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Conversation Analysis
Korean Drama

Group 3

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Content

1. Introduction	3
2. Transcription.....	4
3. Conversation Analysis and Discussion	8
3.1 Turn Taking	8
3.2 Sequence Expansion	10
3.3 Overlap	12
3.4 Repair.....	14
3.5 Communicative Goals	15
4. Generalities of Cantonese conversation	17
4.1 Utterance particles	17
4.2 Dislocation.....	18
4.3 Code switching	19
5. Conclusion.....	21
6. References	22

1. Introduction

Conversation is an essential component for social interaction, and at least two participants are needed. Even if it is easy to start off, continue and end the conversation, there are many theories for analyzing it due to variability, no matter for the language use and the structure. As a human, we are so used to know the time we should take the turn to speak, even for children. It is because of the social norms and they can be generated through daily observation and maternal reinforcement when we were young. However, not all the speeches can be delivered fluently and not every turn can be transferred perfectly. They bring to the issues of repairing and overlapping.

In the report, a discussion on Korean drama is recorded in Cantonese for the analysis on the fields of turn-taking, sequencing, overlapping and repairing. On the ground that Cantonese owns the special features of utterance particles, dislocation and code switching, due to the special cultural background of Hong Kong and the loose structure of Cantonese, these three elements are going to be discussed as well based on the recorded conversation.

2. Transcription

Extract: Korean Drama (61 seconds)

Link of the video: <https://youtu.be/C85h85CrKnQ>

About the Speaker: There are three speakers in this video, including Anna (sitting a female speaker represented by her initial A), Rachel (a female speaker represented by her initial R) and Yan (a female speaker represented by her initial Y). The recorder has gained all the speakers permission before recording.

Setting: The speakers are university classmates, and they were chatting in a room in the library. There are in total 4 people in the room, including the three speakers and the recorder. The seating arrangements are as follows: Left: Anna, Middle: Rachel, Right: Yan.

General content: The three speakers were discussing on a Korean drama, Reply 1988. Two of the speakers were familiar with the content of the drama while one of them was not. The whole conversation focused on the characters and content of that drama.

Remarks: **PT** in the transcription represents the position of Cantonese utterance particles

00:00 01 Y 講 起 話 講 韓 劇 呀 嘛 下 話 =
gong² hei² waa6 gong2 hon4 kek6 aa3 maa3 haa6 waa5
Said before say talk Korean dramas **PT** right

We have decided to discuss Korean drama, haven't we?

00:03 02 A = 係 呀 =
hai6 aa3
Yes **PT**

Yes.

03 Y =哦: 咁你 近期 有 咩 推介 呀:: 或者 你 鍾 意睇啲咩(.)劇呀?=
o5 gam2 nei5 gan6 kei4 jau2 me1 teoi1gaai3 aa3 waak6 ze2 nei5 zung1 ji3 tai2 di1 me1 kek6 aa3
PT then you recently have what recommendation **PT** or you like watch what drama

I see. Then what is your recent recommendation? Or what drama do you like?

00:08 04 R =係 囉(.)有啲 咩 好深[刻]
hai6 lo1 jau5 di1 me1 heoi3 sam1 hak1
Yes **PT** have what very memorable

Yes, which drama stays deep in your mind?

05 A [請回答 1988 啦(.)去睇啦:]>好好睇<
cing2 wui4 daap3 jat1gau2 baak3 baak3 laa1 heoi3 tai2 laa hou2 hou2 tai2
Please Reply 1988 **PT** go watch **PT** very good watch

Reply 1988. Go and watch it! It's very good.

06 R [哇°好慘:::呀(.)
waa6 hou2 cam2 aa3
PT so poor **PT**

- 00:12 07 Oh, that is so sad...
 嗰套嘢我一直都以為阿邊個會((敲枱4下))=
 go2 tou3 je5 ngo5 jat1 zik6 dou1 ji5 wai6 aa3 bin1 go3 wui5
 That drama I always also thought who will (kick the table x4)
- 08 A [=heh
 I have always thought that, that guy in the drama would
- 00:15 09 Y (laughs)
 [=你知↑啲[.hh
 nei5 zi1 gaa3
 You know **PT**
- 10 A So you know that drama?
 [.hhhhhh
- 11 R (Laughs)
 [阿狗煥會((拍手一下)會咩啲嘛會贏啲嘛
 aa3 gau2 wui6 wui5 wui5 me1 gaa1 maa3 wui5 jeng5 gaa1 maa3
 “Dog Hwan” will (clap hands) will what **PT** will win **PT**
- 00:19 12 Jung-hwan would (clap hands) win...
 點知最後點解會係朴寶劍啲::[:
 dim2 zi1 zeoi3 hau6 dim1 gaa1 wui5 hai6 pok3 bou2 gim3 gaa3
 Who knows finally why would be Park Bo-gum **PT**
- 13 A Who would know why it was Park Bo-gum who won at last?
 [但係我(.)我覺得好 charming 啲
 daan6 hai6 ngo5 ngo5 gok3 dak1 hou2 wo3
 But I I think very charming **PT**
- 00:24 14 But I think he is very charming
 佢(.)所以我覺得呢個結局好好啲呀°=
 keoi5 so2 ji3 ngo5 gok3 dak1 ne1 go3 git3 guk6 hou2 hou2 aa6
 He so I think this ending very good **PT**
- 00:26 15 R That's why I think this ending is very good.
 [=即係你鍾意朴寶劍
 zik1 hai3 nei1 zung1 ji3 pok3 bou2 gim3
 That is you like Park Bo-gum
- 16 Y That means you like Park Bo-gum?
 [=°哦°sorry 我完全唔知[你(.)講緊咩°.hhh
 o3 ngo5 jyun4 cyun4 m4 zi1 nei5 gong2 gan2 me1
 sorry I totally don't know you saying what (laughs)
- 17 A Well I feel sorry since I am totally uncertain of what you are talking about.
 [°唔係<(.)我覺得佢係好
 m4 hai6 ngo5 gok3 dak1 keoi5 hai3 hou2
 No I think he is very
- 18 No, but I think he is very
 charm:: .hh ming[.hhh =
 Charm...ming
 Char...ming (laughs)

(laughs)

00:30 20 R =邊個好 charming 呀=
bin1 go3 hou2 aa3
Who very charming PT

Who is very charming?

21 A =朴寶劍[囉
pok3 bou2 gim3 lo1
Park Bo-gum PT

Park Bo-gum

22 R [哦::=
o5
PT

I see.

00:32 23 A =佢喺呢個位(.) charming 過(.)咩(.)同埋佢哋年紀上面(.)實
keoi5 hai2 ne1 go3 wai2 go3 me1 tung4 maai4 keoi5 dei6 nin4 gei2 soeng6 min6 sat6
He in this role charming than who and their ages real

He is more charming in this role. And his age in reality

00:37 24 際年齡上同惠利襯啲嘢嘛=
zai3 nin4 ling4 soeng6 tung4 wai6 lei2 can3 di1 maa3
Real age with Hyeri match more PT

makes a better couple with Hyeri.

25 Y =其實講咩↑::啲呢套嘢我完全唔[知講咩
kei4 sat6 gong2 me1 gaa3 ne1 tou3 je5 ngo5 jyun4 cyun4 m4 zi1 gong4 me2
In fact said what PT this thing I totally not know say what

In fact what is it about? I don't know anything about this drama.

26 R [佢↑好↑古老 啲佢夾埋
keoi5 hou2 gu2 lou5 gaa3 keoi5 gaap3 maai4
It very classical PT it join together

It is very classical and they all gather

00:43 27 好似係一個 set↑:咁 啲嘛=
hou2 ci5 hai6 jat1 go3 gam2 gaa1 maa3
seems is a set like PT

seems that all series group together and form something like a set.

28 Y =古裝 [劇° 呀°
gu2 zong1 kek3 aa3
Old clothes drama PT

Do you mean costume drama?

29 R [請回答 1 9 9(.) 5:=
cing2 wui4 daap3 jat1 gau2 gau2 m5
Please Reply 1 9 9...5

Reply 1995

00:47 30 A =唔係(.)9 7(.) 9 4 [同埋 8 8
m4 hai3 gau2 cat1 gau2 sei3 tung44 maai4 baak1 baak1
No, 9 7, 9 4 and 8 8

No, they should be Reply 1997, Reply 1994 and Reply 1988.

31 R

[呀:=

aa3

PT

Yes, that's it.

00:50 32 A =8 8 年(.)係:>即係<佢 個 setting 就係 嗰陣 時囉:(.)8 8 年 喺
 baak3 baak3 nin4 hai6 zik1 hai6 keoi5 go3 zau6 hai6 go2 zan6 si4 lo1 baak3 baak3 nin4 hai3
 8 8 year is it is its setting is in that time PT 8 8 year in

Year 1988 (yes), that means its setting is belonging to that time period.

00:54 33 首爾嗰 陣 時 發生 嘅事囉(0.5)就係(.>例如<住 喺 一 個 area
 sau1 ji5 go2 zan6 si4 faat3 sang1 ge3 si6 lo1 zau6 hai6 lai6 jyu4 zyu6 hai2 jat1 go3
 Seoul that time happened incidents PT that is such as living in an area

It depicts what happened in Seoul at that time. For example,

00:59 34 啲人 發生 嘅嘢
 di1 jan4 faat3 sang1 ge3 je5
 people happen things

what happened to the people living in an area.

1:00 35 Y 哦:
 o5

PT

I see.

3. Conversation Analysis and Discussion

In the following, the turn taking system with some interesting facts, sequence expansion by minimal pairs, overlap and repair operation of the captioned Cantonese conversation will be discussed. The analysis section shall be ended by some generalities of Cantonese conversation derived from authentic examples quoted from the transcription.

3.1 Turn Taking

Turn Taking Rules

(1a) Current Speaker Selects Next Speaker

(1b) Next Speaker Self-selects

(1c) Current Speaker Continues the turn

(2) Recursive Property of Turn Taking

(Rule 1(a) to (c) will be applied recursively until speaker transfer is affected)

(Liddicoat, 2007)

Rule 1a

Line 01-02

In Line 01 and 02, turn taking rule 1(a) is applied. The current speaker Y initiated the topic of Korean drama. Through the use of the phrase “講起話”, it shows that the conversation has started beforehand. It was a shift of topic, from what was being discussed to the new topic on Korean drama. The current speaker Y selected the next speaker A right after the TRP for a confirmation of the shift of topic. They formed an adjacency pair as a start of the new topic here.

Line 03

In Line 03 Y started off the topic by asking for the recommendation of drama and selected A with rule 1(a).

Line 25-27

In Line 25, Y asked for the information about the drama by rule 1(a) selecting the next speaker. In Line 26-27, R got the turn and she tried to explain to Y what the drama was about. In the conversation, she also tried to put stress on the keywords by latching and rising intonation. In the surface, Line 25 and Line 26-27 form an adjacency pair like a question and answer pair.

Rule 1b

Line 04-05

In Line 04, R self-selected herself right after Line 03 Y's TRP to bring herself into the topic too with rule 1(b). R was not the target respondent and made a follow-up question instead of

answering the question, which connoted that A should be the one taking the next turn to answer the question. R's utterance also provided complementation to the question that not only asked for the name of the recent dramas A would like to introduce, but also the memorable ones that could be discussed as well. R's self-selection here did not violate the maxim of relevance.

In Line 05, A used rule 1(b) to self-select herself before the TRP of R causing an overlap in Line 04 as she recognized in the midway that what R uttered was the similar to what Y asked and the questions could be with the same answer.

Line 06

In Line 06, R used rule 1(b) and self-selected herself after a TRP of A.

Line 09

In Line 09 Y self-selected herself hoping to join the conversation by showing surprise to the fact that R knew the drama.

Line 11-12

In Line 11-12, with the overlap with the laughter, R used rule 1(b) self-selecting herself and continued what she was talking about with a bit repetition of the previous content in Line 07 as repair. This shows that she should have forgotten something and she stopped to think for a while since the time at Line 07. This is treated as a violative interruption to interrupt the laughter of Y in Line 09 so that she could continue her sentence she stopped before.

Line 13-14

In Line 13-14, A self-selected herself at TRP to show slight disagreement with R's opinion that Park Bo-gum should not be the one who won. A explained she liked the ending and provided the reason.

Line 15-18

In Line 15-18, with rule 1(b) R&Y both self-selected themselves to make comments at the same time right after based on A's TRP. In Line 15, R based on Line 13-14 and made a guess whether A liked Park Bo-gum, while Y overlapped with R and expressed she did not understand what they talked about at the same time. In Line 17-18 A responded to R's comment in 15, clarifying that she did not really adore Park Bo-gum, but she only considered him charming. She emphasized on the level of fondness, in which 'like' and 'thinking that he is charming' are different. Y's doubt towards the content was ignored and she lost in the turn-taking competition. Line 15 and 17 forms an adjacency pair.

Line 20-22

In Line 20-21, R self-selected herself and she was the first speaker gaining right to the next turn after the TRP in Line 18&19. She then purposefully used rule 1(a) to select A as the next

speaker by raising a question which she knew the answer already and she also knew that A would respond to her. Line 20 and 21 forms an adjacency pair. Line 22 serves as a sequence closing third (SCT).

Line 23-24

In Line 23-24, rule 1(b) is used. A self-selected herself again to continue her comment towards the drama characters.

Line 25

In Line 25, Y used rule 1(b) to self-select herself to speak.

Line 28-30

In Line 28, Y self-selected herself to guess the type of drama they explained right after a TRP. But in Line 29, R self-selected herself again and tried to continue her utterance in Line 26-27, but there is a very little pause when she uttered '199(.)5'. It shows some hesitation in the utterance. In Line 30, A immediately self-selected herself to correct R's content with correct drama names. It further showed that R actually was not sure about the year.

Rule 1c

Line 07

In Line 07, R used rule 1(c) and continued to self-select herself to speak after a short pause without anyone selecting themselves but she stopped in the middle before the end of her sentence followed by 4 times of the sound of hitting table. These two Lines do not form adjacency pair, but R just gave comment on the drama Reply 1988, aiming to show that she knew the drama as well.

Line 32-34

In Line 32-34, rule 1(c) is applied. A continued to self-select herself in this turn to explain the plot of the drama.

Line 35

In Line 35, Y self-selected herself and it serves as the SCT to show acknowledgement and understanding of the content and as the sign towards the end of the topic.

3.2 Sequence Expansion

Line 01-05

Pre-sequence	FPP	01	Y 講起話講韓劇呀嘛下話 =
	SPP	02	A = 係呀 =
	FPP _{1a}	03	Y =哦: 咁你近期有咩推介呀::或者你鍾意睇啲咩(.)劇呀?= FPP _{1b}
	FPP _{1b}	04	R =係囉(.)有啲咩好深刻

Line 01 and 02 are a minimal pair servicing as pre-sequence to bring up the topic of Korean drama. Line 03 and 04 serve as double First Pair Parts (FPP) as they mean similar things as A responded in Line 05 and it serves as a Second Pair Part (SPP). They became the base sequence of the main topic.

Line 11-14

FPP	11	R	[阿狗煥會((拍手一下)會咩嘍嘛會贏嘍嘛
	12		點知最後點解會係朴寶劍嘍:: [::
SPP	13	A	[但係我(.)我覺得好 charming 喎
	14		佢(.)所以我覺得呢個結局好好°呀° =

Line 11 and 12 serve as FPP, while Line 13-14 serve as SPP.

Line 15-17

FPP	15	R	[=即係你鍾意朴寶劍
	16	Y	[=°哦°sorry 我完全唔知 [你(.)°講緊咩°.hhh
SPP	17	A	[>唔係<(.)我覺得佢係好

Line 15 and 17 form a minimal pair as FPP and SPP respectively and with the ignorance of Y's inserted comment. Y's insert did not form any pair with any sentence anymore in later part of the conversation.

Line 25-35

FPP	25	Y	=其實講咩↑:::啲呢套嘢我完全唔[知講咩
FPP ₁	26	R	[佢↑好↑古老嘍佢夾埋
	27		好似係一個 set↑:咁嘍嘛=
	28	Y	=古裝[劇°呀°
	29	R	[請回答 199(.)5:=
SPP ₁	30	A	=唔係(.)97(.)94[同埋 88
	31	R	[呀:=
SPP	32	A	=88 年(.)係:>即係<佢個 setting 就係嗰陣時囉: (.)88 年係
	33		首爾嗰陣時發生嘅事囉(0.5)就係(.)>例如<住喺一個 area
	34		啲人發生嘅嘢
SCT	35	Y	哦:

Line 25 (FPP) and 32-34 (SPP) are base sequence. In the surface, Line 26-27 looks like the SPP of Line 25. But in fact, Line 26-27&29 (FPP₁) & 30(SPP₁) are an inserted sequence. Line 32-34 is real SPP explaining what the drama is about referring to the SPP in Line 25. Line 28 is an insert. Line 35 serves as the SCT to end the whole sequence as the acceptance of information.

Interesting Facts

In Line 16, 25, 28, Y tried to arouse A and R's attention and shows that she actually did not understand the drama and people that they have mentioned. She made indirect requests for explanation on the drama. Most of the time, she could not join in the conversation content or compete with the floor.

3.3 Overlap

Mis-cue

Line 12-13

A overlapped with the lengthened utterance particle 㗎 of R's TRP. A projected R is finishing her turn, so A started her turn when R is still lengthening the utterance particle 㗎. Since R had delivered the main message before the overlapping, there was not a very obvious overlapping competition.

Line 21-22

A overlapped with R: When A wanted to finish her turn with the utterance particles 囉, R gave a reply of 哦 to express her understanding on A's response simultaneously.

Line 30-31

In Line 30, A repaired R's mistake as R stated the drama name incorrectly in the previous turn. Therefore, when A continued to introduce the series of drama: Reply 1997, Reply 1997 and Reply 1988, R projected A would finish her turn after saying "Reply 1994" but A continued her turn without a pause. R overlapped A's turn with the token"呀", which is used for showing her realization of the mistake she made in her previous turn.

Simultaneous self-selection

Line 08-09

A and Y self-selected themselves with laughter after R's turn to express their feeling towards R's turn.

Line 15 - 16

R and Y overlapped right after A's TRP as A did not select the next speaker in her turn. R started asking A a question while Y started saying she did not know anything about the drama simultaneously.

Other self-selection while current continues

Line 05-06

R self-selected herself after the potential TRP of A's turn, but A actually had not finished her comment towards the drama, so R overlapped with A that caused this problematic overlapping. A delivered her comment on the drama very quickly and quitted the competition, when she heard R was speaking at the same time. R just overlapped with A by a soft 哇 at the beginning, but when she heard that A was planning to end her turn quickly, she did not stop but further enhanced her comment by lengthening the adjective 惨 to stress on her intention to continue her turn.

Line 09-11

A self-selected herself with laughter while Y laughed in her turn. Meanwhile, R self-selected herself and engaged in the conversation by starting her turn even Y and A were laughing. There was laughter from A and Y overlapping with the beginning of R's turn in Line 11. R projected Y and A would finish their turns after laughter so she continued her turn without pausing.

Line 18-19

A and Y simultaneously laughed in the conversation after A finished commenting on Park Bo-gum as a charming actor. A was still laughing in her turn when Y laughed together.

“Interruptive” overlap

Line 04-05

A answered Y and R in Line 05. With the address term “你” appended in Line 3 in Y's turn, A was obligated to give response. Meanwhile, A recognized R was asking a similar question in Line 04, so A projected the ending of R's turn to give respond to both Y and R's questions. However, A failed to catch the TRP of R's turn as shown in Line 4, so she overlapped the beginning of her turn with the end of R's turn in “刻”.

Line 16-17

Before Y ended her comment, A overlapped with Y by interrupting Y's comment of not understanding what A and R were saying. However, A ignored Y but chose to give response to R directly as R selected A to respond in Line 15.

Line 25-26

Not until Y finished her indirect question, R interrupted Y with an overlapping. R projected that Y was asking again for the information of the drama they were discussing, so she gave Y an answer even though Y had not finished her turn yet. In the beginning, they competed syllable-by-syllable. However, Y realized that although R was overlapping with her turn, R

was giving an answer to Y's question. Therefore, Y gave up leading R to win and got the turn. Thus, R continued explaining the content of Reply 1988.

Line 28-29

Y gave a response to R's Line 26 and 27. Even though Y had not finished her conversation with the syllables 劇 and 呀, R did not intend to give the answer to Y's question on whether the drama was a costume drama or not, but R continued with the introduction of the Korean drama Reply 1988.

3.4 Repair

“Repair” is the phenomenon in a conversation that participants address a trouble source when it exists. The trouble source can be due to mis-speaking, mishearing or incorrect information provided. There are two types of repairs: self-initiated self-repair (SISR) and other-initiated repair (OIR). (Hellermann, 2009) The former is the participant repairs his/her own trouble source, whereas the latter is the participant repairs the trouble source produced by others.

In this conversation, SISR is the major type of repair. Replace of wh-word phrase, repetition and word search marker were adopted as strategies.

In Line 7 and Line 11, which is R's turn, she repaired twice for her own speech respectively. For the first repair, she originally mentioned “阿邊個會” and then self-repaired this with “阿狗煥會”. In this repair, R could not mention the name of the main character, so she used “阿邊個” in the beginning to replace the person she would like to mention, as long as she remembered the nickname of the main character, “阿狗煥” was used instead to replace “阿邊個”. Afterward, the second repair of her turn appeared in “會咩嘍嘛會贏嘍嘛”. Same as the previous repair, “會咩嘍嘛” is first mentioned by R to show her surprise on the status of Dog Hwan in the end of the drama, but she failed to do so. Then, she repaired her utterance with “會贏嘍嘛” immediately to show her surprise on the plot within the same turn. Repairs occur as the information is actually important for the conversation, however, it could not come up to her mind due to some reasons. Since it could not be missed, the name of the character and the action ‘win’ were replaced by wh-word phrases “阿邊個” (who) and “咩” (what). They were replaced with the missed crucial information later to facilitate the completeness of the speech. It also helped the addressees understand what R was talking about.

Apart from it, in Line 13, A self-repaired in the same turn in considering Park Bo-gum charming by recycling “我” after a small pause. Repetition strategy was adopted for

indicating that she had problem to find the word for continuing the utterance (Gafarange, 2012). It acts similar to the word search marker ‘mmm’ and a pause, meaning that she needed time for looking for the words or organizing the speech.

In Line 23-24, A repaired in her turn. She said “佢哋年紀上面” in the beginning, but she found out that she could not provide the exact ages or the age difference of the two characters owing to the limited knowledge. So, she self-repaired her turn to “實際年齡上同惠利襯啲” in order to provide the reason why she thought Park Bo-gum was charming without giving out concrete evidence. Word search marker, a pause, was used.

The repair in Line 32 shows the similar reason for repair as that in Line 23-24. A had another self-initiated self-repair, she recycled part of her previous utterance in “係:>即係<”, “係” is repeated and recycled in her turn to introduce the plot of Reply 1988. She tried to explain the plot of Reply 1988 in detail, however, she could not due to the complexity of it. Therefore, she explained it briefly by the use of “即係”.

Other-initiated other-repaired appeared in the conversation once in Line 29 and 30. R provides a wrong answer 請回答 1995 and A gives the correct answer 請回答 94, 97 and 88. Repair occurred since the information was considered to be critical for the conversation by A, and R showed hesitation when speaking. On the ground that R seemed unable to provide the correct information, A repaired it.

3.5 Communicative Goals

For the communicative goals of Anna, Rachel and Yan, at the beginning of the discussion, Yan asked questions about the recommendation of Korean dramas and which Korean drama is their favourite. Then Anna answered Yan’s question by suggesting the drama called Reply Me 1988. After Anna’s suggestion, Rachel joined into the conversation and started to talk about the content of the drama. Yan showed her surprise about Rachel’s knowledge about the drama by saying ‘You know that!’ Since Rachel and Anna share similar knowledge about the drama, they started to discuss the drama actively and Yan remain silent.

At 00:25-00:27, Yan joined into the conversation by inserting a statement saying that ‘Oh sorry, I am totally uncertain of what you are talking about.’ Yan said so in the hope that Rachel and Anna can provide more information about the drama and to get attention from Rachel and Anna so that Yan can try to get involved into the conversation. However, Anna ignored Yan’s request and continued to reply Rachel about who is being more charming and continued to discuss the drama with Rachel. At the same time, Yan remained silent again since she is not familiar with the content of the drama.

At 00:38-00:40, Yan joined into the conversation again by directly asking a question about

the content of the drama and clearly stated her uncertainty about the drama. It shows Yan's eagerness to try to get involved into the conversation. At this point, Rachel started to reply Yan's question by introducing that this is a series of classical drama. Then, Yan joined in by asking question again in the hope that she can get clarification about whether the drama is a costume drama or not. Finally, Anna joined in to make the clarification and to provide more concrete information about the drama.

From the above, throughout the whole conversation, we can see that Anna was the one who is most familiar with the main topic (Korean drama), so her main communicative goal was to introduce the content of the drama and to express her opinion on it. In contrast, we can see another speaker, Yan, who only had very limited idea about the drama, had a major communicative goal to emphasize her uncertainty about the topic and tried to ask for more introduction in order to engage in the conversation. At last, Rachel was the one who was not very familiar with the drama, but acquired something about it. Therefore, her main goal was to exchange ideas with Anna, as well as to express her view on the topic as well.

4. Generalities of Cantonese conversation

Cantonese conversation is quite different from that of other world languages. This is not only because of its complex sound system, but also its interaction with English, especially in an international language community like Hong Kong. In the following, some generalities of Cantonese conversation will be explored in terms of its intonation, syntax and interaction with English.

4.1 Utterance particles

Firstly, Utterance particles are frequently used in Cantonese conversation. This is very different from English. Utterance particles are usually used as a token or at the final position of a sentence to emphasize the emotions or attitudes of the speakers. Although we also have some tokens like *hey*, *oosh* and etc. in English, they are not bounded or used at the end of the sentence like what we do in Cantonese.

For some of the utterance particles, they are pronounced in a quieter and less prominent way when compared with other words in speakers' turns, e.g. 哇 (Line 6), 呀 (Line 14 and Line 28), 哦 (Line 16) and 嘛 (Line 24). According to Luke (1990), utterance particles do not have semantic content, but can be used to show the emotion and attitude of the speakers. Therefore, the utterance particles recorded in the video although are not content words, they either stay alone as a token or as a bounded form being put at the end of a sentence. 哇 (Line 6) and 哦 (Line 16) are used as tokens to show the unexpectedness and realization of the speakers respectively. On the other hand, 呀 (Line 14 and Line 28) and 嘛 (Line 24) are utterance-final particles to show attitudes and emotions of the speakers. Even without the utterances particles, the speakers are able to express what they mean during their turns effectively. This shows that utterance particles are not as important as the main contents that conveyed in speakers' turns. Meanwhile, speakers tend to pronounce the syllables louder and in a more prominent way for more important components in a turn, and vice versa. As a result, some utterance particles are not pronounced as loud and as prominent as the other components in the turns reflecting the particles are less significant elements within a turn.

In the conversation, the utterance particle “咩” is used for arousing a topic in the conversation. For example, in Line 16 and Line 25, Yan used “咩” at the end of the utterance in repeating her question on asking what the drama is about. As for “嘛”, it can be used for maintaining the previous topic in the conversation, for example, in Line 11, R used the utterance particle 嘛 to show her regret to Jung-hwan who could not be the boyfriend of the main

actress in the drama. Also, in Line 24, R used “嘛” again to show her intention of continuous introduction to the drama.

4.2 Dislocation

Dislocation of utterance elements is another characteristic in Cantonese conversation. According to Cheung (1997, p.1), “Cantonese is basically a SVO language”, but dislocation often exists as an afterthought or secondary information to the sentence initial elements. Although dislocation may also appear in English such as a flexible placement of adverb in front or after a verb (e.g. to freely move/ to move freely), the word order in English is less variable and its major grammatical elements seem to be more restricted than in Cantonese (Luke & Tanaka, 2016).

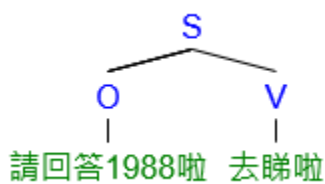


Figure A

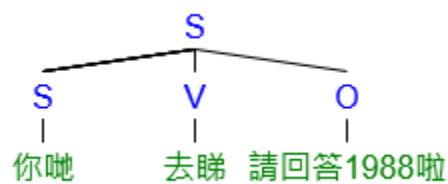


Figure B

In the conversation data we have collected, dislocation was applied to perform the mentioned functions. With topicalization, in Line 05, “請回答 1988” is being placed in front of “去睇啦”(Figure A) while the “canonical” order of this utterance shall be “去睇請回答 1988 啦”(Figure B). Such right dislocation of verb after the object not only put an emphasis on the name of the drama, which is a direct response to the previous question on requesting a good Korean drama to watch, it also represents an afterthought of the speaker to recommend this drama to other participants in the conversation. It is also important to notice that the subject “你哋” (You guys) is omitted.

Another example lies on Line13, where 佢 is right dislocated after the description “好 charming” to emphasize the speakers’ impression of the actor. In this right dislocation, 佢 appeared as an additional information or clarification on the preceding comment she has given. This may also be explained as an afterthought since 佢 was uttered after the speaker realized that she had not provided the subject of her commentary.

The remaining example of dislocation include Line 25, in “其實講咩架呢套嘢”, “呢套嘢” is being right dislocated after the question “其實講咩架” to stress on the question asked by the speaker. Therefore, dislocation is more common in Cantonese than in English conversation to

provide afterthoughts and extra information, as well as putting emphasis on a certain part of the utterances.

4.3 Code switching

Code switching (or we call it code mixing) is an interesting attribute in Cantonese conversation. English conversation may also contain a mix of other European languages, yet most of them emerge as borrowing words in English but not a complete switching of language within the dialogues. Code switching is a very common language phenomenon in Hong Kong as a majority of local citizens are bilingual to master both Cantonese and English conversation well enough. According to Luke (1998), code mixing can be divided into two types by their motivations: Expedient mixing refers to the mix of language for convenience or pragmatic needs, while orientational mixing is mostly for the purpose of “having a western outlook” and “identifications with the better educated.

Given the genre and occasion of our conversation concerned, which is an informal talk between peers regarding trivial topics of interests in life, the first type shall be a more appropriate motivation.

Moreover, as suggested by Li (2010), there are four major motivations of code-switching phenomenon in Hong Kong. They include *Euphemism*, which refers to the adoption of a more indirect way to mention sensitive or embarrassing topics in another language, such as "bra" and "toilet". Another motivation is *Specificity*, which means to use English in rendering a more general meaning in Chinese, such as "fans" itself has included all possible hyponyms (e.g. movie fans, music fans). Also, there is *Bilingual Punning*, which is more common in written texts, with the use of English terms to create an innovative expression with two-layered meanings. An example would be "FUN" in English produces a similar sound with 分(to share/ scores). The last motivation pointed is *Principle of Economy*, where sometimes the English pronunciation of some meanings in Chinese is shorter and requires less linguistic efforts to process. For instance, "check-in" only contains two syllables but its Chinese equivalent 辦理入住手續 (to complete the application procedures before getting the room key in hotels) only contains six syllables, so it is more economic to use the English term.

In fact, we discovered that code switching can facilitate the expression of the speakers' intention, so to pursue their communicative goals. In the following, some sentences from our recording will be extracted to show how code switching may help to achieve the communicative goals of the speakers.

First, as mentioned in the previous section of communicative goal, Anna (speaker A) was the drama expert who was most familiar with the main topic (Reply 1988). Therefore, her major

communicative goal was to demonstrate her knowledge to the drama and to express her personal opinion about it. In Line 13, she uttered “但係我覺得好 charming 啲佢” by switching into the English term "charming". In attempt to explain the purpose of using "charming" instead of its Chinese equivalent, we may use *Specificity* in Li's view. "Charming" in Chinese may have diversified meanings describing the appearance or ability of a person, but it might be quite confusing for Anna to list them out. Therefore, using the English version could be more general to imply her positive attitude towards the actor, thus contributed to her communicative goal as expressing opinions towards the drama.

Meanwhile, Yan (Speaker Y) was not familiar with the topic at all. However, she was also eager to join in the conversation, so her goal was to try her best to express her willingness to participate and to ask for more information about the drama, so that she could participate as well. In Line 16, she produced “Sorry 我完全唔知你講緊咩” instead of “唔好意思我完全唔知你講緊咩”. In here, not only because "Sorry" is a very common usage to express apology, but by using the motivation raised by Li again, this example also demonstrate the *Principle of Economy*. "唔好意思" contains four syllables while "sorry" solely contains two, that means the English version could be more plain and natural to express her feelings, especially when she felt she should express her reason for not contributing well in the conversation and her wish to have more information about the drama. Therefore, code switching helped her to achieve her communicative goal by making her speech clearer and direct.

Last but not the least, Rachel (Speaker R) was the "middle person" in the conversation since she was not totally familiar with the topic, but had some knowledge about it. As a result, her main task was to share her insights with other participants as best as she could. In Line 20, she used “charming” in "邊個好 charming 呀" to request for clarification from A on who she felt was charming. Comparing with other examples, this was a more social one since Rachel probably did not have any special reason to code switch herself, but it was simply used to repeat the English term suggested by Anna to emphasize her attention to her views. Therefore, code switching could be a method for her to portray her willingness to exchange in the talk, which is exactly her communicative goal.

Thus, code switching is a feature in Cantonese conversation possibly resulting from the bilingualism in the Hong Kong society, and it can act as a prominent strategy to enable speakers in achieving their communicative goals.

5. Conclusion

In our project, we recorded a video of 1 minute and analyzed the data with reference to conversation analysis theories. In our study, a multi-party conversation is involved with three participants engaged in it. In the video, we could observe a natural conversation among the speakers with the application of turn-taking, overlapping and repairing. Since each conversation is unique, the conversation analysis features and generalities of Cantonese we figured out in this project are context-based that those features might not be applicable in all other Cantonese conversation.

With more than one speaker, it is undoubtedly that we could observe turn-taking in the conversation as speakers took turns to speak. Meanwhile, since the speakers actively engaged in the conversation by asking questions and exchanging answers to the Korean drama “Reply 1988”, this conversation is with absence of silence or lapse. With reference to Schegloff (2000), overlapping includes two or more speakers at the same time. Overlapping is also observed in this natural conversation where speakers simultaneously spoke or started their turn at the same time. When we are talking, we usually make some mistakes or even errors in our turn by which repair would be required for the provision of accurate information and betterment of understanding in the conversation.

In addition to the conversation analysis features we observed from the video, we also figured out some generalities of Cantonese which are rarely observed in English. Utterance particles is a special feature in Cantonese that the speakers always use it in the sentence to express their attitude or emotion but they are less significant elements or components of the conversation. Dislocation is another prominent feature in Cantonese conversation with an example of topicalization (e.g. “請回答1988 啦去睇啦”) and right dislocation (e.g. “但係我我覺得好 charming 啲佢”). With dislocated noun phrases the speakers could emphasize the comment they would like to express. Last but not the least, code-switching is another unique feature in Cantonese conversation to display bilingualism in the Hong Kong society under the influence by the colonial history.

In conclusion, we analyzed the collected data with the video we recorded with conversation analysis theories and also figured out some unique features in Cantonese conversation which are not commonly found in English conversation. These features not only provided us a better understanding on a natural Cantonese conversation, but also inspired us the significance to treasure these remarkable characteristics of our mother tongue.

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