**Turn-Taking Components and Cues used**

**by Dramatis Personae in the Trials of Brother Jero and Jero’s Metamorphosis**

**Samaila Yakubu**

**Department of English and Literary Studies**

**Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria**

[**samailayaku@gmail.com**](mailto:samailayaku@gmail.com)

08034478215

Abstract

Conversation analysis is an approach to language study which deals with verbal and non-verbal aspects of language in a situation of everyday life. Dialogues in Wole Soyinka’s *The Trials of* *Brother Jero and Jero’s Metamorphosis* are classified as naturally occurring conversations because they involve two or more interlocutors (dramatis personae) who take turns to deliberate on issues that are related to religious hypocrisy on Bar Beach, Lagos. So, as important as conversation analysis is in dealing with issues related to religious hypocrisy in our society, no enough scholarly attention has been given to it. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how dramatis personae in the text employed turn-taking components, turn-constructional component and cues to construct turns, take turns, and signal the end of turns. The study adopts Sack et al, (1974) conversation model as its theoretical framework and employs qualitative method of data analysis to analyse its data. Data for the study are dialogues of dramatis personae extracted from the text. They are analysed and the result indicates that elements of turn constructional component (unit) such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences are used extensively in the text. Turns allocation in the text are in the forms of current speaker select next speaker, next speaker self selec and current speaker continues. Turn-taking cues (signals) such as complete sentences, and tag questions to indicate end of turns are prevalent in the text. Utterances made on *rising* and falling tunes to signal end of turns are also found in the text. The study concludes that conversation analysis is a very important tool for investigating naturally occurring conversations.

Keywords: Turn-taking components, turn-taking cues, conversation analysis, Wole Soyinka, turn constructional component.

**1.Introduction**

Conversation analysis is an approach to the study of social interaction which embrances both verbal and non-verbal aspects in a situation of daily life ( Rukannuddin, 2013, p. 39). The approach enables speakers (dramatis personae) to organize and manage their turn- taking such as who is to speak next? When is he going to speak? And how is he/she going to take turn? Turn- taking component has two parts, namely, turn allocation component (unit) wich is responsible for the distribution of turns during conversation and turn constructional component (unit) which is responsible for constructing turns (Agbedo, 2015, p. 291). Turn constructional component is made up of features such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences which are used by interlocutors to construct turns. Turn-allocation is in the forms of current speaker select next speaker by mentioning his/her name; next speaker self select himself/herself by using turn entry devices such as “well” or “you know”; current speaker continues with the conversation if there is no interlocutor to take floor (p. 291). Turn-taking cues (signals) such as complete sentences indicate the end of turns (Finegan, 2004, p. 307). Sentences which end in tag questions signal the end of turns also. Turn can also end by making utterances on a rising or a falling tune (p. 307).

Soyinka is a professor of comparative literature at the University of Ife, Nigeria. He is preoccupied with lecturing, play writing and acting. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Cambridge, Sheffield and Yale. He taught drama and literature in the Universities of Lagos, Ibadan and Ile-Ife. He founded the theatre group known as *The 1960 Masks* in 1964, he founded The Orisun Theatre Company in which he acted and produced his own plays. He focused his writings on mythology of Yoruba with Ogun the god of iron and war at centre. His plays *Swamp Dwellers,* *The Lion and the Jewel,* *The Trial of Brother Jero*, *The Strong Breed and* *A Dance of the Forests* were published in 1963. Others are *The Road* published in 1965,*Madmen and Specialists* published in 1971, *The Bacchae of Euripes* (1973), *Death and The King’s* *Horseman* published in 1973, *Bacchae for the African Stage* and *Opera Wonyosi* Published in 1981. Soyinka’s latest dramatic works are *A Play of Giants* (1984) and *Lequiem for a* *Futurologists* (1985). He has written two novels, namely, *The Interpreters* (1985), and *Season of* *Anomy (*1973). He wrote *The Man* Died in 1972, *Ake* in 1981. His collections of poem include *Idare and other Poems* (1963), *Poem from Prison*(1969), *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (1972*), Ogun* *Abibiman* (1976), and *Mandela’s Earth and other poems* (Soyinka, n.d).

*The Trial of Brother Jero and Jero’s Metamorphosis* are two short plays authored by Wole Soyinka. The plays examine the corruption of Nigeria society through a self-acclaimed charismatic preacher, named Brother Jero. Both plays satirize Christianity and religious hypocrisy, particularly unquestionable devotion that many converts display towards their spiritual leaders, exposing themselves to manipulation in the process. The Trials of Brother Jero is about a fake preacher, Brother Jero, who lures people to his church by promising them material gain and promotion through prayers. His greatest weakness is women whom he calls daughters of Eve. His lust for them at one point earns him a beating from an angry woman. Chume believes that Brother Jero and Amope, his wife, have been having sexual affairs. He appears at the place where Brother Jero prays for a member of the church and remarks in pidgin: “Adulterer! Woman-thief! Na today a go finish you” p. 42. Brother Jero flees when he sees him with a cutlass. Jero’s Metamorphosis opens with Brother Jero instructing Rebecca to write and invite other prophets for meeting. He accesses confidential file which reveals plans to transform beach which is used as the place for worship now into prosecution ground. Brother Jero plans to unite all the prophets to form one church and be made the head. He instructs Rebecca to serve the prophets with alcoholic drinks during the meeting. The prophets meet and are asked to elect the head of the church. They cast their votes in favour of Brother Jero over his rival Shadrack as a result of the influence of alcoholic drinks they take. To justify the title metamorphosis, all the people in Jero’s church bear titles such as Sergeant and General in spite of the fact that most of them are ex-convicts instead of bearing titles such as Pastors and Bishops which are appropriate for the church (Booknook.store, n.d).

Many academics and scholars have studied Wole Soyinka’s works particularly The *Trial of Brother Jero and Jero’s Metamorphosis* both linguistically and literarily. To be specific, some aspects of the text have been studied through pragmatics, discourse analysis, and stylistics, but no enough scholarly attention has been given to turn-taking components and cues used by the dramatis personae in its. In addition, most researchers focus on the use of recorded conversations to carry out investigations on conversation analysis than conversation in a literary text. This study, therefore, seeks to carry out study on how turn-taking components and cues are used by dramatis personae in a literary text through the following objectives.

1. To identify turn-taking components and cues used by dramatis personae in the text.
2. To discuss the turn-taking components and cues in accordance with the text pre-occupation.

**2. Review of Related Literature**

Amir and Jacob (2020, as cited in Yakubu, 2020) carried out study on male and female teachers turn-taking strategies in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom interaction. The aims of the study were to find out (i) the types of turn-taking strategies used by male and female teachers in EFL classroom interaction, (ii) the reason why male and female teachers take turn in EFL classroom interaction and (iii) the difference between turn-taking by male teachers and turn taking by female teachers in EFL classroom interactions. Four teachers made up of two males and two females were involved in the study. Observation and interview were employed by the researchers to collect data for the study. Qualitative method of data analysis was used by the researchers to analyse the data collected. The result shows that: (i) three types of turn-taking strategies, namely, taking the turn, holding the turn and yielding the turn were used by the male and female teachers in EFL interaction, (ii) male teachers took turn in order to get students’ attention, to give them order, to simplify questions for them and to make them keep quite or to motivate them. Female teacher took turns to get the students’ attention, to repeat explanations, to give the students order and to make them keep quite or to motivate them, (iii) the difference between turn-taking strategy used by male and female teachers is that male teachers used taking the turn strategy to clarify questions and to give order to the students while female teachers used it to repeat explanations and give directives to the students. Based on the finding, the study concludes that three types of turn-taking strategies, namely, taking the turn, holding the turn and yielding the turn were employed by both male and female teachers in EFL classroom interaction. Male teachers took turns to get students’ attention, give them order, simplify questions for them and to make them keep quite or motivate them. Female teachers took turns to get students’ attentions to repeat explanations, to give the students order and to make them keep qiute or motivate them. male teachers used taking the turn strategy to clarify questions and give the students order but female teachers used it to repeat explanations and give directives to the students.

Lestary et al, (2017, as cited in Yakubu, 2022) conducted research on interruption and silences in conversations: A turn-taking analysis. The study aimed to find out the purpose of interruption and meanings of silences in conversations. It employed descriptive method of data analysis to analyse data for this study. The data were casual conversations among friends in three different occasions. They were recorded and transcribed based on Jefferson’s glossary of transcription symbols. They were analysed, and the result shows that interlocutors interrupted the conversation in order to complete turns. Silence in conversation indicates topic switched, unpleasant situations among the participants, and conversation which did not go well. Based on the findings, the study concludes that interlocutors interrupted conversation in order to complete turns. Silence shows topic switched, unpleasant situation among the participants and conversation which did not go well.

Aceron (2015) undertook study on conversation analysis: The judges and the lawyers’ courtroom interactions. The studies aimed at examining the organisation of courtroom interaction and describe how participants take turns in courtroom conversation during preliminary session. The paper employed descriptive qualitative method of data analysis to analyse how turn-taking in courtroom conversation during preliminary session was accomplished by the participants. Extract one shows that the judge’s questioning strategy was characterized by his own style in form and use. During the preliminary hearing, most of the questions the judge asked were informative in form but interrogative in function. Adjacency pair (question/answer) indicates how the counsel of the complainant responded to the order of the court. It is also clear that in the extract, the counsel of the complainant was not prepared to present its point as it stammered often to complete its point in few seconds. However, the spontaneity and consistency of the language use of the judge as heard from the audio, shows that the judge is a seasoned and experience lawyer who is different from the counsel of the complainant who lack spontaneity and consistency of language use while speaking in turns. In extract three, the defence counsel used an insertion sequence to answer questions in the court. The court seemed not to be aware of what the defence counsel wanted to explain in a simple or a short sentence. Based on the findings, the study concludes that the judge’s questioning strategy was characterized by his own style in form and use. The questions the judge asked during the preliminary hearing were informative in form but interrogative in function. The counsel of the complainant was not ready to present its point as it attempted often to complete its points in few seconds. However, the language use of the judge as heard from the audio indicates that he is a seasoned and experienced lawyer. The counsel of the complainant lacked spontaneity and consistency of language use while speaking in turns. The court did not know what the defence counsel wanted to explain in a simple or short sentence.

Almakrob and Al-Ahdal (n.d) carried out research on cultural aspect of turn-taking: An analysis of conversation in a Saudi context. The study aimed to analyse the culture specific turn-taking strategies of native Saudi Arabic Speakers and non-Saudi native English Speakers. It employed qualitative research design guided by Tannem (2005) conversation analysis technique and Miles’ and Huberman’s (1984) model of coding analysis to analyse its data. Data for the study were obtained from the students through interview. They were analysed and the result showed that the native English speakers believe in minimum overlapping and minimum gaping in turn-taking while Saudi Arabic speakers take more time in turn-taking due to cultural impact and interruption of linguistic knowledge. Based on the findings, the study concludes that native English speakers believe in minimum overlapping and minimum gaping in turn-taking while Saudi Arabic speakers spent more time in turn-taking due to cultural influence and interruption of linguistic knowledge.

Rivai (2019) carried out research on turn-taking strategies produced by male and female presenters in American T V shows. The study aims at examining the turn-taking strategies performed by male presenter, Jimmy Kimmel, and female presenter, Ellen Degeneres, in two American TV talk shows. Stenstron (1994) theory of turn-taking strategies was used to analyse data for this study. The result of the analysis reveals that (1) male presenter, Jimmy, applied many strategies such as hesitant start, clean start, uptakes links, alert, filled pause or verbal fillers, silent pause, lexical repetition and a new start which prompts and appeals. Nevertheless, he did not use metacomment, and giving up strategies. Further, in his conversation with female guests, he dealt with other strategies with an exception of hesitant start, metacomment, lexical repetition, a new start, and giving up strategies. (2) Female presenter, Ellen, did not apply metacomment, silent pause and giving up strategies while conversing with male guests. In her conversation with female guests, she used other strategies with an exception of metacomment strategy; (3) the study also reveals that male presenter interrupted more often while conversing with female guests than when he was conversing with male guests. Based on the findings, the study concludes that male presenter used turn-taking strategies such as hesitant start, clean start, uptakes, links, alert, filled pause or verbal fillers, silent pause, lexical repetition and a new start which prompts and appeals. However, he did not use metacomment, and giving up strategies in his conversation with female guests. He employed other strategies with an exception of hesitant start and giving up strategies. (2) Female presenter, Ellen, did not use metacomment, silent pause and giving up strategies while conversing with male guests. In her conversation with female guests, she used other strategies with an exception of metacomment, strategy. (3) Male presenter interrupted more often while talking with female guests than when he was talking with male guests.

**2. Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopts conversation analysis (CA) as its theoretical framework. The theory was propounded by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (Sidnell, 2016). At the initial stage of the development of the theory, it was employed to analyse casual conversation, afterwards it extended to others fields of human endeavours.

**3 Methodology**

Data for this study comprise of utterances randomly extracted from the text under review. Aspects of turn-taking components and cues used in the text are identified, and analysed based on Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) Conversation Analysis (CA) model.

**Turn-taking Components and Cues Used by the Dramatis Personae in the Text**.

The text *The Trial of Brother Jero and Jero’s Metamorphosis* is marked by several features of turn-taking components and cues.

**Datum No 1: Using Single Words as Elements of Turn Constructional Component (unit).**

Single words are used as elements of turn construction component (unit) in the text, examples:

Jero: “what!” p. 22

Jero: “Traitor!” p. 23

Chume: “Prophet…” p. 23

Jero: “Forgive…” p. 24

Chume: “Woman!” p. 24

Jero: “Tonight.” p. 25

Rebecca: “Hallenlujah!” p. 60

Chume: “Amen” p. 64

Jero: “Precisely” p. 82

The above words are examples of single words used as elements of turn constructional component (unit) in the text.

**Datum No 2**: **Using Phrases as Constituents of Turn Constructional Component (unit).**

Phrases are used extensively as constituents of turn-constructional component (unit) in the text, examples:

Jero: “Brother Chume!” p. 22

Chume: “No, Brother Jero” p. 25

Jero: “And Brother Chume…” p. 32

Rebecca: “But Brother Jero…” p.50

Ananais: “Like you.” p. 52

Executive: “Miss Denton…” p. 56

Executive: “Oh Christ!” p. 86

The above phrases are instances of phrases used as constituents of turn constructional component (unit) in the text.

**Datum No 3: Clauses Employed as Elements of Turn Constructional Component (unit).**

Clauses used as parts of turn constructional component (unit) in the text, examples:

Chume: “I was only praying” p. 31

Chume: “I swear, Brother Jero” p. 32

Chume: “I did not forget” p. 33

Chume: “Shut up!” p. 36

Amope: “Kill me…” p. 37

Jero: “God save us!” p. 42

Rebecca: Forgive me…” p. 49

The above clauses are used as parts of turn constructional component (unit) in the text.

**Datum No 4**: **Sentences Used as Elements of Turn Constructional Component (unit).**

Sentences are used as elements of turn constructional component (unit) in the text, examples:

Jero: “I don’t know how she found out my house…” p. 19

Jero: “she passes here every morning, on her way to take a swim…” p. 19

Chume: “This woman will kill me…” p. 24

Ananaias: “You haven’t done badly out of it yourself I notice” p. 52

Rebecca: “The devil is in you, sir, I can see him” p. 58

Chume: “We practice hymn upon hymn…” p. 63

Jero: “He needed a trumpeter…” p. 68

Jero: “All problems can be overcome…” p. 69

Isaac: “Millionaire businessmen! Expensive sinners coming to enjoy the Bar Beach Show” p. 83

Jero: “He will negotiate for the other side” p. 83

The above sentences are example of elements of turn constructional component (unit) used in the text.

**Datum No 5: Current Speaker Select Next Speaker.**

Here, current speaker select next speaker by mentioning his/her name:

Chume: “Good morning, Brother Jeroboam” p. 21

Jero: “Brother Chume!” p. 22

Jero: “Brother Chume, what were you before you came to me?’ p. 23

Chume: “It is so. Brother Jero” p. 25

Rebecca: “What ever you say, Brother Jeroboam” p. 47

Jero: “You are indeed kind, sister Rebecca. I don’t know what I would do without you.” p. 48

Rebecca: “Oh Brother Jero, you say such wise thing.” p. 48

Jero: “I have but little gifts, sister Rebecca, but I make most of them…” p. 48

Rebecca: “I trust you I follow wherever you lead me, Brother Jeroboam.” p. 50

In the above dialogues, current speakers select next speakers by mentioning their names:

**Datum No 6:** **Next Speaker Self-select himself/herself.**

Next speaker self-select himself/herself in the text by making use of turn entry devices such as “well”, examples:

Amope: “Well, let’s see it.” p. 16

Trader: “Well, just remember it is early in the morning…” p. 16

Jero: “Well, we have to be careful about brother prophets…” p. 47

Silva: “Well, if you give me a chance, chummy, I think I may be able to fill Captain Winston’s

shoes for a lesson at least, with God’s help…” p. 62

Chume: “…well, we can’t wait. I mean I can just practice by myself…” p. 62

In the above dialogues, current speakers self select themselves to take turn by using turn entry device “well”

**Datum No 7**: **Current Speaker Continues**

Here, current speakers continue with talks because other interlocutors do not take the floor to speak.

Amope: “I know you can’t wait to get away. You only use your work as an excuse…” p. 14

Chume gets on his bike and flees. Amope shouts after him, craning her neck in his

direction.

Amope: “Don’t forget to bring some water when you’re returning from work…” p. 14-15

Amope: “Where do you think you are going?” p. 15

Brother Jero practically things himself back into the house.

Amope: “One pound, eight shellings and nine pence for three months. And he calls himself a

man of God.” p. 15

Amope: “Take yourself off, you dirty beggar. Do you think money is for the likes of you?” p. 18

The boy flees turns suddenly and beats a parting abuse on the drums.”

Amope: “I don’t know what the world is coming to. A thief of a prophet, a swindler of a fish-

seller and now that thing with lice on his head comes begging for money…” p. 18

Jero: (as the woman comes into sight): “Woman!” p. 26

She continues out, Chume enters with filled bottles

Jero: (shaking his head): “I know her very well. She’s my neighbor. But she ignored me…” p. 26

In the above dialogues, current speakers continue with talking because other interlocutors do not take up the floor to continue talking.

**Datum No 8**: **Using Complete Sentences to End Turns.**

Complete sentences are used by the dramatis personae in the text to end turn, examples:

Chume: “You have got a bed at home.” p. 14

Jero: “Every morning, every day I witness this divine transformation…” p. 20

Jero: “From the moment I looked out of my window this morning I have been tormented one

way or another by the Daughters of Discord.” p. 30

Jero: “The Son of God appeared to me again this morning, robed just as he was when he named

you my successor…” p. 32

Jero: “The voice of the people is the voice of God…” p. 50

Jero: “…Those who are not with us, are against us…” p. 82

Rebecca: “It is their signatures, my General.” p. 89

In the above conversations, complete sentences are employed by the interlocutors to end turns.

**Datum No 9**: **Using Sentences which End in Tag Questions to End Turns.**

Sentences which end in tag questions are used to end turn in the text, examples:

Amope: “You haven’t let the soup pour out, have you?” p. 13

Amope: “…it wasn’t the fault of the jar, was it?” p. 13

Amope: “Well, it does smell a bit, doesn’t it?” p. 17

Amope: “it is last week’s isn’t it?” p. 17

In the above conversations, turns end by using sentences that end in tag questions.

In the above dialogues, the interlocutors (dramatis personae) end turns by making utterances on a falling pitch.

**Datum No 10: Ending Turns with Utterances Made on a Rising tune**.

According to Ukam (2020, p. 124), polar questions are often asked on a rising pitch of voice, examples:

Chume: “Do you want me to bandage it for you?” p. 12

Chume: “Do you see all on the wrapper?” p. 13

Rebecca: “You are going out Brother Jero?” p. 50

Executive: “Is this the woman?” p. 56

Jero: “…Are there any other proposal?” p. 81

Rebecca” “Is this the moment, Brother Jero?” p. 82

In the above dialogues, dramatis personae employ utterances made on a raising pitch to end turns.

**Datum No 11: Ending Turns with Utterance Made on a Falling Tune..**

Onuigbo (2003) says utterances which make statement are made on a falling pitch, examples:

**Jerome: “Chumes, you are not at work…” p. 21**

Chume: “Women are a plague, brother.” P. 30

Jero: “He named me the Immaculate Jero, Articulate Hero of Christ’s Crusade…” p. 32

Rebecca: “All things are God’s gifts…” p. 49

Jero: “The voice of the prophet is the voice of God…” p. 50

Jero: “It is written that the good Lord shall feed his true servant.” p. 52

Clerk: “This is the place, sir.” p. 55

**4. Findings**

The researcher found out that elements of turn-constructional component (unit) such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences are prevalent in the text. Turns allocationin the text are in the forms of current speaker select next speaker, next speaker self-select himself/herself, and current speakers continues. Turn-taking cues (signals) such as complete sentences, sentences which end in tag questions are used by the interlocutors to end turns. The interlocutors (dramatis personae) also made utterances on the rising and falling tunes to end turns in the text.

**5 .Conclusion**

The research reveals that turn-taking components and cues used by dramatis personae in the text are about religious hypocrisy of Brother Jero who lures people to his church by promising them material gains and promotion through prayers. The research concludes that turn-taking components and cues (signals) used in the text makes the massages in it very clear.

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