in classroom interaction, delving into the way's different types of speech overlap manifest in the ESL classroom setting.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study utilized the descriptive research design. Thus, the study is predominantly qualitative. The method was employed since this study aims to accurately and comprehensively describe prevailing conditions, practices, trends, and phenomena (Calderon 2006).

3.2 RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The participants of the study were the communication classes from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences – Department of Arts and Humanities, specifically the students

of Bachelor of Arts in Communication, Bachelor of Science in Development Communication, Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies, and Bachelor of Science in Industrial and Commercial Communication.

3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The study utilized audio recording as the primary instrument for gathering the data from the eight (8) communication classes. The abovementioned instrument was used to record the occurrences of speech overlap during the classroom discussion.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data gathered were analyzed using the frequency count and percentage.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency and percentage distribution of categories of speech overlap in communication classrooms.

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of categories of speech overlap in eight communication classrooms. The table shows that with a frequency of 426 or 55.91% the category Non-competitive Overlap occurred most in the communication classroom. On the other hand, Competitive Overlap had a frequency of 336 or 44.09%.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Categories of Speech Overlap in Communication Classrooms.

Categories of Speech Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Non-Competitive	426	55.91%
Competitive	336	44.09%
TOTAL	762	100%

The tables presented below are the types of speech overlap that occurred in the classroom interaction.

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T1's classroom discourse.

Table 2.1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the types of speech overlap manifested in the classroom discussion of T1. The table shows that the most frequently used speech overlap was Chordal/Choral and Conditional Access to the Turn with 14 or 27.5%. It was followed by Turn Stealing with a frequency of 9 or 17.6%. Then Terminal and Anticipated Turn Taking had a frequency of 5 or 10.8%. Lastly, Complementary overlap had a frequency of 4 or 7.8%.

Table 2.1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T1’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Chordal/Choral	14	27.5%
Conditional Access to the Turn	14	27.5%
Turn Stealing	9	17.6%
Terminal	5	9.8%
Anticipated Turn-taking	5	9.8%
Complementary	4	7.8%
Back-channel	0	0%
Continuers	0	0%
TOTAL	51	100%

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T2’s classroom discourse.

Table 2.2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in Teacher's 2 classroom discourse. Complementary overlap occurred most in the classroom discourse with a frequency of 36 or 63.16%. Further, Chordal and Conditional Access to the Turn had the same frequency of 5 or 8.77%. The three types of speech overlap that had the same frequency of 3 or 5.26% are Turn stealing, Terminal, and Anticipated Turn-taking. On the other hand, the least occurred types of overlap are Back-channel and Continuers, with a frequency of 1 or 1.75%.

Table 2.2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T2’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Complementary	36	63.16%
Chordal	5	8.77%
Conditional Access to the Turn	5	8.77%
Terminal	3	5.26%
Turn to steal	3	5.26%
Anticipated Turn-taking	3	5.26%
Back-channel	1	1.75%
Continuers	1	1.75%
TOTAL	57	100%

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T3’s classroom discourse.

Table 2.3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the types of speech overlap manifested in the classroom discussion of T3. The table shows that the most frequently used speech overlap is Chordal/Choral with 68 or 35.23%. It was followed by Complementary with a frequency of 46 or 23.83%. Then Conditional Access to the Turn had a

frequency of 17 or 8.8%. Back-channeling and Continuers had a frequency of 16 or 6.22%. Terminal and Anticipated Turn Taking had a frequency of 12 or 0.06%. Lastly, Turn Stealing had a frequency of 6 or 3.1%.

Table 2.3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T3’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Chordal/Choral	68	35.23%
Complementary	46	23.83%
Conditional Access to the Turn	17	8.8%
Back-channel	16	8.3%
Continuers	16	8.3%
Terminal	12	6.22%
Anticipated Turn-Taking	12	6.22%
Turn Stealing	6	3.1%
TOTAL	193	100%

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T4’s classroom discourse.

Table 2.4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the types of speech overlap manifested in the classroom discussion of T4. The table shows that the most frequently used speech overlap is Complementary with 98 or 0.49.49%. It was followed by Chordal/Choral with a frequency of 41 or 20.7%. Then Conditional Access to the Turn had a frequency of 40 or 20.2%. Back-channeling, Continuers, and Turn Stealing had a frequency of 5 or 2.53%. Lastly, Anticipated Turn-Taking and Terminal overlap had a frequency of 2 or 1.01%.

Table 2.4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T4’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Complementary	98	49.49%
Chordal/Choral	41	20.7%
Conditional Access to the Turn	40	20.2%
Back-channel	5	2.53%
Continuers	5	2.53%
Turn Stealing	5	2.53%
Anticipated Turn-Taking	2	1.01%
Terminal	2	1.01%
TOTAL	198	100%

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T5’s classroom discourse.

Table 2.5 displays the frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in Teacher’s 5 classroom

discourse. Regarding the Complementary, it had a frequency of 46 or 44.23%. As per the Chordal, it had a frequency of 28 or 26.92%, followed by Conditional Access to the Turn, with a frequency of 19 or 18.27%. On the other hand, Back-channel and Continuers had the same frequency of 4 or 3.85%. Furthermore, with a frequency of 1 or 0.96%, Turn stealing, Terminal, and Turn-taking are the least occurred types of overlap in the classroom discourse.

Table 2.5: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T5’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Complementary	46	44.23%
Chordal/Choral	28	26.92%
Conditional Access to the Turn	19	18.27%
Back-channel	4	3.85%
Continuers	4	3.85%
Turn Stealing	1	0.96%
Terminal	1	0.96%
Anticipated Turn-taking	1	0.96%
TOTAL	104	100%

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T6’s classroom discourse.

Table 2.6 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in Teacher's 6 classroom. Complementary occurred most in Teacher's 6 classroom discussions with a frequency of 15 or 65.2%. Meanwhile, Chordal had a frequency of 3 or 13.04%. Then, Conditional Access to the Turn with a frequency of 2 or 8.70%. Consequently, three types of speech overlap that had the same frequency of 1 or 4.35%: Turn stealing, Terminal, and Anticipated Turn-taking. Based on the table above, shows that there is no occurrence of Back-channel and Continuers.

Table 2.6: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T6’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Complementary	15	65.2%
Chordal/Choral	3	13.04%
Conditional Access to the Turn	2	8.70%
Turn Stealing	1	4.35%
Terminal	1	4.35%
Anticipated Turn-taking	1	4.35%
Back-channel	0	0
Continuers	0	0
TOTAL	23	100%

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T7’s classroom discourse.

Table 2.7 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in Teacher 7 classroom discussion. The table shows that the type of overlap that occurred most in Teacher 5's classroom discussion was Complementary, with a frequency of 45 or 48.39%, followed by Conditional Access to the Turn, with a frequency of 21 or 22.58%, respectively. Then, Chordal with a frequency of 19 or 20.43%. Further, the Turn stealing had a frequency of 6 or 6.45%. On the other hand, the two types of speech overlap that had the same frequency of 1 or 1.08% were Terminal and Anticipated Turn-taking. In terms of the Continuers and Back-channeling, there is no occurrence of the aforementioned types of overlap in Teacher 5's classroom.

Table 2.7: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T7’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Complementary	45	48.39%
Conditional Access to the Turn	21	22.58%
Chordal	19	20.43%
Turn Stealing	6	6.45%
Terminal	1	1.08%
Anticipated Turn-taking	1	1.08%
Back-channel	0	0
Continuers	0	0
TOTAL	93	100%

Frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in T8’s classroom discourse.

Table 2.8 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the types of speech overlap manifested in the classroom discussion of T8. The table shows that the most frequently used speech overlap is Chordal/Choral with 21 or 48.83%. It was followed by Complementary with a frequency of 9 or 20.93%. Then Turn Stealing had a frequency of 6 or 13.95%. Back-channeling and Continuers had a frequency of 2 or 4.65%. Lastly, Terminal, Anticipated Turn Taking, and Conditional Access to the Turn had a frequency of 1 or 2.33%.

Table 2.8: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in T8’s Classroom Discourse

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Chordal/Choral	21	48.83%
Complementary	9	20.93%
Turn Stealing	6	13.95%
Back-channeling	2	4.65%
Continuers	2	4.65%
Terminal	1	2.33%

Anticipated Turn-Taking	1	2.33%
Conditional Access to the Turn	1	2.33%
TOTAL	43	100%

Overall frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in communication classrooms.

Table 2.9 presents the overall frequency and percentage distribution of speech overlap in communication classrooms. As shown in the table above, Complementary had a frequency of 299 or 39.24% occurred the most in the communication classrooms. Followed by the Chordal/choral, with a frequency of 199 or 26.12%. Then, Conditional Access to the Turn with a frequency of 119 or 15.62%. Further, Turn stealing had a frequency of 37 or 4.86%. On the other hand, Back-channeling and Continuers had a frequency of 28 or 3.67% while Terminal and Anticipated Turn Taking had a frequency of 26 or 3.41%.

Table 2.9: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Speech Overlap in Communication Classroom (Overall Computation)

Types of Overlap	Frequency	Percentage
Complementary	299	39.24%
Chordal	199	26.12%
Conditional Access to the Turn	119	15.62%
Turn Stealing	37	4.86%
Back-channel	28	3.67%
Continuers	28	3.67%
Terminal	26	3.41%
Anticipated Turn-taking	26	3.41%
TOTAL	762	100%

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of the research, one of the most important aspects of the interaction that takes place inside a classroom is the incidence of speech overlap. Both how the students answer and the extent to which they participate in the classroom discussion are directly influenced by the formulation of the questions asked by the instructors to provide them with conditional access to the turn. Because interlocutors were talking to each other and trading ideas and responses, it was inevitable that their utterances would sometimes overlap with each other. Generally speaking, speech overlaps are often viewed as a violation or perceived negatively, however, the data of this study shows that it is not the case in the communication classroom and it would appear that the frequent occurrence of speech overlap in the discourse made the classroom discourse livelier, engaging, and instructive. This suggests that the conversation in the

communication classroom is particularly cooperative and dynamic for it centers on the maximum participation of the students. An informative classroom discussion requires participation from both the instructor and the students in the class

In this light, this study suggests expanding the setting to observe a greater proportion of participants coming from other content areas or other disciplines. Since natural or informal conversation usually takes place outside the classroom setting, speech overlap may also be explored outside the classroom. Moreover, future research may also look at other aspects of communication like turn-taking, pauses, repairing, adjacency pairs, or kinds of questioning inside the classroom.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers would like to extend their loudest appreciation to those who have continued to lend a hand in preparing and completing this study.

Dr. Jomel B. Manuel, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and thesis adviser, for sharing his expertise and knowledge in the field of research that led to the successful completion of this study. For his words of encouragement, patience, and time that truly made this study a reality;

Dr. Chirbet C. Ayunon, Dr. Michael B. Lavadia, Prof. Charisse C. Caronan, and Prof. Patrianne M. Padua, for their unending support and supervision throughout the process of conducting this study;

Participants for allowing them to observe and record their class discussion, for their time, effort, and cooperation during the conduct of the study;

Parents, for their unwavering assistance, courage, effort, and everlasting love in their endeavors;

Above all, to the Almighty God for His blessings that made it achievable for this study to be undertaken, as well as for providing the researchers with the knowledge and fortitude to triumph over the problems they faced while conducting this research.

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