



A Pragmatic analysis of Overlap in Some Selected Conversations of *Titanic* and *The King of Summer* Movies

A Paper Drawn from M.A. Thesis

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Abstract

Overlap is a phenomenon that occurs when the new speaker starts speaking at the possible completion point of the current turn while trying to avoid gap and silence between the two turns. It also occurs when new speaker's words overlap with the last words of the current speaker. Sometimes, overlap takes place when interlocutors misunderstand the end of the turn and start talking at the same time. Hence, overlap is one aspect of the irregularities in conversation, in that, the basic rule of "one party talks at a time" is violated.

This study deals with the pragmatic analysis of overlap in the two American movies, namely *Titanic* and *the King of Summer*. Four selected conversations are to be analyzed from the two movies according to Sacks, Jefferson and Schegloff (1974) model in their paper "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-taking in Conversation". This model

adopts an organizational device that allows parties to achieve the basic feature of 'one part at a time'. In this study, it is hypothesized that talk by more one speaker at a time in the same conversation is observed, in that, the turn-taking violation occurs due to overlapping talk in the same conversation. Conversations are analyzed in terms of identifying overlapping talk and the pragmatic explanation related to them. Each conversation is dealt with according to three steps: firstly, the original conversation is brought. Secondly, the analysis of conversation and finally the discussion of conversation.

Finally, it is concluded that turn-taking violation occurs frequently in the two movies, mostly due to self-selection procedure.

الخلاصة

يعد التداخل ظاهرة تحدث عندما يبدأ المتكلم الجديد بالكلام عند نقطة الانتهاء الممكنة بينما يحاول تجنب الفجوة والصمت بين الدورين . يحدث ايضا التداخل عندما تتداخل كلمات المتكلم مع الكلمات السابقة للمتكلم. بعض الاحيان، يحدث التداخل عندما يسئ المتحدثون فهم نهاية الدور ويبدأون بالكلام في نفس الوقت. وهكذا، فان التداخل هو احد جوانب المخالفات في المحادثة، وبذلك، يتم خرق القاعدة الاساسية التي تنص " يتحدث طرف واحد في وقت واحد".

تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على التحليل التداولي للتداخل في الفلمين الأمريكيين ، تيتانك و ملك الصيف. وسيتم تحليل اربعة محادثات من الفلمين وفقا لنموذج ساكس و جيفرسون و شيكلوف (١٩٧٤) في بحثهم " نظام مبسط لهيكلية تبادل

الادوار في المحادثة". تفترض هذه الدراسة بانه هناك حديث بواسطة اكثر من متحدث لكل وقت في نفس المحادثة، أي ان، خرق تبادل الادوار يحدث بسبب الحديث المتداخل في نفس المحادثة. يتم تحليل المحادثات من خلال تحديد التداخل و التفسير التداولي المتعلق بالمحادثات. حيث يتم التعامل مع كل محادثة وفقا لثلاثة خطوات: اولاً، يتم ذكر المحادثة الاصلية. ثانياً، تحليل المحادثة وثالثاً مناقشة تحليل المحادثة.

اخيراً، تم التوصل في هذه الدراسة الى ان التداخل يحدث بصوره متكررة في الافلام الامريكية نتيجة اجراء الاختيار الذاتي.

The Concept of Overlap

In normal ordinary conversation, there is a rule that one person talks at a time and the other speaker should wait until the current speaker finishes his/her turn. The purpose of this rule is to prevent two or even more speakers from talking at the same time which, consequently, lead to overlap or a simultaneous speech. Mey (2001: 138) compares turn-taking rules with traffic rules. For him, the main purpose of conversational structure is to keep the flow of conversation and to avoid "accidents" and traffic jams. Without these rules, no one can move from point A to point B.

Many scholarly papers dealing with overlapping talk fail to provide a clear definition for overlap. One of the scholars who defines overlap is sacks. In his early work, Sacks (2004: 40)



divides instances of simultaneous talk into two categories: overlaps and interruptions. However, overlap occurs when the next speaker starts talking at the possible completion point of the current turn while trying to avoid gap and silence between the two turns. On the other hand, interruption is the way when a new speaker starts intentionally within the current speaker's turn. In other words, to interrupt is to start speaking at a place which is not a transition relevance place. Coates (2004: 113) calls turn-taking irregularities as overlap and interruption. Schegloff (2000: 3-7) outlines a way to define overlap. Hence, overlap and simultaneous talk are equivalent terms that refer to talk by more than one party at a time. Moreover, Coates (1986:99) remarks that overlap occurs when speaker's words overlap with the previous last words. Sometimes, overlap happens when interlocutors misunderstand the end of the turn and start speaking at the same time. Additionally, Liddicoat (2007: 82) states that overlap is interactional phenomenon which is produced by speaking together or may be produced by speakers continuing past possible completion.

Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) outline a model that describes how speakers manage turn-taking in talk-in-interaction. The main point of this model is that 'one party speaks at a time'. To put differently, speakers avoid talking



simultaneously with their interlocutors. They (ibid: 700-701) provide a list of 'apparent facts' concerning the occurrence of overlap which are listed as below:

- 1- Instances of overlap are common but brief.
- 2- Transitions with no pause and overlap are common, together with slight pause or overlap; they constitute the majority of transitions.

As for overlap, points (1) and (2) indicate the rarity of overlap and it occurs where speaker change takes place. They call the places at which this change occurs as transition-relevance place, TRP. TRP is a possible completion point of the ongoing turn-constructural unit. Sacks et al. (1974:706) describe two features which allow the occurrence of overlap. Firstly, the system allocates single turns to single speakers; and all turn transfer is coordinated around transition relevance place which are determined by possible completions. So, in organizing turn transfer exclusively, the possibility of transitions with no gap and no overlap is provided. For them, transitions with no gap and overlap are brief and common and they do not consider participants as violating turn-taking rule which allows "one party talks at a time" (ibid.708). Moreover, turn-taking model of Sacks' et al. (1974) describes the way speaker change occurs. They provide two features, the first of which is divided



into a, b and c. , thus, rule 1b has a consequence for the occurrence of overlap, in that competing self-selectors may start speaking simultaneously and overlap may occur (ibid:706). In addition, overlap comes from projectability of possible elements like address terms that go after first possible completion without intending continuation, and the projectability of turns before completion point is that the second speaker misses the completion point and starts talking before the first finishes then overlap takes place (ibid: 707). Hence, the most practice for stopping talk by more than one at a time is to stop talking. They should stop talking before coming to a possible completion of turn-constructural unit they are producing.

In addition, Sacks et al.'s model relies on the assumption that people are able to project the possible completion point of a turn with the help of syntactic information. In more recent papers, Ford and Thompson (1996: 136) and Schegloff (2007: 3-4), for instance, indicate that not only syntactic but also intonational and pragmatic cues help conversationalists to project when a turn is to end. Moreover, Goodwin and Goodwin (1986: 72) point out that non-vocal behavior such as gazing towards an interlocutor can give detailed information about the organization of current activity. Schegloff (2007:



271) pays attention to the connection of gestures and turn-taking with special focus on hand gestures. He states that hand gestures can be used, for example, when a current non-speaker wants to take the next turn. According to him, they are used when a speaker who is interrupted wants to show that s/he doesn't finish his/her turn and intends to continue after interruption.

Furthermore, Schegloff (2000: 4-6) concludes that overlap is of two types: competitive and non-competitive. Competitive overlap, on the one hand, refers to aspects of simultaneous talk which occurs before the current speaker has reached a possible completion in his /her turn and its purpose is to take the turn of the current speaker by force. The following example illustrates the case of competitive overlap in which the speaker B enters the floor at a point where A has just started his TCU:

- (1) **A: I don't read the news I [I hate the news]**
B: [for many ma]ny weeks

On the other hand, non-competitive overlap refers to the unwillingness of the next speaker to take the floor from the current speaker as in:



(2) **A: but it's really hard to speak it**
It's [just] no offence but just \$a really awful language for an=

B: [yeah]

A = [English speaker\$]

Here, B enters or takes the floor for a short moment before the current speaker finishes his/her turn or before reaching transition relevance-place TRP. What makes it different from the example in (23) is that the second speaker does not challenge to take the floor (ibid).

This division is first marked by French and Local (1983). Thus, they_(1983:21-8) describe competitive overlaps which they call "turn-competitive incomings". For them, neither the position of the incomer's speech at a non-completion point in the ongoing turn, nor its lexical content in relation to the content of speech make this speech as competitive or non-competitive. Thus, an incoming speech is hearable as competitive due to the combination of two prosodic features: high pitch and increased loudness.

Then, Schegloff (2000:4-6) describes it in a more thorough way claiming that there are two kinds of overlaps: 'problematic' or competitive and 'non-problematic' or non-competitive. In



Schegloff's view (2004:4-6), there are four kinds of overlapping talk that are non-competitive with respect to turn-taking. The first kind is "terminal overlaps". It occurs in situations where the next speaker predicts that the current speaker is about to finish his/her turn and start talking simultaneously with him/her.

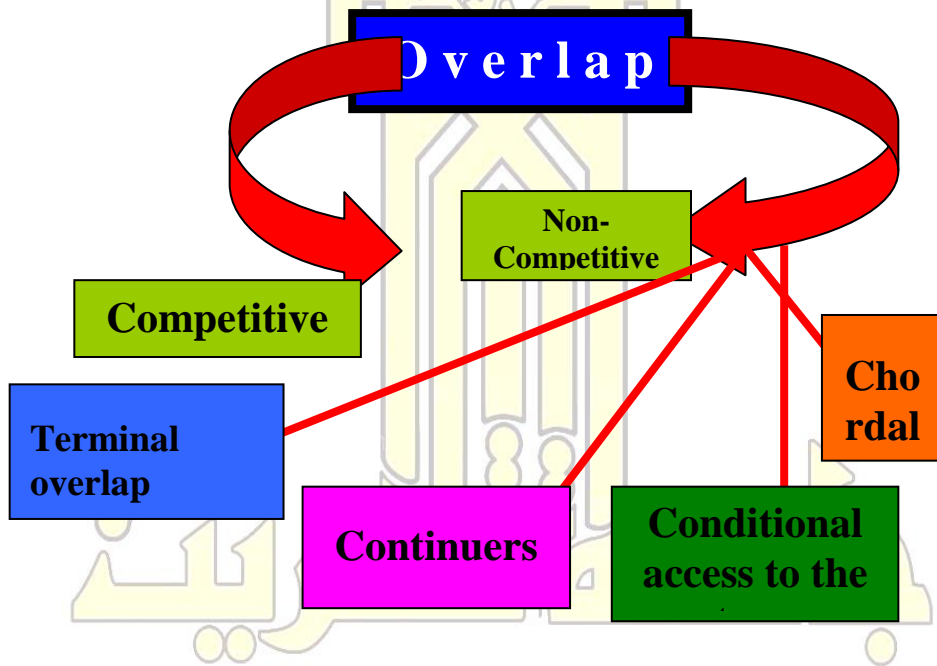
Moreover, the second kind that Schegloff introduces is "continuers". According to him, the next speaker can, by using continuers such as *uh huh* and *mm hm*, indicates that s/he understands that the current speaker holds the floor and has not completed his/her turn yet. In other words, the next speaker does not cause a threat to the current speaker's turn (ibid: 5).

The third kind consists of various kinds that go under the umbrella of "conditional access to the turn". However, these are cases in which the current speaker gives his/her not completed turn to another speaker. To him, aspects of this kind are like 'word searches' in which the hearer may be invited to help current speaker to find words s/he cannot retrieve, and collaborative utterance constructions where the current speaker initiates an utterance and provides it for a recipient for completion (ibid:5-6).

Finally, the last type of non-competitive overlapping talk introduced by Schegloof (2004:6) is called "chordal". He

explains that aspects of this kind of overlapping talk are treated by interactional participants to be done at the same time not one after the other. Laughter is an example of this kind of activity, as are collective greetings, leave-takings and congratulations in response to announcements of personal good news.

The two kinds of Schegloff's overlaps are shown in the diagram below:



(Diagram 1)



With reference to the kinds of overlapping talk proposed by Schegloff, he was not the only one to deal with it. Jefferson (1983) studies the organization and onset of overlaps. She discovers the places when it occurs and identifies three main types based on onsets. She emphasizes that overlap is an organized conversational phenomenon instead of a "messy chaotic business" (ibid: 157). Thus, the first type of her classification is a transitional onset which refers to the way in which the next speaker starts talking at a possible completion of the turn in progress while the current speaker continue his/her turn. Next speaker starts talking at or near a predicted transition relevance place as in:

(3) John: [this is not] sort of specifically sort of part of

the curriculum but it's used quite well at schools [isn't it]

Kelly: [it's] yeah i- it is in the curriculum but it comes onto English and tha[t's pretty much] it a srole play.

(Stolt,

2008: 13)



In this example, Kelly starts talking before John has finished his turn. Kelly obviously does not want to initiate overlap or take the floor from John prematurely and that simultaneous talk occurs because John does not stop talking where Kelly expects him to finish his turn.

The second kind, recognitional onset refers to instances of overlap when the next speaker may respond to the current speaker's turn before it reaches an adequate transition-relevance place. Thus, the next speaker may recognize a word or a phrase such as 'ha', or 'happy new year' and responds to the turn before the ongoing turn has reached a possible TRP. Finally, progressional onset occurs when there is disfluency such as 'silence' or 'silence fillers' (e.g. uh) when the next speaker realizes that the current turn and a next speaker suggests a completion in order to move the conversation forward (ibid: 2).

In describing the management of overlap, Schegloff (2000:4) introduces the overlap resolution device (ORD). ORD aims at describing organization that Provides the resources and practices with which participants can reconcile the requirements of the organization of interaction with the projects and courses of action in which they are severally engaged at the very moment". Thus, an overlap resolution device is composed of (a) a set of resources of turn production;



(b) a set of places at which those resources get deployed; (c) and interactional "logic" by which those resources, in those places, constitute "moves" of a describable sort of a competition sequential topography.

Accordingly, stretches of overlapping talk are characterized by hitches and perturbations in the talk. So, hitches refer to the continuity and progressivity of talk's production. On the other hand, departures from prosodic character of talk's articulation to that point are called "perturbations". Hence, talk can get suddenly (1) louder in volume (2) higher in pitch (3) faster or slower in pace. Moreover, talk in progress may be (4) suddenly cut off (5) some sound may prolonged or stretched (6) prior element may be repeated (ibid: 11-12).

Some of these hitches and perturbations invite understanding as forms of strategic maneuver in a competitive or agonistic undertaking, a fight for the floor in which talking louder may aim to "shout the other down". Thus, these hitches and perturbations in the developing course of overlapping talk may be deployed by speakers in managing the course and resolution of overlap (ibid). Consider the following example:

(4)1 Bee: t! We:ll, uhd-yihknow I-I don' wanna make any- thing

2 definite because I-yihknow I jis:: I jis::t thinkin:g



3 *tihday all day riding on th'trai:nshhuh-uh*

4 {*hh[h!*

5 *Ava: [Well there's nothing else t'do. ^I wz*

6 *thinkin[g of taking the car anyway.] {hh*

7 *Bee: r [that I would go into the ss-uh-]5I would go*

8 *into the city but I don't know,*

(Schegloff, 2000:

12-3

In this example, Ava has been trying to invite Bee to join her the next day when she travels from Long Island into Manhattan. Bee has been resisting, and is resisting again at 3:1– 4, being in the course of retracting the possible plan of going *into the city* which has elicited Ava's efforts. At 3:5– 6, Ava presses the talk through the end of one turn unit (*nothing else t'do*) into the start of another (*I wz thinking*), engendering an overlap when Bee (at 3:7) voices the ostensible continuation of the talk which she was producing at 3:3– 4. Then note that the talk proceeds fluently on both their parts, until there is an apparent hitch in Bee's turn in the phrase *into the c[ity]*. The initial consonant of *city* is stretched and then cut off (represented in the transcript as *ss-uh-*), before the whole is recycled from the start of the clause (Schegloff, 2000: 12-3).



In addition, overlap begins with the onset of simultaneous talk. Parties to talk in interactions may be oriented to pre-onset phase of overlap. That is, a speaker of a turn in progress may detect –either from body behavioral displays or from common turn-pre- beginning practices such as pre-turn hearable in breath- that another is about to launch a turn. in this case, a speaker deploys resources and practices to avoid overlapping talk. Let's consider this example:

- (5) 1 James: Alright. Becau:se, it's insu:red anyway,
when I call de**
- 2 r office, dey'll send a man up eh tuh put that glass
I:N.**
- 3 Vic: Well,**
- 4 James: But dis [person thet DID IT,]**
- 5 Vic: [If I see the person,]**
- 6 James: –IS GOT TUH BE:: {hh taken care of. You
know what [I mean.**
- (Schegloff,
2000: 15)

Here, James is setting aside concerns about the cost of the broken window in favor of settling up with the culprit; and as he comes to the possible completion of one of the TCUs that



compose his turn, he apparently registers Vic's gearing up to start a turn of his own (the turn that is actually started a moment later at line 3). James seeks to interdict that start-up with a sudden sharp increase in the volume (and pitch) of his talk, represented in the transcript by the capitalization and partial underlining of the word *I:N* on line 2.17 This effort fails to head off Vic's talk, which is launched directly after it (Schegloff, 2000: 15).

Furthermore, speakers sometimes delay the final part of their utterance after the onset of talk by another participant. Therefore, delayed completion can provide a way to bring an unfinished turn-constructural unit to completion after another speaker produces an utterance in the course that turn-unit. Thereby, it can be seen as an overlap resolution device (Lerner, 1989: 167-170). Let's consider the following example:

(6) **Dan: as a matter of fact we may not have a group going**

after [the uh

Roger: [maybe you're screening 'em too hard

Dan: next couple of weeks.

Hence according to Lerner (1989: 173), delayed completion provides a means to produce complete turn-constructural unit



across intervening talk. It means to resolve an overlap in conversation and regain the speaking turn. As a result, speakers have techniques to extend the size of their turns as they approach a possible completion place. Schegloff (1987: 37), for example, describes a "rush through" technique in which a speaker "speeds up the talk and runs the intonation contour across the completion point". Coulthard (1977: 59-60) suggests that there are two possible strategies a participant can use in cases of overlap: one is by "speaking more loudly, more quickly and in a higher pitch as in:

(7) A: that's not for YOU to decide: that's for HER and her parents to decide: you understand that

This signals to the hearer that the current speaker's turn is not completed yet.

The other strategy is "by repeating short, single-tonic utterances to show his desire for the floor".

1. Introductory remarks of Titanic Movie

"*Titanic*" movie is an American epic romantic disaster movie. It is directed, produced, and edited by James Cameron. Its stars are Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet who fall in love aboard. Leonardo DiCaprio's name in the movie is Jack Dawson. He is a homeless, poor man from Wisconsin who



tours many places in the world. He wins two tickets in a poker game to travel on Titanic as a passenger of third class with his friend Fabrizio. On the other hand, Kate Winslet is called Rose. She is 17-year-old girl from Philadelphia who is forced into an engagement to 30-year-old 'Cal'.

1.1 Analysis

Conversation (1)

Rose: Good gracious!

Perhaps as a reminder
of my feelings for you.

Rose: Is it a

Cal: Diamond? Yes. 56 carats to be exact.

Analysis:

In this talk, **overlap** occurs when Rose wants to say to Cal the type of jewelry and Cal self-selects and tells her as a kind of first possible start.

Discussion:

In this talk, Cal and Rose meet after the accident of suicide when Jack saves her. Cal brings to Rose a gift which is diamond. Cal begins the talk about Rose's case then he offers the gift to her before being engaged. She is surprised then



produces a turn asking about its type. Cal self-selects and interrupts Rose telling that it is a diamond to be early possible start.

Conversation (2)

Rose: You do get around for a...

Well, a person of limited means.

Jack: Go on, a poor guy. You can say it.

Analysis

Overlap occurs before the completion point when Jack begins speaking before Rose finishes her turn.

Discussion:

Jack begins speaking before the completion point of Rose then his speech overlaps with Rose's turn. He wants to complete her turn because Rose is surprised about the arts of Jack and tells him a person of limited means.

Conversation (3)

Guard: No, I'm afraid I don't.

Now, you're gonna have to turn around.

Jack:
talk

He'll tell you. I just need to



Analysis:

In this exchange, **Overlap** occurs when Jack **self-selects** before the Guard finishes his turn.

Discussion:

In this bit of talk, Jack comes to see Rose at the church but he is prevented by the guard of the door because he is from another rank and is no longer welcomed in this class. The guard tells him to leave but Jack tells him that he was here last week. Jack tells the guard that Lovejoy is going to tell you that he is authorized to get in to see Rose. Jack's words overlap with the words of the guard before completion point due to self-selection.

Conversation (4)

01:14:34

Jack: you're the most amazingly ...astounding, wonderful girl ... woman that I've ever known and

Rose: Jack, I

Jack: No, let me try to get this out.

Analysis:



Here, Jack is telling a story to Rose. Rose interrupts Jack before the completion point of Jack's turn then **overlap** occurs as a result of self-selection because self-selectors compete for the talk and the early possible starts of the speakers that lead to overlap.

Discussion:

Jack is telling his story preface and is speaking to Rose about his feelings. Then, Rose self-selects and interrupts Jack's turn. Jack's speech overlaps by Rose and disrupts at the middle of his utterance as a result of self-selection competing to take a turn before the completion point of Jack's turn. Jack raises his intonation trying to dominate conversation because men have more power over women and as he was telling a story, he takes the turn again.

2.Introductory Remarks of the King and Summer Movie

The king of summer movie is a 2013 American independent coming-of-age-drama which goes around three teenage boys Joe, Patrick and Biaggio. Joe finds himself frustrated by the attempts of his single father, Frank, to manage his life. Patrick is also



annoyed by his parents in his life at home. Joe declares his freedom and for all and escape to the forest in the woods with his friends. Joe says that they are going to build a house there to be free from the responsibility of parents.

3.1 Analysis

Conversation (1)

00:04:32

Kelly: Um, I will see you tonight.

Joe: Yes. Yeah, uh

Paul: Babe.

Kelly: Yes?

Analysis:

Here, **overlap** occurs as a result of **self-selection** by Paul when Kelly was speaking with Joe because of the early start by the self-selector speaker.

Discussion:

In this exchange, Kelly is speaking with Joe then Paul comes and self-selects and overlap occurs because the self-selector is competing for the talk and his words overlap with the words of Joe and this occurs frequently in the turns between friends. This results in unsmooth transition of speech due to the gaps and overlaps between turns.



(Spaces are not desirable as such)

Conversation (2)

Joe: YeahUh, look,

this may sound desperate,but I am 100% lucid, okay?

Don't smile, 'cause I'm...

Don't

Joe's sister: No, this is very serious.

Analysis:

Here, **overlap** occurs due to the projectability of possible completion. Joe is speaking to his sister then his sister self-selects before the articulation of the completion point then overlap occurs.

Discussion:

In this conversation, Joe is speaking to his sister to explain to her his state with his father then before the completion point; his sister starts her turn missing the projectable part of the turn to start her turn and overlaps with the previous words of Joe.

Conversation (3)

00:43:47

Joe: Okay, please my dad is loving



every second of this, okay?

Kelly: No, Joe, I seriously doubt that.

Kelly: So, uh...

...does Patrick have a really
big, crazy beard now, too'?

Analysis:

In this conversation, talk is between Kelly and Joe. Kelly begins the first turn then Joe **self-selects** and produces a single phrase. Kelly also self-selects and this results in an **overlap** before the completion point.

Discussion:

In this conversation, Kelly and Joe meet to talk about Joe's father and their lives. Kelly begins her speech then Joe continues. Kelly self-selects and results in an overlap before the completion point of the turn. Self-selection also occurs to continue speaking after his/her turn.

Conversation (4)

00:44:40

Kelly: Yes.

Joe: This is life or death, Kelly.

Kelly: Okay, okay, okay.

Joe: Okay.

Analysis:



Overlap occurs when Joe adds the address term Kelly which goes after first possible completion as in the last two turns in the above conversation then his words overlap with the words of Kelly.

Discussion:

In the last two turns, Joe begins his turn adding an address term which is optional then Kelly also begins her turn and overlaps with the words of Joe.

4. Conclusions

- 1- Overlap is one of the irregularities of turn-taking in conversation.
- 2- Overlap occurs in the two movies frequently resulting in the violation of the rules of turn-taking, namely the rule that one party talks at a time.
- 3- Overlap due to self-selection is much more frequent in the two movies

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