



**University of Tikrit**

**College of Education for Women**

**Department of English**

**Subject: General English Language**

**Stage: 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Students**

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**Title of Lecture : Turn Taking**

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## **Introduction**

A turn is the time when a speaker is talking and turn-taking is the skill of knowing when to start and finish a turn in a conversation. It is an important organizational tool in spoken discourse. The structure is generally universal. So, overlapping talk is avoided and silence between turns is minimized, and turn-taking is vary by culture and community. Turn –taking is firstly described by sociologists Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson.

In formal situations, such as business meetings, lectures, committee meetings, conferences, presentations and so on, turn-taking may be controlled by a chair, the presenter or the educator. In these settings, turn-taking will be by invitation and one person will decide who speaks, when, on what topic and for how long. But in informal conversations, such as conversations between friends, in small groups or pairs, turn-taking comes to the fore.

Also, the speaker should recognize the right moment to have a turn and signal the end of the turn. The current speaker may signal the completion of a thought or sentence by taking control not only over who speaks next but what he says. This is done in three ways:

### **A- Selection and constraint:**

A speaker may select the next persons to take a turn, either by naming them or by alluding to them in some ways. For example:

**What do you say, John ?**

**Well, we have an expert here, don't we ?**

Selection may also be achieved through gaze, i.e., selecting the next to speak by making eye contact with them. While in constraining a

speaker may signal the end of a turn in the form of the next utterance but not select a speaker to perform it. For example:

**Does anyone know what time it goes ?**

### **B- Open-ended turn passing**

A speaker may simply signal the fact that his or her turn has finished by falling silent, finishing with falling intonation or shifting gaze. In this case, it is up to the other participant(s) to self-select who is going to continue the interaction.

### **C- Predicted sentence completion**

Listeners are often able to predict with fair accuracy how a sentence will finish for example:

**A: Sorry we are a bit late, the traffic was**

**B: Awful, yes it always is on Fridays .**

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### **Turn-taking system**

1- A pre-allocated system

- No interruption pressures
- Turns tend to be longer
- It consists of a series of linked sentences

2-Turn-by-turn allocation

-A strong pressure from other participants ,that are wanting to speak.

-The turn is typically only one along sentence.

### **Techniques of "possible Completion"**

1-Employ as Sacks calls an utterance incompletor, as (but, and, however,...etc.) that turn a complete sentence to incomplete one.

2-Begin with incompletion marker, as (if, since, ...) or any other subordinator.

3-Using pre-structure unit of speech, as (I'd like to make two points, or "firstly" ....), to indicate there is more.

4-Using other tools , that speaker indicates not to yield the floor:

-speaking more loudly.

-speaking quickly.

-using higher pitch.

5-Simply breaking in, this technique for non-speaker who wishes to speak, but unable to find entry spot. (this is full of rudeness)

6-Repeating short, single-tonic, this is a technique which children master! as (ah ah ah).

### **Techniques of a non-speaker who offered the floor**

1- Simply remain silent.

2- Produce a minimal response that to confirm, to agree, to interest.

3- Use a possible pre-closing, as (alright, OK, so, well...)

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Duncan (1973-1974) suggests that the cues for speaker can be grammatical, paralinguistic or kinesics or any combination of all the three. A listener may claim the speaking turn when the current speaker gives a turn signal at the end of phonemic clause, of at least one of a set of six cues. The cues are:

- 1- Intonation: the use of any pitch level .
- 2- Paralinguistic: drawl on the final syllable or on the stressed syllable of the phonemic clause .
- 3- Body motion: the termination of any hand gesticulation or the relaxation of a tensed hand position.
- 4- Sociocentric sequence: the appearance of one of several stereotyped expressions such as “but uh”.
- 5- Paralanguage: a drop in paralinguistic pitch and or loudness, in conjunction with a sociocentric sequence.
- 6- Syntax: the completion of a grammatical clause involving a subject predicate combination.

