

# Turn-Taking in Political Interviews and Its Impact on Building Government Credibility

Yingjuan Yao<sup>1</sup>, Bowen Liu<sup>2</sup> & Yun Li<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Foreign Languages, Shandong University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China

<sup>2</sup>School of Foreign Languages, Liaoning Normal University, Dalian, China

Correspondence: Yun Li, School of Foreign Languages, Shandong University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China.

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## Abstract

Television political inquiry is conducted through question-and-answer exchanges with host and government officials on prominent livelihood issues, which helps to improve the efficiency of government governance. Interview participants' identity, communicative intention, power, and contextual factors have a significant impact on the discourse choices of both parties. This research clarifies the mechanism by which communicators mobilize appropriate discourse strategies to promote the solution of social problems. It adopts qualitative research method and conversation analysis to interpret interview participants' talk-in-interaction and discourse strategies in "Ask Government Affairs of Shandong". Research finds that adjacency pairs in political interview perform social behaviors such as greetings, requests, suggestions, apologies, acknowledgement. Interview participants' turn-taking is divided into claiming for the turn, holding the turn, and giving up the turn. Discourse strategies such as insertion, interruption, and repetition are adopted to claim for the turn. Discourse markers and conversation repair are applied in communicators' turn-holding stage. Communicators adopt explicit nominations, vague job designations, and silence strategies to give up the turn. Clear, accurate, and highly relevant official responses are conducive to projecting a responsible government image and improving government credibility. The phenomenon of avoidance, hesitation, and pause in official response is likely to cause the masses to question government officials' work capability, which is not conducive to establishing a positive and trustworthy government image. Suggestions for optimizing the process setting of political interview and official responses are provided to enhance the effect of political enquiry.

**Keywords:** conversation analysis, adjacency pairs, turn-taking, credibility

## 1. Media-based Governance and Television Political Inquiry

Media-based governance means that governance subjects give full play to the unique role of media in social governance (Ding, 2022), which is favored by social management departments because media can spread information quickly and form a strong influence. Government departments combine media platforms such as television, microblog, and government portal websites, with digital technology to communicate with the public. Originating from the American public news movement in the 1990s, television political inquiry becomes a political communication activity in which officials and citizens consult public affairs and carry out management through television media (Ge & He, 2015). It provides a favorable platform for government to listen to the demands of the people and solve their difficulties effectively.

Television political inquiry is a manifestation of innovative governance, aiming to solve problems in the fields of employment, education, health care, etc. The discourse interaction between the host and interviewee in political inquiry has attracted the attention of scholars. Housley & Fitzgerald (2003) apply member taxonomy to interpret the impact of social organization, discourse management, responsibility allocation, and moral differences on political interviews. Ekstrom (2009) interprets the normative and responsibility orientation of politicians' refusal speech act, as well as the negotiation of politics and news legitimacy. Graham & Avery (2013) believe that social media are conducive to expanding democratic participation and establishing harmonious public relations. Chovanec (2020) finds that politicians apply evasive discourse strategies to avoid providing precise information and commitments, aiming to reduce the threat to their face from the host. Jin & Chen (2022) adopt Spencer-Oatey's rapport management theory to analyze the acquisition-oriented and protection-oriented image management implemented by officials in political inquiry. Xiong et al. (2024) think that empathic official responses narrow the psychological distance between the public and government, which is conducive to improving people's satisfaction with the government.

To sum up, most studies are conducted on discourse characteristics, strategies, identity construction, and pragmatic effects of political interview, but few studies have applied conversation analysis to interpret the turn-taking among interview participants. Relevant studies are influenced by disciplines such as communication, administration, linguistics, etc. In television political inquiry, the host is equivalent to the opinion leader elected to represent the public. On behalf of the masses, the host questions the shortcomings of government work and urges government officials to solve problems as soon as possible under the supervision of public opinion. In this study, conversation

analysis is applied to interpret communicators' talk-in-interaction in political interview, expecting to enrich the application research of conversation analysis and provide optimization suggestions for official responses.

## 2. Conversation Analysis Theory

In the 1960s, sociologists Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, Gail Jefferson and other scholars initiated conversation analysis (CA) (Li & Fan, 2002). Conversation analysis is the process of analyzing and reasoning discourse practices to inform the generation and identification of comprehensible behavioral processes (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Hutchby & Wooffitt (2008) think that CA is a social research method that examines the sequential organization of conversation to interpret how participants understand and organize natural forms of social interaction. Conversation analysis regards daily communication and institutional conversation as primary research subjects, focusing on the social behaviors performed by communicators' discourse. Institutional conversation means that the conversation content of communicators involves their institutional identities (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Conversation analysis deeply studies the process of communicators applying turn-constructive-unit (TCU) such as words, phrases, sentences to perform social behavior, and believes that TCU in different sequences has distinct properties and effects.

The theoretical and applied research of CA has been developed by scholars, and the research hotspots can be basically summarized into the following three aspects. Regarding methods and characteristics of conversation analysis, Heritage (1989) thinks that the perspective of CA has been influenced by fields such as psychology, cognitive science, anthropology, etc. Gardner (2004) thinks that CA adheres to empirical research method, presenting the structure on which group members construct social reality. Yu & Wu (2016) believe that CA is influenced by Harold Garfinkel's folk methodology and Erving Goffman's social order thoughts to study social order reflected in human communication. Regarding conversation analysis and institutional discourse, according to Peräkylä (1997), the direct assertion model adopted by doctors in communication with patients shows the doctors' authority orientation, while the evidence formation model attempts to establish inter-subjective understanding. Seedhouse (2005) explores the role of CA in teaching material design, language ability assessment, and classroom interaction in special education. Hutchby (2005) argues that turn-taking of interview participants is limited to asking questions and providing answers. Regarding conversation analysis and pragmatics, Wu & Zhou (2015) summarize key concepts of CA and pragmatics from disciplinary basis, research content, research perspective, etc. Meng (2010) finds that explicit pragmatic teaching model of CA can improve the appropriateness of learners' language sequence and social pragmatic awareness. Mori & Thi (2019) believe that both pragmatics and CA study the choice of symbol resources and the role of context in meaning generation and interpretation.

In conclusion, the study of CA has already obtained abundant research results, and CA in Chinese context has received increasing attention. Conversation analysis focuses on analyzing a large amount of corpus details to explain and summarize discourse patterns. In addition to the study of teacher-student discourse, doctor-patient discourse, and interview discourse, CA has also been applied to the analysis of communicators' identity construction and speech behavior in the context of court mediation (Heisterkamp, 2006; Vasilyeva, 2017), product transaction (Carranza, 2017; Mondada, 2018), online social communication (Meredith, 2017; Bloch & Leydon, 2019), etc. Relevant studies reveal the discourse organization and meaning expression in depth through quantitative and qualitative analysis, lacking interdisciplinary awareness and adequate solutions to existing problems. Moreover, CA has gradually shifted to the orientation of finding social problems and providing solutions. Scholars who study CA have paid much attention to institutional conversation, yet the discourse interaction between interviewer and interviewee in political enquiry lacks in-depth research. Conversation analysis and pragmatics are not strictly distinguished by scholars because the interpretation of language can not be separated from context, so CA seems to be more of a methodology that complements pragmatic research. Conversation analysis has been influenced by a wide range of disciplines and is concerned with talk-in-interaction. Seemingly disordered turn-constructive-units form different sequence organizations to serve the communicative targets of communicators. In addition to verbal resources, CA also interprets the psychological and cognitive motivations of discourse phenomena by analyzing non-verbal resources such as pause, eye contact, smile, gestures, etc. Guests of political interview often argue euphemistically to persuade the public and save their face, and CA has a strong explanatory power on this topic.

## 3. Corpus Collection and Research Methods

"Ask Government Affairs of Shandong" is a political interview program created by the People's Government of Shandong Province and Shandong Radio & Television Station. Each episode of it follows the process of event introduction by video, question-answer between interview participants, and representative's evaluation. The hostess and government officials carry out turn-taking to clarify the cause of the event, rectification measures, rectification period, etc. It is a typical example of institutional conversation, in which the hostess and guest, as the representative of media and government department respectively, communicate with each other within the restrictions of authority, responsibility, identity, and social conventions of their corresponding organizations. In order to interpret the discourse interaction between communicators in political interview, the writer downloads 10 videos of "Ask Government Affairs of Shandong" from the official website, each video with an average length of 90 minutes, and converts the speech into text through video processing software. Then the writer proofreads and segments the corpus, obtaining a corpus of 51326 words. Through comparison with the video and aimless review of the corpus, the typical discourse structures are found and transcribed in detail based on Jefferson's (2004) transliteration system (Note 1). Finally, typical adjacency pairs and turn-taking in political interviews are explained based on the analytical framework in Figure 1, which can elaborate the discourse interaction conducted by communicators to achieve consensus.

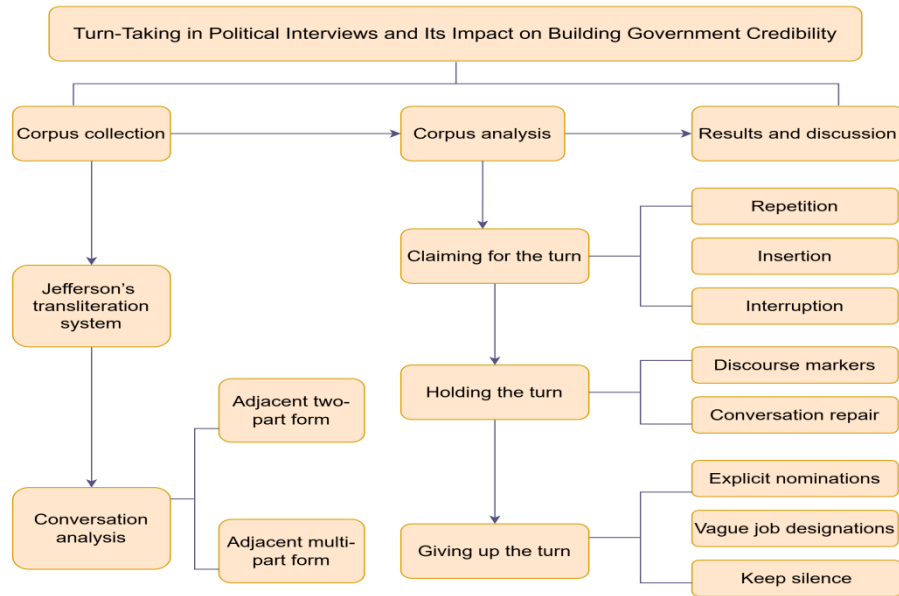


Figure 1. Conversation analysis framework of political interview

**4. Research of Adjacency Pairs in “Ask Government Affairs of Shandong”**

There are many semantic corresponding structures in daily communication, such as acknowledgement- acceptance, request-rejection, suggestion-adoption, etc., which are called adjacency pairs. The adjacency pair is composed of two sequences of discourse before and after, one of which is the first pair part and the other is the second pair part (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).The first pair part of a specific type requires the second pair part of a specific type, and their order can not be reversed (Yu, 2022). The program “Ask Government Affairs of Shandong” is equipped with typical institutional conversation features, and the discourse of both parties are highly interactive and sequential. Liu (2004) divides adjacency pairs into adjacent two-part form and adjacent multi-part form.

*4.1 Adjacent two-part form in Political Interview*

Adjacent two-part form refers to those corresponding forms consisting of two adjacency parts, the former of which is the trigger and the latter of which is the response (Liu, 2004). In order to achieve the corresponding relationship between the trigger and the response, the listener needs to understand what the speaker has said and abide by social conventions under specific culture.

**Example 1:** 01 Guest: I am×××, the Deputy District Mayor of ××.

02 Hostess: Hello, District Mayor.

03 Hostess: You see, about these two roads in the video, residents have called you many times, and the phone has been transferred to our ×× District, then why do we not answer it?

04 Guest: The problems reflected in this video show that there are still blind spots and loopholes in urban management.

05 Guest: (.) After the program, I will immediately organize relevant departments to urge the construction side we talked just now to improve its standards as soon as possible.

**Example 2:** 01 Hostess: Director, do you want to manage it?

02 Guest: I want to.

03 Hostess: Can you manage it?

04 Guest: Yes.

05 Hostess: Can you manage it successfully?

06 Guest: Yes, I can.

**Example 3:** 01 Hostess: Chief, may I ask the comrade in charge of ×× Bureau to explain the situation first?

02 Guest: OK.

**Example 4:** 01 Hostess: Director, because now, it is time for dinner and our reporter arrived at the destination. Can we take a look at the scene together?

02 Guest: OK.

**Analysis:** Example (1) consists of two adjacent two-part forms. The first adjacent two-part form exists in 01-02, which is an introduction + greeting adjacency pair. The first pair part of it is the guest's self-introduction "I am×××, the Deputy District Mayor of ××" in 01. When guests introduce themselves in political interview, they generally state their department and position to indicate their identity as a representative of the government agency, highlighting the authority and persuasiveness of their statement. The second pair part of it is the greeting "Hello, District Mayor." in 02. Actually, there is no greeting in the first pair part, but the hearer understands the self-introduction in the first pair part as a greeting, so she performs the corresponding greeting behavior in 02. A similar adjacent two-part form is greeting + greeting adjacency pair, such as the first pair part "Hello, the responsible comrade." corresponding to the second pair part "Hello, hostess.", which often occurs when the hostess temporarily initiates a conversation with an official on the scene.

When addressing people with deputy positions, the discourse marker referring to "deputy" is usually omitted by Chinese people to show respect and politeness. In 01, the guest indicates that he is the Deputy District Mayor, but the hostess omits "deputy" and directly applies "District Mayor" to address the guest in the response, satisfying the face need of the guest by promoting him to a higher position. It reflects the etiquette and principles of conduct under the influence of Chinese culture. Moreover, the hostess and the guest obviously belong to different organizations, but the hostess adopts "our" and "we" instead of "you" in 03 to endow the guest with the attribute of in-group identity. This designation facilitates interpersonal rapport and engagement motivation by arousing a sense of comfort between interaction participants (Garbarski et al, 2016). It is a favorable strategy to build a relatively close psychological relationship between communicators, reducing the intensity of questioning and pressure on the guest.

In political interview, the hostess has four types of names for the guests. The first type is official title like "Director, Mayor, Chief Executive", etc. The second type is official title+ surname such as "Director Wang, Mayor Li". The Third type is "name + official title" like "×× Director". The last type is the non-differentiated title "the responsible comrade", which is chosen by the hostess when she does not know the name and position of the guest in advance. The word "responsible" in this salutation implies that the listener should be held accountable for the breach of duty, which inadvertently makes the listener respond more cautiously under pressure. The two names of the guests to the anchorperson are "hostess" and "political interviewer". The former is the explicit professional identity of the hostess, while the latter is the implicit identity of the hostess in the context of political inquiry.

The second adjacent two-part form of example (1) is composed of question+answer. In 03, the first pair part "then why do we not answer it?" performs information-seeking function to ask the reason of the government official's failure to shoulder his duties. 04-05 is the second pair part of the adjacency pair, of which 04 is the official explanation of the above problems. In 05, the guest implements the speech act of commitment, promising exact measures and time to solve the problem. The discourse marker "we talked just now" in 05 prompts the listener to pay attention to the previously mentioned content in conversation, which is conducive to strengthening the coherence of the discourse and guiding information for the audience.

According to Yu (2022), the second pair part 04-05 can be called a preference, that is, when the guest responds to the hostess's question in 03, he does not stop, hesitate, or avoid, but clearly admits the work shortcomings and provides solutions in time. The intensifying marker "immediately" and "as soon as possible" in 05 indicate that government officials are ready to solve the problem in the shortest time, reflecting the positive attitude of government workers to make up for deficiencies in their work.

In example (2), 01-02 is the first adjacent two-part form. The first pair part of it is "Do you want to manage it?", asking the listener's willingness to solve the difficulties of the masses, and the second pair part "I want to" clearly shows the affirmative will of the guest. 03-04 is the second adjacent two-part form. The first pair part of it is "Can you manage it?", asking the listener's ability to solve the problem. This question triggers the second pair part "yes", which is a positive response indicating the guest's certainty of institutional members' work ability. 05-06 is the third adjacent two-part form. The first pair part of it is "Can you manage it successfully?", asking the guest about the expected management effect. The second pair part "yes, I can" implements the commitment speech act, indicating that the speaker is determined to achieve effective management results. The hostess's short and continuous questions create a communicative atmosphere with a sense of urgency, which strongly promotes the guest to make promises explicitly. Three adjacent two-part forms of question+answer have similar structures and progressive semantics, showing the determination of government staff to take actions, which is quite convincing to the audience.

Interrogative sentences generally perform information-seeking function, but they can also implement speech acts such as request and suggestion. Example (3) is a request-acceptance adjacent two-part form. The first pair part of it is 01 "Chief, may I ask the comrade in charge of ××Bureau to explain the situation first?" The purpose of this question is not to seek information, but to perform request speech act. It euphemistically expresses the hostess's expectation for the hearer's approval of a third party to participate in conversation, implying that the status and power of the listener is higher than that of the third-party participant. The second pair part 02 is "OK", indicating that the listener recognizes the hostess's intention and agrees with her request. In Example (4), 01-02 is a suggestion-adoption adjacent two-part form. The first pair part is the hostess's "Can we take a look at the scene together?", in which the hostess does not intend to ask for unknown information. Actually, she adopts the interrogative sentence with the purpose of tactfully advising the listener to watch the scene together. The second pair part is "Ok", indicating that the listener recognizes the speaker's intention and agrees with her suggestion.

#### 4.2 Adjacent Multi-Part Form in Political Interview

Turn of conversation is a continuous speech spoken by the speaker at any time, and its ending is marked by a signal to give up the turn, such as the role reversal of the speaker and the listener or silence from all parties (Li & Fan, 2002). The adjacent multi-part form is

composed of two or more adjacent sentences belonging to different turns, in which the middle part has the dual functions of the initiator and response (Liu, 2004). It means that the middle part can reply to the previous turn and trigger the next turn. The adjacent multi-part form better reflects the role of the hostess as a guide, in which she gives feedback to evaluate what the speaker has said. Moreover, feedback can be regarded as the listener's recognition, questioning, neutral attitude, etc., to the speaker's speech, which can trigger the speaker to further elaborate his opinion.

**Example 5:** 01 Hostess: You (.), I guess you don't have any good ideas, right?

02 Guest: There is a way.

03 Hostess: There is a way? Then talk about it.

04 Guest: Regarding the issue of certification mentioned in the video, one method is to strengthen the team building of licensed pharmacists.

**Example 6:** 01 Hostess: We see that the pharmacy of ×× is preferred to recommend prescription medicines, then is this in line with the regulations?

02 Guest: It should be against the rules.

03 Hostess: Uh huh, against the rules?

04 Guest: Yes, consumers should make choices according to their needs.

**Analysis:** Example (5) is a conversation sequence consisting of question-answer-repetition/request- acceptance, which can be regarded as adjacent multi-part form. Specifically, 01-02 is an independent question-answer turn, and 03-04 is an independent request-acceptance turn. However, 03 is both the response to 02 and the initiator of 04. The sentence "There is a way?" in 03 fully repeats the structure of 02 and applies an upward tone, questioning the statement made by the guest in 02 that there is a method to deal with illegal sales of prescription medicines. The hostess's "Then talk about it." in 03 implements the request speech act to ask the guest to explain the rectification measures in detail, which triggers the guest's specific explanation in 04. Therefore, it is an adjacent multi-part form, in which the regularity of conversation is reduced and the sequential progression of semantics is more pronounced.

When the adjacency pair is extended, the extended adjacency pair is called base adjacency pair, in which the extension that appears before the base adjacency pair is called "pre-expansion", and the extension that appears after the base adjacency pair is "post-expansion" (Yu, 2022). In example (5), 01-02 can be explained as pre-expansion and 03-04 belongs to base adjacency pair. In response to the question in 01 "I guess you don't have any good ideas, right?", the guest should have taken a yes or no answer in 02, but he adopts "There is a way." to indirectly deny the hostess's opinion. The response "There is a way." is the prerequisite for the hostess to initiate the request in 03 "Then talk about it." Only on the premise that the guest clearly says that there is a solution can the hostess smoothly requests him to elaborate the solutions.

Example (6) is a question-answer-affirmative feedback/question-response sequence. It belongs to adjacent multi-part form because 03 both responds to the guest's statement in 02 and triggers the following explanation. 01 is a yes or no question "Is this in line with the regulations?", so the corresponding answer should be "Yes, it is" or "No, it is not." However, the reply of the guest in 02 is "It should be against the rules". As a low-value modal word, the predicate "should" conveys a sense of speculation and uncertainty, reducing the accuracy of the response. Then "Uh huh" in 03 is the hostess's supportive feedback to 02, indicating that the hostess understands or agrees the judgment of the guest in 02. In 03 the hostess applies an upward tone to "against the rules?", repeating part of the language structure of 02. The purpose of this question is to satisfy the hostess's intention to confirm the information by triggering a response from the guest in 04. Obviously, the guest's answer "yes" and further explanation in 04 show that he satisfies the hostess's communication target. It can be seen that 03 is both the answer of 02 and the initiator of 04, so the conversation belongs to the adjacent multi-part form.

Feedback widely exists in political interview, which is generally composed of simple words or phrases. Although feedback does not carry rich information, it can reflect the listener's concern and recognition of the speaker's speech, playing the role of encouraging the speaker to continue with the current topic. The interrogative tone of feedback can express the attitude of suspicion and uncertainty. In political interview context, the most commonly adopted feedback by the hostess includes "as you said", "Aah", "Yes", "OK, I understand", etc. In addition to these language feedback, appropriate body language feedback such as "nodding, smiling, eye contact, gestures," are also very necessary, showing that the hostess respects and listens to the guest.

### 5. Analysis of Turn-Taking in "Ask Government Affairs of Shandong"

Discourse interaction is the medium for disseminating information, performing social acts, and connecting with the audience's emotions. In political interview, communicators can fully regulate the turn-taking to achieve mutual negotiation, which greatly meets the communication needs of analyzing problems in depth and promoting actual solution. The relevance, logic, and fluency of interview participants' talk-in-interaction directly affect the effect of political inquiry. This requires communicators to accurately identify transition-relevance place of turn-taking and apply appropriate turn-constructive units to promote turn-taking. The following is an analysis of communicators' turn-taking and typical discourse structures in "Ask Government Affairs of Shandong".

#### 5.1 Claiming for the Turn in Political Interview

Discourse does not necessarily follow the rules of sequential transmission between interview participants. Seizing the right to speak can

secure priority to expressing one's views, which is a necessary strategy in political interview. Interruption, insertion, and repetition are typical discourse structures in the stage of claiming for the turn, aiming to compete for the speaking right for the communicator. Interruption and insertion are often considered impolite and undermine the other person's face, which are often employed when the interviewee violates the cooperative principle in conversation. In political interview, some interviewees' responses are rather long, cumbersome, and poorly related to the topic, urging the interviewer to take interruption and insertion strategies to guide the topic back to the right track.

**Example 7:** 01 Hostess: I would like to ask, have you managed this market?

02 Guest: ××Chinese Herbal Medicine Market is the only professional wholesale market approved by the state in Shandong Province.

03 Read the problems reflected in the video, I myself ah, feel very shocked, and very sad.

04 About this market, our county government's ah, supervision, is duty-bound.

This next step we...

05 Hostess: [I want to ask, have you managed it in the past five years?]

06 Guest: It is not well managed.

07 Hostess: Not well managed?

08 Guest: Not well managed, umm, there are still many loopholes.

**Example 8:** 01 Guest: From the video, we can see that the conclusion of this inspection's report is wrong.

02 We will immediately investigate and verify this inspection agency. If any violations are found, we will resolutely deal with it in accordance with the law...=

03 Hostess: =So, is this inspection company still authoritative?

04 Guest: For our regulatory department, such a report would lose its authority and credibility...

**Analysis:** Interruption occurs when the speaker has not completed his turn and the hearer starts speaking in an attempt to prevent the speaker from speaking. In this case, the speaker generally has not yet expressed the full meaning, but his speech is obstructed by the person who conducts interruption. In example (7), the hostess employs interruption in 05 to claim the turn for herself, that is, inserting "I want to ask, have we managed it in the past five years?" when the guest is speaking in 04. The interruption interferes with the guest's thinking logic, causing a pause in his speech, and he is forced to respond to the hostess's question in 06. The reason for the interruption here is that the guest violates the maxim of relation, which means that the information he provides is not relevant to the topic.

Interruption and insertion are closely related to transition-relevance place where the previous speaker ends the speech. The descending tone, pause, and silence of the speaker can all be the basis for the listener to judge transition-relevance place. Sometimes interruption can be attributed to a mistake in the speaker's judgment of the transition-relevance place, in which the overlap of discourse occurs frequently. However, the hostess's interruption is clearly intentional in inquiry context. She adopts "Have you managed this market?" in 01", accordingly, the answer should be "Yes, we have" or "No, we have not". However, the guest's reply in 02-04 is about the importance of the medicine market and his remorse for the deficiencies at work, which has nothing to do with whether the department has managed it. The response of the official seems to follow an established template, avoiding or ignoring the hostess's intention to seek information, forcing the hostess to adopt interruption. The interruption provides the hostess a chance to continue asking for the information that she wants to know. It also implies that the department does not carry out effective supervision of this medicine market.

Repetition means that the communicator mentions the words, phrases and sentences that he or other speakers have said before, playing the role of emphasizing, explaining, and clarifying topics. In Example (7), there are two repeated structures, the first of which is 05, "Have you managed it in the past five years?". It is a partial repetition of 01, asking the guest to face current problem with a serious attitude and offer a concrete and relevant response. The second repetition is "Not well managed?" in 07, repeating the guest's response in 06. Here, the hostess adopts a questioning tone and eye contact with the guest, aiming to ask the guest to confirm the information. The guest continues to repeat "Not well managed" in 08 to admit work mistakes and adds other information to make the reply more complete. It indicates that the same turn-constructive-unit appearing in different sequences can achieve different pragmatic purposes.

Insertion occurs when the speaker has expressed a relatively complete meaning in the current turn, and the hearer starts the turn immediately afterwards. Insertion generally complements, affirms or questions the previous speaker's point of view. In example (8), the guest has made a large number of statements about the events in 01-02, and the hostess regards the descending tone at the end of the guest's turn in 02 as the signal that he has finished his speech. In other words, she identifies the end of 02 as the transition-relevance place and inserts "So, is this inspection company still authoritative?" in 03. The insertion indicates that the hostess is more concerned about the authority of the inspection company than the upcoming disposal measures from the management sector. Sometimes the hostess adopts certain predictive words when she inserts a statement, such as "you mean", "that is to say", "I want to say", to give a hint to the holder of the turn. Of course, the guest clearly states that the report is not authoritative in 04, satisfying the communication intention of the hostess. In political interview, most of the insertion phenomena are intentional by the hostess to meet her communication targets. Sometimes the hostess just inserts a speech unintentionally, in which she generally returns the speaking right to the guest with a speech act of apology.

For example, when the hostess realizes that her insertion speech has hindered the guest's speech, she adopts "Sorry, please continue." At this time, the hostess does not explain why she apologizes and what to continue, but the guest understands the hostess's meaning and continues his turn, which stems from people's acquiescence to long-established social conventions.

### 5.2 Holding the Turn in Political Interview

Discourse markers and conversation repair strategies are quite commonly adopted in communicator's turn-holding stage. The perspectives and classifications of discourse markers are different, but in general, discourse markers are significant for enhancing text logic and comprehensibility as well as promoting interpersonal interaction. Conversation repair solves the listening, speaking and understanding problems encountered by communicators in the process of interaction (Yu, 2022).

**Example 9:** 01 Hostess: Therefore, can you give us an accurate message, on earth is there still hope?

02 Guest: There is hope for this, and there are two methods.

03 As I said just now, first, he can prove that he paid for the bill of utilities, then the second one is that his residence permit shows that he has lived for a year.

**Example 10:** 01 Hostess: OK, then. Where are the responsible comrades of ××?

02 Guest: I sit to say, stand to say. After I saw this video, I am also very chen tong, ah, chen zhong.

**Analysis:** In example (9), the guest employs topic transition marker "therefore" in 01 to invite the guest to clearly explain the method to prove that the resident has lived in the community for a full year. The topic transition marker is a continuation of the previous discussion and naturally reminds the listener to pay attention to the new information currently provided. The intensifying marker "on earth" strengthens the power of discourse, so the skeptical emotion is expressed more intensely and directly, which forms certain psychological pressure on the speaker. The intertextuality marker "As I said just now" in 03 strengthens the logic connection with the previous text by guiding the listener to review what the speaker has said before. The transition markers "first" and "the second one" in 03 correspond to the "two methods" in 02, making the response level quite clear and easy for the audience to grasp the key points.

According to the classification of (Li & Fan, 2002), 02 in example (10) belongs to middle obstruction repair. It means that when the speaker finds something wrong with what he is currently saying, he corrects it in the same turn. The guest has made conversation repairs twice here. The first correction is that he changes "sit" into "stand" in 02 because he is actually answering the question in a standing state, which can be attributed to the guest's language ability error caused by psychological tension or anxiety.

The second conversation repair is that the guest corrects "chen tong" to "chen zhong", which is an obvious wording mistake. Chinese and English are not completely equivalent, so we have not translated these two words that have similar meanings, but different emphasis. The expression "chen tong" means that people are saddened by the loss of someone or something, which is often employed in eulogies. The expression "chen zhong" expresses the speaker's worried mood or responsible attitude in a situation that the task is difficult or ends with an unsatisfactory result. The context here is that a citizen can not prove that he has lived in the district for a full year, which prevents his child from attending school in the district. The word "chen zhong" is obviously more suitable for the context, conveying the government official's guilt and concern about the client's bad experience. Obviously, conversation repair disrupts the fluency of the conversation but improves the accuracy of the discourse. Appropriate expression of emotions like remorse, sympathy, etc., can help to alleviate the audience's dissatisfaction and is favorable for government officials to get the audience's understanding of their work mistakes.

### 5.3 Giving Up the Turn in Political Interview

Naming the next speaker is the main strategy for the hostess to give up the turn, while being silent is the main strategy for the guest to give up the turn. Giving up the turn also appears in the situation that an official with a higher position names an official with a lower position to transfer the turn in order to avoid a threat to his face because he may not be familiar with the situation mentioned by the hostess.

**Example 11:** 01 Hostess: Director, can you tell us the difference between the disinfection product number and the drug product number?

02 Guest: The disinfection number refers to disinfection and sterilization product, which does not have the function of disease treatment and must be approved by the health department.

03 The drug number is a national approval number of medicine for treating disease, which needs to be approved by the drug regulatory department.

04 Hostess: Ah, yeah.

**Example 12:** 01 Hostess: Do our representatives on-site have any questions? Raise your hand.

02 Hostess: Okay, that representative.

**Analysis:** In Example (11), the hostess in 01 gives up the turn by directly naming the next speaker, that is, she invites the listener to take the turn through the salutation "Director" at the beginning of the sentence. From an epistemological point of view, Heritage (2012) believes that knowledge state is a relative position, involving the relative opportunities, knowledge, and power that communicators hold in certain knowledge fields. Yu (2022) believes that knowledge expression means that the speaker shows his relative knowledge of a certain field through the turn design. In example (11), the hostess asks the guest about the difference between the disinfection product

number and the drug product number. As the director of the drug administration, the listener's discourse shows that he has more professional knowledge in this field than the hostess.

In 02-03, the guest designs a clear and explicit turn to elaborate the functions of the two products and the departments in charge of them respectively to convey information to the audience. In 04, the hostess gives a supportive feedback by replying "Ah, yeah", indicating that she understands what the speaker has said. It shows that the guest successfully passes medical product knowledge to the hostess and the hostess acquires a few knowledge in this field.

The hostess's questions are generally directed at a specific government official. However, representatives from other institutions at the interview scene also irregularly join the conversation. Example (12) is an adjacency pair consisting of the question-answer initiated by the hostess herself. The first pair part of the adjacency pair is a question not directed at a specific person, but for a wide range of representatives. Here, the representatives can choose to raise their hands or keep silent to respond, but for the effect of the political interview, they seem to follow a certain social convention, that is, there is always someone willing to take over the hostess's turn. Here, The sentence "Okay, that representative." not only implies that someone has already taken up the hostess's question by raising his hand, but also serves as a preparation for her upcoming inquiry.

In the above content, the writer explains the important concepts of conversation analysis, such as adjacency pairs, turn-constructive units, sequence organization, transition-relevance place, etc. Various speech strategies are adopted by interview participants to achieve communicative purposes. Adjacent two-part form and adjacent multi-part form are illustrated with examples, which reflect the features like interactivity and correspondence in speech. As a typical institutional conversation, political interviews play an active role in improving the quality of government affairs management. Actually, political interview intends to highlight the role of guests who convey information and provide solutions to the public by responding to interviewer's questions. A well-organized, logical, and relevant response can better reflect the responsible image of public officials and enhance the credibility of the government. However, there are some official responses with low relevance to the event and are quite vague, which reduces the effect of political interview.

When responding to hostess's questions, guests should adopt the discourse framework of explaining reasons, expressing attitude, and clarifying the rectification time and measures. This is a favorable framework to alleviate the discontent of the masses and urge responsible departments to effectively solve the difficulties, which contributes to build a government that the people are satisfied with. Guests can selectively adopt discourse markers to make the reply more logical and easier for audience to understand. The application of modal particles such as "Um... Emm... Er..." should be appropriately reduced, because too many modal particles make the audience feel that the speaker is not familiar with the topic. It is also suggested that the guests face the audience when responding questions, which is conducive to showing a sincere and responsible attitude through visual interaction with the audience. Moreover, current political interview only shows the interaction between the voice of the media and the voice of the government, lacking the participation of common citizens. Therefore, the program can invite the parties involved in the event to make comments on government's work ability, which can reflect the authenticity of the program and broaden the channel of public political inquiry. Actually, language is only a catalyst to stimulate social behavior. Only by implementing officials' promises into actions can we build a responsible government image.

## 6. Conclusion

With the increasing demand for compound talents in multinational companies, developing a good second language application ability has become a necessary skill for students to enter the workplace. This study also brings some inspiration to the cultivation of language talents and job interview. In the initial stage of students' second language learning, textbooks are designed with adjacency pairs such as greeting-greeting, suggestion-acceptance, etc. Learners can effectively cultivate their interest and curiosity about language learning by practicing adjacency pairs through role-playing. Adopting supportive and guiding feedback to comment on learners' discourse interaction by teachers can improve their sense of achievement and confidence in language learning. In knowledge transfer stage, learners need to cultivate more comprehensive abilities to organize language elements into meaningful discourse. When they make language errors, teachers should judge whether the error is caused by psychological factors such as tension and anxiety or by defects in their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Then interruption and conversation repair strategies can be used to help students improve the accuracy of their discourse.

The job interview is carried out through the turn-taking between the interviewer and the applicant. When facing the questions raised by the interviewer, applicants should think calmly and state their opinions according to conversation principles. They should pay attention to the rhythm of turn-taking with the interviewer, accurately identify where the interviewer ends the turn, and continue the topic as smoothly as possible. It is important to avoid interrupting or conducting conversation repair to interviewer's mistakes because such behaviors are considered to be a loss of face for the interviewer and a form of impoliteness. Candidates should make sure that the content of their speech is highly relevant to the topic, and then adopt transition markers to strengthen the logical coherence of the speech. Frame markers such as "in terms of, by contrast, the most important is" etc., help to stimulate the interviewer's interest and guide him to focus on the key points of the candidate's response. Furthermore, appropriate verbal or non-verbal feedback can be adopted to provide further guidance or evaluation for the candidate. The interviewer can also apply interruption and conversation repair strategies such as "repetition, repetition + questioning, requesting clarification" to help the candidate express his views accurately. Finally, this paper lacks adequate data support and the analysis of embedded adjacent pairs. Therefore, more corpus will be collected and the percentage of discourse strategies will be counted to increase the objectivity and persuasiveness of the results in further research.



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**Authors' contributions**

Yingjuan Yao is responsible for corpus transcription, analysis and paper writing. Bowen Liu collects and proofreads the corpus, adding analysis roadmap and conclusion. Prof. Yun Li is responsible for the revision of the paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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#### Note 1.

Transliteration symbol description

(.) represents a pause of 0.1 seconds.

[] indicates that the communicators' utterances overlap.

= shows that the words before and after are closely connected in time dimension.

×× means that the name of a person or place is hidden.

! indicates a strong tone.