



General and explicit test prompts: Some consequences for topic management in paired EFL discussion tests

Greer, Tim

Nanbu Zachary, Matthew K T

(Citation)

Second Language Pragmatics and English Language Education in East Asia

(Issue Date)

2020-12-28

(Resource Type)

book part

(Version)

Accepted Manuscript

(Rights)

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge/CRC Press in Second Language Pragmatics and English Language Education in East Asia on 28 December 2020, available online: <http://www.routledge.com/9781003008903>

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License

(URL)

<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14094/0100483165>



Abstract: When assessing students' interactional competence, teachers and test makers are increasingly designing formats that more closely approximate the characteristics of mundane conversation, resulting in a shift away from oral proficiency interview (OPI) style tests between an assessor and the test-taker in favour of dyadic or group conversation tests between peers. Although previous studies have explored the differences between paired and OPI style tests, there is a need for further interactional research comparing different styles of paired conversation test to one another. Adopting a conversation analytic (CA) approach, this chapter analyses a dataset of over 200 EFL conversation tests video-recorded at a Japanese university. By providing grounded observations on the test-takers' interaction, the findings suggest that slight variations in the paired test format have major implications on the way the discussions unfold. The analysis shows that a relatively minimalistic style of prompt containing only a general theme often leads to the sort of collaborative conversation reminiscent of natural talk. Conversely, complex prompts with explicitly stated goals (e.g., agreeing or disagreeing with a stated

opinion) result in the solicitation of target pragmatic forms at the risk of a (less natural) parallel style of turn-taking/topic development. Further, the study suggests that the presence of multiple textual objects in the test setting can be an affordance or an impediment to progressivity of the talk. Test-takers at times indexically refer to the prompt cards as a means of topic management. However, the presence of multiple cards also becomes a focal point for student gaze and attention throughout the conversation. The findings suggest that a format with a single general prompt and fewer textual artefacts is more conducive to natural conversation than one containing explicit tasks. On the other hand, explicitly focused tasks can prove valuable when assessing test-takers' ability to accomplish certain pragmatic actions.

Keywords: Agreements, inscribed objects, paired EFL tests, test design, topic management, turn progressivity

Tim Greer: [ORCID.org/0000-0003-4460-6381](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4460-6381)

Zachary Nanbu: [ORCID.org/0000-0001-8316-5342](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8316-5342)

10

General and explicit test prompts

Some consequences for topic management in paired EFL discussion tests

Tim Greer and Zachary Nanbu

Introduction

In order to assess students' interactional competence (IC) (Hall, Hellermann, & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Youn, 2020), some teachers and test-makers are designing formats that aim to more closely approximate the characteristics of everyday conversation. Moving away from oral proficiency interview (OPI) style tests between an assessor and the test-taker in favour of dyadic or group conversation tests between peers can also expedite the testing process, particularly for low-stakes tests in EFL classes with high teacher-student ratio, such as those commonly found in East Asia. Although previous studies have explored the differences between peer-paired and OPI-style interview tests (e.g., Davis, 2009; Ducasse & Brown, 2009), there is a need for further interaction-based research comparing different styles of paired conversation tests to one another.

Adopting a multimodal conversation analytic (CA) approach, this chapter analyses excerpts from a dataset of over 200 EFL paired discussion tests video-recorded at a Japanese university. By providing grounded emic observations of the test-takers' interaction, we explore the implications that slight variations in the paired test format have on the way the discussions unfold. Although the CA approach does not set out to examine specific research questions in an *a priori* manner, a number of questions emerged via our on-going engagement with the data: Can a relatively minimalistic style of prompt containing only a general one-word topic lead to the sort of

collaborative conversation reminiscent of natural talk? Alternatively, to what extent do comparatively complex prompts with explicitly stated pragmatic goals (e.g., agreeing or disagreeing with a stated opinion) result in the solicitation of target pragmatic forms? In exploring these questions, our study documents how the presence of multiple inscribed objects in the test setting are oriented to by the participants, and how they are treated as either an affordance or an impediment to the progressivity of the talk.

The chapter begins with a review of relevant interactional studies on topic management, affordance and language proficiency testing settings, and then provides a brief introduction to the multimodal conversation analytic approach before moving on to a detailed commentary on six exemplar cases from our dataset in which test-takers orient to the test prompt in order to further the topic they have been asked to discuss.

Previous research into test prompts and topic management in EFL discussion tests

Considering that tests of oral proficiency aim to assess unscripted interaction, it is not surprising that researchers pay careful consideration to the talk that is generated in such settings, particularly with regard to what we know about related issues in ordinary L1 talk. In order to provide a basis for our investigation, this section will explore some of the key research findings within conversation analysis and EFL testing, including topic management, the test format and the test prompt as an affordance for interactional progressivity.

CA research into topic management is integrally linked to the organisation of talk, including turn design and allocation, action formation, sequential practices and the mechanics of repair (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). Analysis of naturally occurring talk between L1 speakers has revealed that topics can be generated through the use of topic initial elicitors like “So, what’s been happening?” (Button & Casey, 1984), or are nominated and pursued via itemised news enquiries or news announcements (Button & Casey, 1985). Alternatively, topics can gradually transition in a stepwise fashion (Jefferson, 1984) through the connection of the current topic to a new one. When a current topic reaches a natural conclusion, its attrition can be marked by assessments and terminal laughter, and therefore necessitate a shift to a new topic (Jefferson, 1993). A news-of-the-day telling can be initiated to begin a conversation where none currently exists, via a question such as “How was your day?” (Greer, 2019), and these can be seen as similar to the sorts of prompts tasks commonly used in EFL discussion tests to elicit interaction from test-takers.

Although similar practices for maintaining and shifting the topic are undoubtedly at work in interview-style oral proficiency tests, interview tests also feature asymmetrical topic management rights (Egyud & Glover, 2001;

Iwashita, 1998; Kormos, 1999; Lazaraton, 1997, 2002; Taylor, 2001; Seedhouse & Harris, 2011), since it is the interviewer who consistently drives the topic through his or her pre-determined questions, and therefore such talk can be seen as institutional in nature (Seedhouse, 2013). Likewise, the interviewer can initiate third position repair in situations when it becomes apparent the test-taker has misunderstood the task (Kasper, 2013). While some amount of institutionality is still evident in the interaction found in paired or group discussion tests (Greer & Potter, 2008; Lam, 2016), peer-to-peer tests at least give students an opportunity to generate and direct topics and display conversational management skills in ways that are not possible in interview-style tests (Kormos, 1999). It is for these reasons that paired conversation tests are increasingly being advocated for and used in language classrooms.

Mav (2009) argues that the paired format accepts and embraces the co-constructed nature of interaction. When compared to tests conducted in small groups, for example, Ahmadi and Montasseri (2019) demonstrate that paired test formats exhibit higher and richer levels of turn-taking, self-repair, receipt tokens and eye contact. While differences in the test-takers' language levels may be considered cause for concern, data collected by Davis (2009) suggest that such "proficiency differences among examinees need not preclude use of the paired oral test format" (p. 367). In fact, Brooks (2009) found that test-takers performed better in the peer-paired format than when they interacted with an examiner, because the interaction with their peers was far more complex. It involved more negotiation of meaning via the practices of repair and more output that was interactionally challenging. Recent CA work on paired discussion tests has also revealed that high-level candidates use a greater variety of shift markers and stepwise transitions to initiate and shift the action assigned to them via the prompt (Youn, 2020).

One primary point of our analysis is that written artefacts, or inscribed objects (Day & Mortensen, *in press*), in the test environment (namely the topic cards) operate as both constraints on the interaction as well as affordances (Gibson, 1979; van Lier, 2000) and thus allow the participants to perform a variety of conversational actions. As Strømmer (2016) points out, such artefacts do not automatically become affordances, but are instead "learning potentials" that must be treated as relevant by the interactants for carrying out their business at hand. Our analysis thus focuses on moments when orientation to the cards is publicly available and we avoid any mentalistic supposition about the relevancy of the cards to the talk. One obvious affordance that the prompt holds is the text that is written on it, and by extension the message that it relays to the test-takers. Brown, Iwashita and McNamara (2005) found that raters judged test-takers favourably if they were able to incorporate lexical elements from the test prompt into their talk, especially if they did so in a reformulated or paraphrased manner or if they reinterpreted elements of the prompt by relating them to their own lives. However, the same raters criticised participants who reproduced phrases from the prompt verbatim too often and

suggested that reading extensively from the prompt may give a false impression of a low-level student's proficiency.

Despite its repercussions for the interaction, very few studies have considered the question of how the length of the written prompt affects the test-taker's performance. However, [Akhondi, Malayeri and Samad \(2010\)](#) demonstrated that giving an interviewee a prompt with higher lexical density and higher vocabulary load positively affected the outcome of the test, since the content of the prompt provided a basis on which the test-takers could build their responses, "which led to producing more coherent and more cohesive chunks of speech" ([Akhondi, 2007](#), p. iv). However, in these studies the prompts were both actually quite lengthy passages (the long prompt was 600 words and the short one was 300 words) and the test involved discussing the content of a news story. To the best of our knowledge, there has been no research conducted on interactional affordances of shorter test prompts like those examined in our study (where the long prompt involves less than 50 words spaced out over a number of cards and the short prompt is just one or two words). Such prompts instead require test-takers to generate talk from their own experience or opinions and there is less text on the card that they can use in their responses.

The incorporation of language from contextually available written documents into the here-and-now production of a turn at talk has also been investigated from a CA perspective in a range of other settings. [Svennevig \(2012\)](#) looked at the written agenda in a workplace meeting as a resource for introducing a topic, noting that a shift of gaze toward the agenda constituted a public display that the topic transition was related to known information included on the agenda. On other occasions the agenda could be invoked implicitly by indexing phrases highlighting "the interplay between written documents and talk-in-interaction" (p. 64), and many of these same practices are seen in the test data we examine next. Bodily orientation toward a written document can also signal a shift from small talk to the main business of the meeting ([Svinhufvud & Vehviläinen, 2013](#)) or enable participants to incorporate written elements of a document into their emergent turn design ([Greer & Leyland, in press](#)), and therefore the transition between topics on written documents is contingent and locally accomplished ([Depperman, Schmitt, & Mondada, 2010](#)). Likewise [Majlesi \(2014\)](#) details the way in which a teacher instructs a student on a point of grammar while referring to visible objects on a piece of paper and therefore mobilises a variety of semiotic resources to enable the student to see and understand an *instructed vision* (cf. [Goodwin, 1994](#)). The findings of such studies inform the current investigation regarding how the test prompt is implicated in the test-takers' topic development.

Multimodal EMCA, embodiment and testing talk

Studies in ethnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (CA) are concerned with the locally situated, emergent and publicly available conduct of members engaged in interaction. By creating praxiological accounts that detail how interactants negotiate understanding, EMCA studies aim to emically and empirically reveal the organisation of social interaction (Sacks, 1992). Due in part to technological constraints at the time, early studies in the field primarily utilised audio recordings of conversations in their analysis. However, as Mondada (2019) points out, from the beginning there was an interest in participants' embodied practices that was facilitated through the use of early video-recording technology (notably Goodwin, 1981; Heath, 1983, 1986). These investigations built on the established field of gesture studies (Kendon, 1970; McNeill, 1985), which had long advocated for increased recognition and examination of the relationship between cognition, language and embodiment (Mondada, 2019).

The proliferation of video-recording technology in recent years has led to the systematic use of video data within EMCA (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010; Mondada, 2006b, 2019; Broth, Laurier, & Mondada, 2014). By allowing for repeated observations of not only the participants themselves but also the complex material environments they inhabit, videos provide researchers with the ability to consider the complex interplay of multiple modalities in their analysis. As such, a plethora of EMCA studies have provided detailed, empirical and micro-attentive accounts of participants' mobilisation of embodied, artefactual, semiotic and linguistic resources to achieve interactional practices and how such practices allow for intersubjectivity during talk-in-interaction.

However, although discussion tests have been the subject of some investigation within interactional research (see Galaczi, 2008; Lam, 2018; Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2013), either the data in these studies have largely consisted of only audio recordings, or consent agreements have precluded the use of video in reports. The analysis is thus constrained to the participants' spoken utterances rather than the participants' gestures or gaze or physical features in the environment.

One notable and relevant exception to this logocentric focus is Greer and Potter (2008). Employing a multi-modal CA approach, they showed that participants in a group discussion test in a Japanese university combined the indexical speaker selection phrase "How about you?" in conjunction with embodiment to pivot the conversation to another interactant (Hauser, 2008). The authors note that this pivoting practice often leads to short rounds of conversation (Carroll, 2005; Hauser, 2008) in which the recipient of a question gives a minimal response that does not expand on the given topic, before redirecting the question to another member with gaze/palm selection and "How about you?" They also observe that more proficient speakers used this practice to allocate turns to reticent speakers in the discussion and further suggest that the minimal nature of reticent member's replies could be an interactional

burden in a paired test setting. With its attention to participants' orientations to embodiment, artefacts in the physical environment and one another's talk, this study illustrates the merits of taking into account the multiple modalities employed to achieve interactional practices during conversation tests.

In using a more complex style of transcription (see Appendix 10.1) that captures participants' embodiment in greater detail, the current study addresses these issues at a level of granularity currently lacking in most of the test-talk literature in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of paired test interaction.

Data

The data we will analyse are part of the Kobe Test of Oral Proficiency (KTOP) dataset, a corpus of EFL oral proficiency tests video-recorded at a national university in Western Japan between 2015 and 2019 (to date). The test pairs students together in order to conduct a four-minute discussion in English. The test-takers are all first- and second-year Japanese students from a variety of different faculties. The students were participating in a required oral English class that focused on developing their spoken fluency through discussion and the test results formed part of their grade for that class.

The excerpts in this chapter come from two distinct subsets of the corpus, one with a short prompt and the other with a long prompt. The short prompt consists of a card with a single topic written on it (e.g., yourself, travel, marriage, jobs, your hometown or share-housing). These were all topics that the students had discussed in class over the previous six weeks. At the beginning of the test, the pair was randomly assigned one of these topics by selecting a card with the topic written on it. They were then asked to talk freely about this topic for four minutes. In the long-prompt version of the test, on the other hand, the students were given a series of four statements, each written on a separate A4 piece of paper, and asked to either agree or disagree with that position. The statements were related to a topic they had discussed in class (secrets and privacy) and included prompt sentences like 'Agree or disagree: It's easier to share secrets with strangers' and 'Agree or disagree: Some secrets should never be shared'. Test-takers were told there was no requirement to finish discussing all four, but they were expected to discuss the tasks in the order they were numbered. An instruction sheet in Japanese detailing this procedure was also provided.

The test took place in a room near the students' regular classroom. Students were seated at a table facing each other, and in the extracts presented later the student on the left is designated as A while the one on the right is B. During the test there was also a camera operator (C) in the room whose job it was to manage the test and video-record it for the instructor, who later graded the test-taker's conversation skills in terms of fluency, accuracy and complexity. The camera operator was not otherwise involved with the students' classes and

10 General and explicit test prompts

was completely unknown to them prior to the test. Apart from the test prompt, the only other item on the table was an iPad that was being used as a timer.

After repeated viewings of the videos, we identified 20 examples from the corpus in which the participants showed physical orientation to the prompt card(s) on the table. Six of these examples, half using short prompts and half using long prompts, are analysed in detail in the following section. We then transcribed these conversations according to Jeffersonian conventions (2004), and used a modified version of Mondada's (2018) approach to transcribe the embodied features of the talk, as outlined in the Appendix. Our analysis takes the form of a detailed sequential account of pragmatic and interactional practices the participants adopted throughout the test.

Analysis

Using the card to aid in topic transition

Our analysis will begin by considering the participants' gaze and topic management practices in cases that we consider relatively efficient. At a point when a given topic has reached its logical conclusion, the speakers momentarily and visibly orient to the card as they shift the topic, then move their gaze away from it as they progress to the next topic in a stepwise fashion.

Excerpt 1. (KTOP16) Kimpaku

Topic card: 'Your hometown'

1 B hallo
2 A hallo::
3 B |my |name is suzuki miyuki=
____a-gz |>>B-->line 7
____b-gz |>>A-->line 7
____b-rh ____|toward self

[Insert 15032-4241-010 Figure U01 Here]

4 A =o:h my |name is miki=
____a-rh ____|toward self
5 ____=nice to meet[ch o o : :_-]
____6 B ____B____[nice to mee]t
you.

7 A |mm |today's |tehma is your hometown.
____theme
topic

10 General and explicit test prompts

9 a-gz |~~card----->line
 9 a-gz |~~card----->line
 9 a-px |turns
 a-rh |picks up card
 |shows B

Insert 15032-4241-010 Figure U02 Here

8 B oh=.
 9 A |=oh. | ↑|whe:re is your hometown.
 a-gz |~~card--|~~B----->
 a-gz |~~card--|~~A----->
 a-rh |toward B

Insert 15032-4241-010 Figure U03 Here

10 B my hometown is.u (0.6)
1011 ishikawa pre[fecture.
1112 A [Oh:::hohohoho
1213 B .hhh
1314 A very far. [oh : : :]
1415 B [yes yes.] = u:m
16 u:m | (uh) shinkansen?
 bullet train
 b-lh |long flat sweep x3

1517 A °hoku°
1618 B and three: [hours.
1719 A [|hokuriku?
 place name
 a-rh |raises, ~~holds flat~~ chest
 height

1820 B >hokuriku shin°kansen°<
1921 A |ah
 a-hd |nods

2022 B |three hours.
 b-lh |LH long sweeping motion, angled

2123 A three hours?
2224 B mm.
2325 A O: (h)hoh very fa|h)r!
 a-rh |fist to mouth

10 General and explicit test prompts

2426 B _[ye(h) ah hahaha .hhh

2527 A _____|[hahahah .hhh |haha

__a-gz |>>at B-----

__b-gz |>>at A-----

__a-rh _____|retracts from mouth

[Insert 15032-4241-010 Figure U04 Here]

2628 A |o::h._____|e:h=|what,
(0.5)|what's

__a-gz |to card |up _____|above B _____|to B

2966 -the famous-(.)|food.

__a-gz |to card |up _____|above B _____|to B

__a-rh _____|sweep

__a-hd _____|tilt

[Insert 15032-4241-010 Figure U05 Here]

27_____30_____(0.4)

28_____31 A -in ishi[kawa

29_____32 B _____[food, (1.0) u:m::

30_____33_____(1.1)

31_____34 B -it famous for (0.5)|kimpaku? °heh
heh°

_____gold leaf
__b-bh _____|forward

3235 A kimpaku?

_____gold leaf

3336

B ~~gold leaf~~

yes yes.

3437 A _____|gold?

__a-bh__h_____|~~+~~gold?

+twinkle hands, fingers raised

3538 B _____

~~b-bh b-mt~~_____|gold.u_____| (0.8)_____|paper.

__b-bh _____|flat toward self_____|back and forth

__b-mt _____|mouths "p- p-"

3639 A ohoho[hoh

3740 B _____[hehehe

10 General and explicit test prompts

3841 A gold [paper ehh
3942 B _____
b-rh [uh but |eat [(we/you) can eat
b-rh |gestures eating

4043 A _____ [eat.u?
4144 A we can eat this?

The vast majority of the short-prompt tests proceeded in a smooth manner, similar to that exemplified in this excerpt. In this case, even after the participants were assigned a topic, they briefly postponed addressing it to carry out a series of greeting sequences (lines 1 to 6), which constitute an opening sequence. In line 7, A then turns briefly to the topic card and announces the ‘theme’ of the discussion as ‘hometown’ and B receipts this with a stand-alone change-of-state token (‘oh’) in line 8. Although this is undoubtedly a slightly jarred and irregular way of initiating a topic, it is consistent with this particular test setting, and moreover the participants quickly re-orient toward each other, rather than examining the card for further information. A immediately shifts her gaze back to B as she initiates a sequence that is relevant to the topic (line 9, ‘Where is your hometown?’), and this leads to a series of three-part sequences (each consisting of a sequence-initiating action, a response action and a sequence-closing receipt) that progress the topic naturally in a stepwise fashion (Jefferson, 1984). In other words, the short prompt is successful in this case in that it defines the topic without over-restricting it. The participants orient to the topic as one that can be naturally developed by building on the content of what their partner has just said, and so the talk shifts naturally from hometown (lines 9–143) to how to get there (lines 1415–1920) to how long that takes (lines 2022–2526).

Only when that particular thread of talk reaches a natural conclusion does A again orient to the prompt card. In line 286, she shifts her gaze momentarily to the card as she produces an elongated ‘oh’, which can be heard as a reprise of the one she delivered just prior to her assessment in line 253, and this therefore indicates that she may be searching for a means of extending the talk. Her quick glance at the card seems to serve as a reminder of the overarching topic and allows her to shift the conversation in a slightly different direction as she looks back toward B to ask about famous foods in her hometown. Again, once the topic is back on track, A no longer looks at the card, instead focusing on what B says and building on that through post-expansive sequence initiations such as the confirmations in lines 352 and 374 and with receipt-through-repetition (Greer, Bussinguer, Butterfield, & Mischinger, 2009) in line 3841. On the whole, this excerpt demonstrates that a short prompt can be used successfully to start a conversation that progresses in a relatively open and unscripted manner and approximates the sort of natural talk commonly found in everyday conversation.

10 General and explicit test prompts

Likewise in Excerpt 2, the participants in the test with the long-form prompt also glance at the card to transition from introductory talk to the topic proper. At the start of the transcript A and B have been talking about soccer, a sport A plays.

Excerpt 2. Anyway ja

- Topic card: — 'Agree or disagree: — Sharing secrets — can make people feel better.'
- 1 B — ———— what position? eheh
- 2 A uh: |(0.5) defense=
— a-rh — ———— |to own chest
- 3 B — ———— =ah: >yeah yeah<
- 4 B |side- side back?
— b-bh |raise palms out
- 5 A uh:: centre back
- 6 B — ———— oh — [really?]]
+
- 7 A — A [yeah h —] |or: branch
— a-rh h — h — |raise palm up
- 8 B AH ah ah=
- 9 A =midfield.
- 10 B >yeah yeah.< I get it

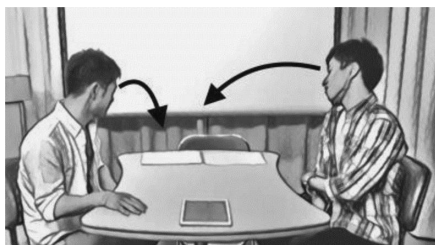
[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U06 here]



- 11 — | (1.5)
— b-gz |~~card----->
— a-gz |~~card----->

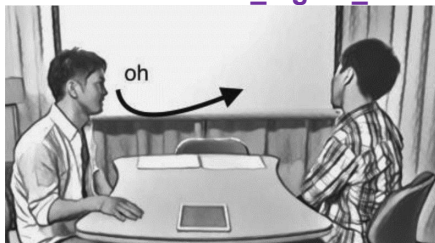
[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U07 here]

10 General and explicit test prompts



12 B |oh: (1.0)
 ___a-gz |~~to B-->

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U08 here]



13 A |anyway ja (0.4)
 ___well
 ___a-lh |touches topic card
 ___a-gz |~~to card-----> line 16
 ___b-gz |~~to card-----> line 16
 ___b-hd |moves toward card

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U09 here]



14 A |~~((reading))~~ it easier to shecoret wis
 strangers

___a-gz |to card ((reading))

15 ___ (0.6)

16 A |what do you think?

___a-gz |card-----

10 General and explicit test prompts

17 B _____ |uh:: it's difficult to share my secrets

_____ a-gz |~~to B-----until end->

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U10 here]



18 A yeah.

19 B _____ because I donno- I-(.) _-I:: (.)
don't ~~real-~~

20 _____ ~~real-~~ I:: do not know.

The long-prompt tests tended to begin in a similar fashion as the short-prompts tests did, with the participants ignoring the topic at first to open with somewhat generic greeting sequences. Just before this excerpt begins, the two participants exchange names before changing the topic to the sports they both play. After a brief telling in which A says he plays rugby, B initiates post-expansion in line 1, which leads to an inserted negotiation sequence about the position he plays. A responds that he plays defense, to which B gives a candid~~ate~~ understanding saying, 'side back?', the name of a defensive position. B is rejected by A who offers three consecutive ways of referring to his position 'centre back' (line 5), 'branch' (line 7) and 'midfield' (line 9). After B claims to recognise these positions, the post-expansion sequence reaches closure and the topic of sports peters out.

One tendency in the dataset is that participants spent much more time gazing at the topic cards in the long-prompt tests compared to those with the short prompts (68.2% versus 22.8% of the total test time respectfully). This is apparent throughout this excerpt, such as in line 11, where both interactants' gaze shifts to the topic card on the table and they stare at it in silence for 1.5 seconds. In line 12, while still looking at the card, B produces a change-of-state token 'oh', suggesting he has understood what is written on the card. A's gaze briefly moves from the card to B, but after a one second silence, B does not expand further and neither does he re-establish gaze with his interlocutor. In fact, B's gaze stays fixed on the topic card for the remainder of this excerpt and does not return to A until later in the talk.

With the conversation essentially having stalled, A utilises a combination of embodied, spoken and artefactual resources to initiate a topic shift in line 13. His utterance 'anyway ja' is an artful combination of English and Japanese, with both words used to preface topic shifts in their respective languages

(Alfonzetti, 1998). A's accompanying embodiment publicly displays his orientation to the topic card as the next trajectory for the talk, as he places his left hand over it and attends to it via his gaze. At the same time, B moves his head in to inspect the card more closely, displaying his alignment with A's action. A then reads the prompt aloud and invites an assessment from B (lines 14–16) to complete the topic shift, revive the conversation and attend to the task at hand. B, who has now been staring at the card since line 11, continues to do so even while responding to A's question (lines 17, 19). Although A does occasionally look to B (such as in lines 12 and 16), since he is unable to establish mutual gaze, he also gazes at the card for much of the conversation.

Both here and in Excerpt 1, the card becomes a resource for publicly establishing alignment toward topic change from opening sequences of talk to topically relevant talk. Unlike in Excerpt 1, however, we see here that in addition to topic change, the card was also used to restart a conversation that had lapsed into silence and that the card is treated as much more focal to the conversation overall, particularly in regard to displayed attention/physical orientation. This latter point is likely attributable to the fact that rather than just one or two words, the long prompt has both a task that projects a specific pragmatic action (agreement or disagreement) and a sentence that takes more time to read and interpret. In spontaneous conversation, it is unusual in most contexts to leave gaze unestablished when addressing others or being addressed, if the environment allows it (Sacks, 1967; Goodwin, 1980). This can therefore be considered a potential shortcoming inherent to the long-prompt test design.

When orienting to the test prompt hinders progressivity

However, the topic development during these tests does not always progress smoothly, and at times even leads to communicative breakdown. In such cases, it appears that the short-prompt test-takers orient to the prompt as the 'only' topic (and therefore do not attempt stepwise topic shift), or in the case of those with the long prompt, the test-takers orient to the availability of more topic cards and therefore move on to the next page before fully developing the topic they are on. Excerpt 3 shows an example from the short-prompt data, in which A treats the topic of share-housing as difficult and B prevents him from changing the subject.

Excerpt 3. (KTOP7) Only topic share-house?

Topic card: 'Share-housing'

- 1 B ~~if~~ yo-~~if~~ if you share house: (0.7) uh:
- 2 do you wan- (0.7) h- how many people
- 3 do you want to: share.
- 4 A ah[: : :]
- 5 B [with.]

10 General and explicit test prompts

6 _____ (0.4)
 7 A _____ |uh two- uh two people.
 _____ a-hd |tilts left
 _____ a-rh |holds up two fingers

8 B _____ tw(h)o peo(h)ple.
 9 A _____ t _____ two or three [>°two or three°<]
 10 B _____ [(_____)-]-.hhh
 11 A _____ a few people.
 12 B \$a li(h)ttle .hh little people.\$
 13 A [heh
 14 B [hahaha .hhh:
 15 _____ | (0.5)
 _____ a-lh _____ | (0.5)
 +rubs nose LH

16 A _____ uh uh many- (0.4) uh: (0.3)
 17 _____ sha:re house with-°eh° _____ many people is
 uh:

18 _____ | (2.0)
 _____ a-bh _____ | (2.0)
 |small circles

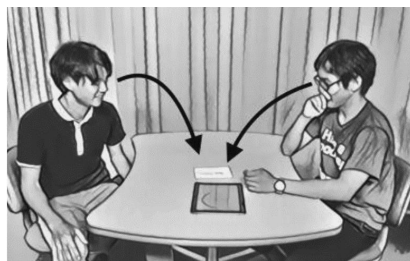
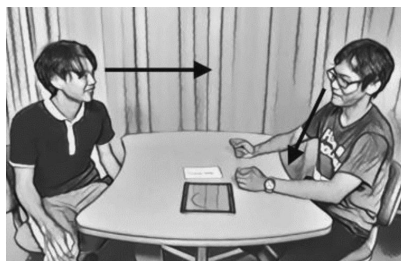
19 A ~~_____ -#uh:::#thatI:don't |have| private time|~~
 _____ a-hd _____ #uh:::# that I: don't
~~+have +(private time)+~~
 |nods
 b-hd _____ |nods-----
 ---|

20 _____ | (1.0) | (1.0) | (1.0) | (1.0) | (1.1)
 _____ a-gz ~~+(1.0)+(1.0)+(1.0)+(1.0)+(1.1)~~
 +B-----|~card-----
 b-gz ~~b-px b-rh a-rh~~ |down-----|~card----

 _____ b-px |leans back
 _____ b-rh |covers mouth
 _____ a-rh |preens hair-->

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U11 here]

10 General and explicit test prompts



21 B | °share house°
 a-rh | ----....

22 A | mm::
 a-lh | covers mouth

23 | (0.3)
 a-lh | covers mouth
 a-gz | looks off (at C?)

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U12 here]



24 A | eh. | only topic.u share house.u?
 a-gz | ~~card----- a-rh
 | points to card----->

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U13 here]



25 | (1.0) | (1.0)
a-gz | ~~B-- | ~~card

10 General and explicit test prompts

a-rh |-----|scratches head

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U14 here]



26 B |may(h) |be
 ___b-hd |nods
 ___a-rh |scratches head
 ___a-gz |B-----|~~card-->

27 A o[ah:
 28 B |[hehe
 29 _____| (2.4)
 ___a-gz |---->
 ___b-gz |~~card~~off-->

30 A share
 31 B |ah (°tekitohni shabete°)
 _____any-old-how chat-GER

_____ ***Just say something***
 ___b-gz |~~A-->

32 _____ (1.2)
 33 A |share |house.
 ___a-px |leans back
 ___a-bh _____|crosses arms

34 B uhnn.
 35 _____ (2.1)
 36 A eh:[:]

10 General and explicit test prompts

37 B |__[t]h#e:n# (.) do you want to:::

~~b-rh~~ |~~↑RH moves~~ forward toward A

38 _____ (1.7)

39 _____ live.u (.) yourself?

40 _____ (1.2)

41 A |ah eh- (1.1) °do you want-° |ah:::

_____ a-g-z |down at table

_____ a-h-d _____ |nods

42 _____ ye-yes [I do. (°yeah°)]

43 B _____ [heh-heh-heh ____-]

0044 _____ eheh heh .hhh hitori?=
_____ *by yourself*

4445 A |un-=-un-=-un. ____ .hhh

_____ yeah yeah yeah

_____ a-hd |nods

4546 _____ |°ah° |sh- (0.9) uhn: (1.0)

_____ ~~Co3~~ _____ ~~HM~~

_____ a-gz |to card-----

_____ a-lh _____ |points and moves toward card

4647 _____ share-u-uh::

4800 _____ |I_-don't imagine share housing.

_____ b-bh _____ |shakes both hands

4749 B _____ B

~~b-hd~~ _____ |mmm::

_____ b-hd |slight nod

4850 _____ | (4.5)

_____ a-gz ~~+(4.5)-~~

|to card

b-lh |to mouth

4951 A uh I- I (1.0) I live (1.3)

5052 a house with my family.

51-

~~b-hd~~53 _____ | (2.6)

_____ b-hd |nods

5254 B I think (.) there are a few people

(.)

10 General and explicit test prompts

5355 in japan em: who sh- share house.
 5456 | (2.4)
 b-hd + (2.4)
 |tilts head
 b-gz |to upper right

5557 A +ah

The topic of share-housing is certainly more difficult than most of the other short-prompt options, in that many of these test-takers have not directly experienced living with someone other than their family members, but they have talked about the topic in depth during class and other pairs were able to extend it by talking about its merits and demerits and shifting the talk to chores, their current living situation and the like. The test-takers in Excerpt 3, however, seem to experience difficulty doing this, partly because A actively works to resist talking about the topic. His responses are brief and he does not extend his responses with post-expansive follow-up talk. In line 7, for instance, in response to B's question, speaker A only gives a short numerical response, which he restates in line 9 and then again in line 11. Likewise, B simply receipts this information through iterative repetition, which leads to nervous laughter. Eventually, A does manage an extended turn in lines 16 to 19 that seems to serve as an account for his answer and therefore does extend the talk to a certain degree.

However, B does not use this as an opportunity to shift the topic in a stepwise fashion, instead looking down to the card and covering his mouth in line 20, a move that A soon mirrors. Obviously, the only information the card offers is the general topic ('Share-housing') and therefore all the test-takers can do is use it to initiate a new (sub)topic rather than progressing the under-developed topic they already have. In line 21 B repeats the topic 'share-house' under his breath and after a short silence A looks off to his right, toward the camera operator, as he makes a bid to confirm that share-housing is indeed the only topic they are allowed to discuss (line 24). After a two second gap of silence (line 25), B confirms that it is (line 26) and therefore effectively blocks A's implied attempt to propose a different (disjunctive) topic from among the pile of possible topics. Although this is in accordance with the rules of the test as they have been explained to the test-takers, it leads to more awkward silence and disfluent turn construction (lines 27–32) as the test-takers struggle to restart the conversation. There is then yet another moment when A repeats the topic (presumably by reading the card) as he bodily removes himself from the talk by leaning back in his chair and folding his arms. B seems to interpret this as an indication that A is not able (or willing) to initiate a related sub-thread of talk and so after a brief hesitation marker (line 34) and silence (line 35), in lines 37 to 39 B formulates a question that is hearable as a flipped version of the one he asked earlier: Since A has indicated he would not want to live with

more than two people, B asks him if he would rather live by himself. This appears to be sequentially fitted to the line of talk that was emerging before A put it on hold with his bid to change the topic, presumably by choosing another card. That is, B is orienting to the stepwise development of the topic while A is resisting it by proposing they use the affordances of the test situation to enact a radical change of topic by drawing an alternative card.

Faced with B's rebooted line of questioning, A perseveres to the best of his ability by first repeating part of the question along with an extended change-of-state token in line 41 that claims understanding of the question and then producing an initial response in line 42. In so doing, the participants have successfully restarted the talk. Overlapping his uptake with A's response, B then gives a brief receipt by switching to Japanese, perhaps thereby displaying his orientation to the difficulty A is experiencing at this point. Participant A receipts this with a quick series of Japanese uptake tokens (line 44-45) and goes on to self-select and produce an account for his own struggle to discuss this topic, saying he cannot imagine what share-housing is like (line 46-48). Notice though that just before he does this, A again turns to the card (line 45-46), and it could be that his incorporation of the word share-house in his account is occasioned by what is written on the card. It seems that A may have been looking for more information on the card and part of his trouble is that he is unable to come up with questions related to this topic due to the paucity of detail on the card. Of course, this pared-back format is fundamental to the test design, so the fault lies largely with the test-taker. In line 48-50 he once again spends a full 4.5 seconds looking at the card before he formulates post-expansions that further explain his position. In the end, the participants are able to discuss the topic to a certain extent, but they treat the card and the topic itself as problematic both explicitly and through the disfluent nature of their talk.

The long-prompt test-takers also treated the topic cards as problematic and occasionally publicly displayed their resistance, as is apparent in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4. Iya ya kore ('I hate this')

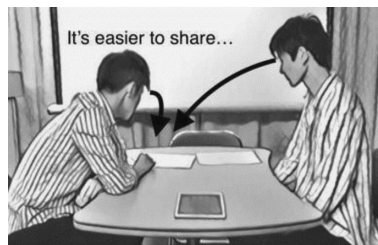
Topic Card: "Agree or Disagree: It's easier to share secrets with strangers"

1 -A _____ | °it's easier to share ~~secrets with strangers~~°
 _____ a-gz |>>at card ((reading))-----
 _____ b-gz |>>at card-----

2 _____ secrets with strangers°

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U15 here]

10 General and explicit test prompts



2 A |.hhh (0.7) [#uhh:# a-hd
a-hd |cocks left

3 B _____[(°share secret°)

4 A I don't think it's easier to

5 _____share |secrets with |strangers.
a-gz -----|~~to B-----|~~to card--> line 9

6 B I agree:::.

7 A °hehehe°

8 _____| (0.6)
a-rh _____|to back of head

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U16 here]

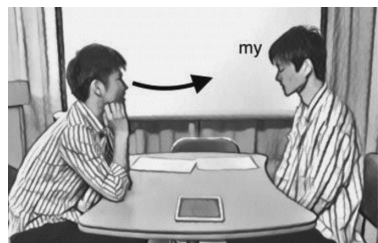


9 B |becau:se |(0.5) eh:: |(1.0) ~~|my |(.)~~
~~secre(.).t~~
a-gz |~~to B---|~~card-----|~~to B
a-hd |nod

010 |my _____|(.). secre(.).t
a-gz |card|~~B-----> a-hd |nod

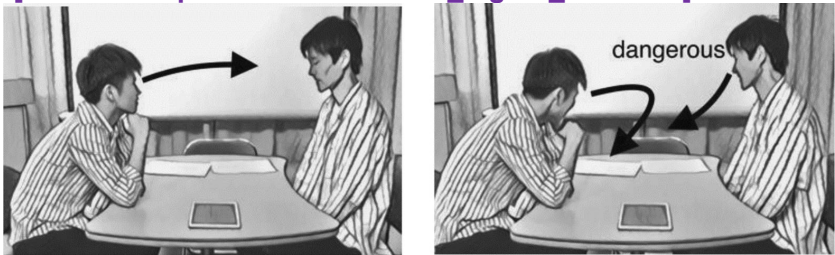
[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U17 here]

10 General and explicit test prompts



1011 | (0.4) is | (0.8) dangerous [::]
a-gz | B-----
a-hd | nod nod | nod nod

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U18 here]



1112 A | [ha]ha .hhh | me too.
a-gz | [ha]ha .hhh | me too.
| ~card----- | ~to B

1213 (1.0)
1314 A °eh::°
1415 | (3.0)
b-gzz | (3.0)
| ~to card-->
a-gz | ~to card-->

1516 A °iya ya
~~horrible COP~~ | kore. .shhh°
~~horrible COP~~ ~~this~~ ~~this~~

~~a-rh~~ ~~I hate this.~~
a-rh | to brow
a-fc ~~fe~~ | winces

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U19 here]

10 General and explicit test prompts



1617 _____ | (0.7)
_____ b-gz |~~to table

1718 A _____ | °doh suru?°
_____ how do
_____ **What should we do?**
_____ a-gz |~~to B

1819 _____ | (0.7)
_____ b-gz |~~to card
_____ a-gz |~~to card

1920 A °secrets.°

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U20 here]



2021 _____ | (1.2)
_____ a-gz |~~to down/mid-front

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U21 here]



2122 A | °>doshio.<°

10 General and explicit test prompts

_____do-VOL

_____What should I do?

___a-gz |~~~~~to card--> line 23

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U22 here]



2223 _____ (0.7)

2324 B B I-|want-|to::_-share|+:-my:

___a-gz -----|~~to B----->line XX

___a-hd _____|nod |nod |nodding

0025 B _secret_-with_-strangers.

___a-gz -----

a-gz -----|~~to B-----

-----a-hd -----|nod |nod |nodding

246 A ah:

2527 _____| (1.6) _____) _____| (0.8)

___b-rh |move toward card-|grasps card

___b-gz -----|~~to A----

___b-hd _____|slight nod

26-28 A |°soh shiyoh°

_____that do-VOL

_____Let's do that.

___a-hd |nod

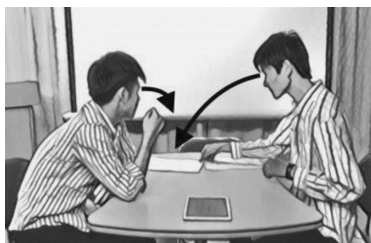
2729 _____| (2.4)

___b-hd |nods

___b-bh |changes card

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U23 here]

10 General and explicit test prompts



28-30 _____ | (4.2)

_____ a-gz |~~to card-->

_____ b-gz |~~to card-->

29-31 A ah:

30-32 _____ (4.3)

31-33 A hhh °doh yaro°.

_____ how COP

_____ **What do I think?**

32-34 _____ (0.6)

While in Excerpt 3 (share-housing) we can perhaps attribute the participants' resistance to a lack of first-hand experience, in Excerpt 4 the issue seems to stem from an inability (or perhaps unwillingness) to draw out topically relevant talk in a substantive way. In line 1, A begins the test by reading the prompt aloud as both participants gaze at the card. In line 2, A already begins to display issues formulating a response by taking an extended in-breath, pausing for 0.7 second and tilting his head to the left (Seo & Koshik, 2010). After these displayed difficulties, A formulates a disagreeing response to the prompt by co-opting (Goodwin, 2013, 2018) the written text and adding some grammatical negation ('I don't think'). B first agrees in the next turn, before adding an increment that provides an account for his opinion: 'because my secret is dangerous' (lines 9-10, 11). A's somewhat minimal agreement in line 12, 14 ('me too') precedes a one second silence followed by some displayed frustration in line 13, 14 ('eh:::') and another three second gap in line 14, 15 where both participants are again silently staring at the card. A's already visible frustration with the test reaches an apex in line 15, 16, where he publicly expresses his distaste for the test, placing his hand on his brow and wincing as he says 'I hate this' in Japanese. His use of L1 to do so adds another element to his displayed resistance, in that he is resisting the prescribed language of the discussion test itself. Following another 0.7 second gap, A continues to speak in Japanese ('what should we do', line 18, 19) before yet another 0.7 second silence in line 19, 20 where the participants are again both quietly staring at the prompt card. After another 1.2 seconds of silence in line 21, 22, A once again uses Japanese to express that he is unsure about how to continue, saying 'What should I do?' (line 22, 23).

10 General and explicit test prompts

B's eventual solution to this impasse is perplexing to say the least. In a complete reversal of his previously stated opinion (that he does not want to share his secrets, since they are dangerous), he states that he wants to share his secrets with strangers (lines 2324-25) before slowly reaching his hand toward the topic card, and slightly nodding at A, seemingly to seek a display of his alignment with the projected action (changing the card) before carrying it out. After more lengthy silence and orientation to the cards, A finally gives an aligning response (in Japanese) in line 2628, and B flips to the next prompt card, which signals both the end of the current sub-topic and the beginning of another.

With its four cards and relatively specific focus, the long-prompt format affords the test-takers with the opportunity to end a course of action somewhat artificially rather than pursue genuine intersubjectivity. B's abrupt about-face in lines 24-253 logically warrants further unpacking, but rather than initiate repair or invite explanation, A simply goes along with B's move to shift the topic via the in-built affordance of the test format. The shorter one-word prompts, on the other hand, do not allow for such abandonment, and test-takers must therefore rely on the interactional architecture of talk to shift the topic in a stepwise fashion. This generally works well (as it did in Excerpt 1), but it can prove challenging for test-takers who are unable or unwilling to go beyond the topic written on the card (Excerpt 2). It is also observable in Excerpt 4, and the long-prompt tests generally, that both participants spend a lot of time attending to the topic cards with their gaze rather than looking at one another, a behaviour not commonly found in the shorter prompt tests. We further explore the notion of the test prompt as an affordance in the next section.

Textual objects as an affordance for achieving topic change

The availability of an inscribed object can aid in achieving the sequential progression of talk by reducing the need for linguistic production and relying instead on other semiotic resources within the local interactional environment, as is the case when people share photos (Aaltonen, Arminen, & Raudaskoski, 2014) or point to something on a page as they formulate a recognitional (Greer & Levland, 2018). In both the short-prompt and long-prompt tests, it became clear that the participants were using the topic cards to accomplish various conversational actions beyond topic nomination. The achievement of topic change was common in both tests, but while this action was similar, the nature of the topic shift in the two test formats was quite different. In the short-prompt tests, the single available card tended to be used at the beginning of the test as a means of transitioning from opening greeting sequences into the topic of the test then was generally no longer oriented to. At other times, test-takers used indexical gestures (pointing at the card or touching it) as a way of displaying to their interlocutor a divergence from the topic and orienting to a responsibility to return to it. In both these cases, the short-prompt cards

10 General and explicit test prompts

created mutual alignment between the test-takers on a trajectory of talk about their respective topic, after which there were no external affordances that allowed for topic shift. If the topic was to change, it had to be because the participants themselves did the necessary interactional work of making it happen. On the other hand, in the long-prompt tests the participants had multiple topic cards at their disposal and could thus use them as a resource to change the topic once they decided they had completed the explicit agreement/disagreement task. Unfortunately, this means that natural stepwise topic changes in the long-prompt tests are far less common than disjunctive ones and topics are often abandoned before substantial development has occurred. In addition, because the cards contained more text they predicated more reading and, as was apparent in our analysis of Excerpt 4, became a focus for participant gaze and attention. These characteristics are very clear in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5. Next

Topic card: 'Agree or disagree: Sharing secrets can make people feel better.'

- 1 | (3.2)
 a-gz |to card
 b-g—z |to card--> until line 5
- 2 A |ah:::::
 a-gz |~~to B--> until line 10

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U24 here]



- 3 | (1.7)
 b-h—d _ |nods
- 4 —B |I eh:: | (2.4) + | (0.3)
 b-lh _ |to self
 b-bh _____ |to front then side
 a-rh _____ |~~palm~~ ~~palm~~—selects B

10 General and explicit test prompts

5 B agree. | agree.
 ___ b-gz agree. | agree.
 ----- | ~to A

6 A un::

7 B agree=

8 A =why:

9 B |uh|::

___ b-gz |~~card

___ a-gz --|~~card |uh|::

~~|~~card~~

~~|~~card~~

10 ___ | (1.7)

___ b-rh +(1.7)

|~~card

a-gz |~~B

11 B sharing secret is very | (0.6) distance:

___ b-gz ----- |~~A

___ b-bh sharing
secret is very | (0.6) distance:

~~|~~A~~

~~|raised~~ palms in and ~~-----~~ (1.3)

~~and~~ out

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U25 here]



12 B (1.3) sh[ort]. short.

13 A ___ [ah-]

14 (0.7)

15 A others, | (0.5)

___ a-rh |back and forth in/out 5 times to
 self and B

___ b-hd |nods twice

10 General and explicit test prompts

16 B (another a[n:d]) | (0.8)
 ___ b-gz ___-----|~~card
 ___ b-lh _____|mirrors A's ~~back and~~
~~forth~~-gesture

17 A _____[°un°]

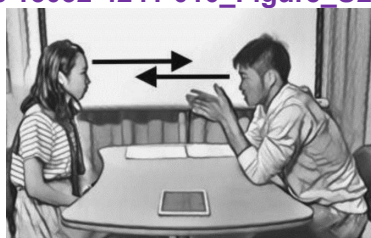
18 B |distance short<=| ↑so::
 ___ b-gz ___-|~-----timer|~~card
 ___ a-gz ___-|B-----|~~timer

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U26 here]



19 (0.7)

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U27 here]



20 B _____|very important.
 ___ b-gz-gz _____|~~ A-----

___ a-ga ___-|~~ B-----

___ a-hd |nods

|very important.

+-+ A

+-+ B

+-+ nods

21 (0.5)

22 A yeah me too=[that's (a) good point=

23 B _____|[_me too? _____]

___ b-gz +[me too?]

10 General and explicit test prompts

|~~card-----

24 A = [.hhh ↑hah hah hah ____]

25 B _[oh(kay) >yeah yeah yeah.<]

26 A .hhh uh (1.1) by:

27 a-hd .hhh uh (1.1) by: disclose (0.6) zing
|others?

a-hd |nod

2728 | (0.4)

b-hd +(0.4)

|nod

2829 A |to others (0.4) ↑I ca:n (2.0)

a-hd |tilt left

2930 ↑it's (0.3) |short relax.

a-rh ↑it's (0.3) |short relax.

|points at air x2

3031 B mm mm mm | [relax:.] |ve[ry
importan'.]

b-gz mm mm mm | [relax:.] |ve[ry importan'.]

-----|~~card---|~~timer-----

3132 A | [eheheh] | (a:nd
it)]=

a-hd | [eheheh] | (a:nd it)

|nods]=

3233 A =can |get along with

a-rh =can |get along with

|back and forth from self to

B

3334 B mm mm mm mm [mm.]

3435 A [them]

3536 B |yeah yeah yeah yeah. |good.

b-gz |yeah yeah yeah yeah. |good.

|~~card-----|~~timer

3637 A same. He [hehe].

3738 B | [same]. |Uh NExt!

b-rh |to card

10 General and explicit test prompts

```

_____b-gz  |[[same]]. |Uh NExt!
|to card
-----|~~timer

3839      A _____|Ne(h)xt. |Heheh
_____a-gz  |Ne(h)xt. |Heheh
|~~camera--|~~card

3940      B _____|$next$ (okay. okay).
_____b-bh  |$next$ (okay. okay).
|shuffles through cards

```

After exchanging greetings with one another, both participants spend 3.2 seconds silently reading the card (line 1) before A produces a stretched change-of-state token ‘ah’ in the next line and shifts her gaze to B, publicly claiming her understanding of the topic card as well as her availability to talk. Rather than re-establishing gaze with A, B continues to look down at the card for another 1.7 seconds while nodding. In line 4, while still staring at the card, B begins a new turn constructional unit (TCU) which is delivered with a stretched hesitation marker ‘eh’, a long 2.4-second pause and some movement of his hands, eventually expressing his agreement with the card and finally bringing his gaze from it back to his interlocutor. A receipts this in the next turn and B again repeats ‘agree’, leading A to solicit an account by asking him ‘Why?’ in line 8. B’s gaze again returns to the card as he produces some thinking noises before beginning his account inline 11 saying ‘sharing secret is very distance short’ and moving both hands in and out. A first claims understanding with a minimal change-of-state token (‘ah’, line 13) before giving a demonstration of her understanding of B’s account by saying ‘others’ while producing a gesture in which she moves her right hand inward (toward herself) and outward (toward B) five times. Although simple, this turn provides an important missing component of B’s telling: the parties who would get closer by sharing secrets. One party is explicitly stated (others), the other (myself) made relevant through implication. B accepts this contribution by repeating both the utterance and gesture and expands his topic with an assessment that both explains his stance further and closes down his telling sequence ‘others and distance short, so very important’. Worth noting, is that B’s gaze had been on the cards for the duration of his telling, only returning to his interlocutor at the end of this TCU (line 20), which further illustrates the high degree of attention the participants in the long-prompt tests gave the topic cards – something that was rare in the short-prompt tests.

After a 0.5 second pause, A agrees and gives a positive assessment of B’s stance, using one of the phrases listed in their textbook as a way of doing agreement (‘that’s a good point’ line 22), which she then treats as laughable

(Sacks, 1992) in line 24.³ This format has thus been successful at not only eliciting target pragmatic actions highlighted in the textbook, but also one of the specific forms given for doing so.

A goes on to also provide an account for her agreement with both B and the prompt, saying that by disclosing her secrets with others she can ‘short relax’ (line 3029). Although the formulation is unique and perhaps worth clarifying, B gives three minimal receipt tokens followed by a receipt through repetition of the word ‘relax’ and the positive assessment ‘very important’, which works as an attempt to close the sequence. Ironically, despite claiming that A has just made an important point, his embodiment during this turn (in which he alternates his gaze between the timer and topic cards) creates the impression that he is not actually listening to his interlocutor. Perhaps realising that her account was not sufficiently explained, A begins expanding the account in lines 3132 and 3233, adding ‘and it can get along with’ while repeating the gesture for ‘others’ she made in line 15. B’s response of four repeated ‘yeahs’ and another assessment ‘good’ is again accompanied by his gaze on the topic cards and timer. It is clear by this point that B is not interested on remarking on the topic or expanding on A’s responses in a substantive way.

In line 3637, A says ‘same’, which in this sequential position is hearable as drawing a parallel between her just-stated opinion and B’s. She gets another minimal repetition receipt from B as he stares at the timer and reaches his right hand toward the topic cards before loudly saying ‘next’. Using an assemblage of embodiment, minimal utterance and the available inscribed objects, B has worked to propose a topic shift. This gets a fourth-wall breaking gaze at the camera from A as she laughs and gives B the go-ahead to change cards before he moves the top card to the bottom of the stack.

It is apparent in this excerpt that the topic cards became an affordance for achieving topic change without the interactional burden inherent in stepwise topic change that can at times stall progressivity (see Excerpt 3). With a simple move of the hand/gaze toward the card and just one word, B was able to both close the topic and select a new topical trajectory. However, it is also clear from the participant’s conduct that the cards can be a distraction with negative impacts on the quality of reciprocity and breadth of topic development. Because B is so busy looking at the cards and rushing to get through them, he rarely looks at A and nor does he provide evidence in his minimal responses that he has in fact understood what she said.

In the final excerpt, in which the test uses the short-prompt format, the topic moves slightly away from jobs (to houses), after which the test-takers both look back to the card before A returns to a new sub-topic that is more closely aligned to what is written on the card.

10 General and explicit test prompts

Excerpt 6. KTOP46 Big house

```

1  B      (mo-) |if.u (0.5) |you:      be-      (0.4)
((sniff))
   b-gz      |mid-distance-----
----->
   b-lh      |palm-selects A |points to A

2  _____↓you (0.6) beco|me.u: rich |man (0.8)
   b-gz -----|~~A      _____|down---->

3  _____do you (0.2) |want to >eh- do you< wan-
   b-gz -----|~~A-----

4  _____|(0.6) do you |wantut.o (0.3) |big house.
   b-gz |away (up-left)|~~A----->
line 8
   b-rh |hand on chin
   b-fc _____|smiles

5  A      uh:: |yes.a-hd
   a-hd      |nods
+nods

6  B      °yes°
7  _____(0.3)

8  A      uh:: (0.8) |I .hh—| (0.9) I (0.6)—I
will.u+I will.u |buy.ai
   b-gz -----|~down|~~A -----
-----> ln 12
   a-bh _____|+beat
|beat +beat

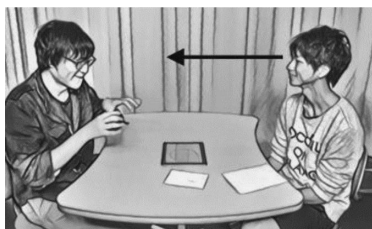
θ9 _____|buy.ai (0.6) |>big-house< [etto]
                                     HM
   a-bh |beat _____|spread

10 B      [(    )]
11 A      |(0.9) wi:zu: (0.3) a (0.3) |pool.
   a--rh |beat
   a-bh  |beat
   a-gz  |away (down-rt)-----|~~B-->

```

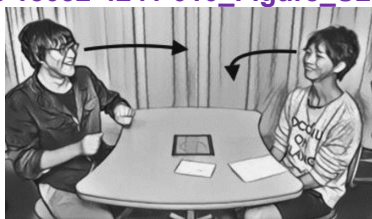
[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U28 here]

10 General and explicit test prompts



12 B | [↑o : : : | : h !]
 ___ b-gz | away (lft) | down-->
 ___ b-fc | smiles--------->

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U29 here]



13 A | [heh heh | heh heh] | \$'kay\$ eh:: hn
 ___ a-gz | ~~B-----| ~~down to card-->ln
 16
 ___ b-gz -----| ~~center (mid-distance)-->line 16
 ___ a-hd | nods

14 B ((cough))
 15 A hn
 16 B | I will go: | your hou(h) se.
 ___ a-gz | ~~B----->
 ___ b-gz | ~~away-----| ~~A----->

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U30 here]



17 A | ah-[hah o(h)h | o(h) kay ye] | (h) s.
 18 B ___ [hn -----hn hn hn hah-----]

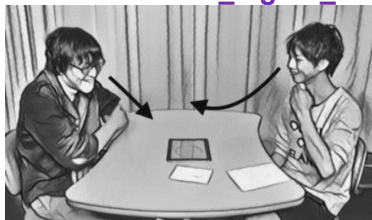
10 General and explicit test prompts

```

    a-gz |B-----|~down to
card-->line 20
    b-gz |A-----|~down to card-----
----->line ln 19
    a-hd _____|nod

```

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U31 here]



```

19 A .heh=.heh=.huh |eh (0.9)
    a-gz |down-----|~mid-distance

```

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U32 here]

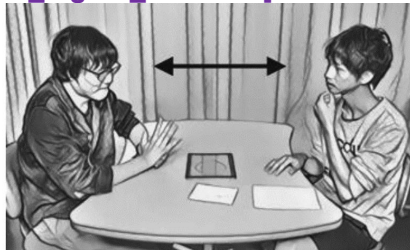
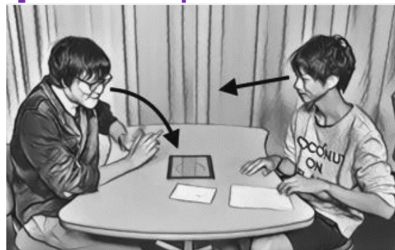


```

20 _____|do you: |(1.1)~eh~|want to~|(1.1)
|work.u
    a-gz |down----|up-rt----|~B----|~away|~B-
-->
    b-gz |mid distance-----|~A-----
-->
    b-hd _____|nod

```

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U33 here]



```

21 _____i[n f]uture.
22 B _[|ah]

```

10 General and explicit test prompts

____ b-gz --|looks away
 ____ b-hd ____|nod

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U34 here]



23 ____ (0.4)
 24 B I work.u in:: |(0.8) geh- ~~(0.5) game~~
 designer?
 ____ b-gz ____|looks back to A
 25 (0.5) game designer?
 2526 A ooh-ooh:
 2627 B |°game designer°
 ____ b-gz |~~away----->

[EZ-Edit Graphic 15032-4241-010_Figure_U35 here]



At the point we join this conversation, the topic has progressed in a stepwise fashion and in lines 1 to 4, B poses a hypothetical question that would have been just as relevant to another of the topic cards (money). After A's response (line 5) and its post-expansion (lines 8–11), B produces a Japanese receipt token that adopts an impressed or awed stance (Greer, 2016), while A overlaps it with self-addressed laughter, both signalling a possible close to the sequence. B shifts his gaze away at this point (line 12) then moves it to a mid-point just as A looks down to the card (line 13), which along with his sequence-closing 'okay' (Bench, 1995; Mondada, 2006a) and the topic-terminating shared laughter (Holt, 2010), suggests his possible orientation toward the end of this topic as well as the relevance of the card as an affordance for returning to the assigned topic. However, B apparently aligns differently to A at this point, adding a post-expansive hypothetical situation in a bid to further the joking stance (line 16); A shifts his gaze back to B while he delivers this. During the affiliative laughter and another iteration of the 'okay' closing marker in lines

17 and 18, B's gaze shifts to the card and A soon follows with his own gaze, which seems to demonstrate that B was in fact sensitive to A's earlier bid to reset the topic.

In line 19, A prefaces his turn with a disjunctive 'eh', that marks it as a noticing of departure (Hayashi, 2009), and therefore works to propose an abrupt change of topic. A's gaze in lines 20 and 21 shifts to various places as he conducts the necessary word search practices to formulate his question, but eventually he ends the turn while looking at B (line 20) to accomplish speaker selection. B likewise shifts his gaze away from the prompt card and back to A (line 24), as they continue the talk without directly orienting to the card.

The prompt card therefore serves as both a simple reminder of the topic and as a means of returning to that topic in moments when the interaction has progressed on to other matters. In fact, in at least the short-prompt version of this test, the students were not penalised for shifting the talk on to other topics, so long as it was carried out in a stepwise fashion. Even so, the test-takers on occasion oriented to the institutionality of the talk in this way by returning to the assigned topic, and the embodied practice of gazing at the prompt card enabled them to do so in a manner that was visibly available to their partner. In this sense, the shorter, more general test prompt may have held more potential for the interactants to develop the topic, because they could use it to springboard to a range of related talking points.

Discussion and pedagogical implications

CA research on peer-to-peer language testing to date has largely focused on either the interactional constraints and affordances within this particular institutional context (Brooks, 2009; Carroll, 2005; Greer, 2016; Greer et al., 2009; Greer & Potter, 2008; Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2011) or how interactional competence can be defined and assessed in such situations (Galaczi, 2008; Lam, 2016, 2018; May, 2009; May, Nakatsuhara, Lam, & Galaczi, 2019; Youn, 2020). Our chapter has chosen a different tack by zeroing in instead on one feature of the test design – the length of the written prompt – and investigating its influence on the resultant talk. In doing so, our study has shown that seemingly minor changes to the format can have major implications for the ensuing interaction.

In the short-prompt tests, the interactants tended to openly orient to the topic cards more at the beginning of the test where it was regularly used as a means of facilitating topic change from an opening greetings sequence and into the test topic. At other times, a gaze or an indexical gesture toward the card was used to re-align the conversation with the topic on the card, displaying the interactants' orientation to the institutionally constrained parameters of acceptable discussion. In some cases, however, the minimal nature of the one-word prompt (and therefore the breadth of its scope) became problematic if the test-takers reached an impasse where they indicated an inability to

10 General and explicit test prompts

generate further talk about the topic on the card. With no additional cards or co-optable inscribed language available, the test-takers were left to carry the interactional burden of topical development and enact stepwise transition on their own. Their (in)ability to do so can be seen as a significant and assessable element of their interactional competence.

On the other hand, test-takers in the long-prompt tests did not have to do this work themselves, but could instead rely on affordances built in to the format to shift the topic. As such, lapses in conversation tended to be less common and shorter, since the participants could simply change to another card to enact topic shift. The additional availability of inscribed language was also shown to be used as a resource for turn construction with participants regularly incorporating card elements into their utterances. In addition, the focus on agreeing and disagreeing allowed opportunities for use of target linguistic forms for these pragmatic actions learned in class, such as 'That's a good point' to enact assessment-as-agreement (Excerpt 5, line 22). What was abundantly apparent, however, is that the test-takers in the long-prompt tests generally spent much more time orienting to the cards with their gaze and bodies throughout the conversation. Although this can be partially attributed to the time needed to read each prompt, participants would gaze at the cards even while their interlocutor was speaking, a reciprocity practice with potentially negative interactional consequences. As [Sacks \(1967\)](#) points out, gaze is a way for a recipient to show that they are listening, and speakers therefore aim to not only have the floor, but to "have the floor while others listen" (p. 7). In addition, the ease of topic shift afforded by the cards also meant that each individual long-form prompt would only be addressed in a minimal way before the participants opted to change the topic; as a result, the thread of conversation was cut before it could be substantively expanded upon.

These observations raise some thought-provoking questions regarding the implications for test design. First, it is clear that just because a test is of the dyadic, peer-to-peer discussion variety, the kind of interactions it generates can be greatly influenced by test design choices. These include the length of the prompt, the number of available inscribed artefacts in the test environment, and the presence (or non-presence) of overtly prescribed tasks. Test-takers in the short-prompt tests overall spent more time building on the topics and relating them to their own experiences and were able to display their IC when stepwise topic change became a relevant action. They also spent more time attending to one another with both their gaze and turn-construction ([Sacks, 1992](#)), tying their turns back to what had just been said rather than relying on language written on the card.

Conversely, when unable to develop a selected topic any further, the test-takers could at times fall into problematic lapses and therefore appear less interactionally competent. Participants in the long-prompt tests were able to display different skills, including the incorporation of environmentally available inscribed language ([Day & Mortensen, in press](#); [Greer & Leyland,](#)

[in press](#)) and the ability to achieve prescribed pragmatic actions using forms learned in class. However, the large amount of visible orientation to the topic cards, a common lack of substantial topical development, and the often abruptly initiated topic shifts might lead raters to a negative impression of the test-takers' interactional ability.

When selecting and designing discussion tests, educators must therefore carefully consider the kind of interaction they are trying to assess. If the goal is to solicit conversation and topical development/change that emulates an everyday conversation, a relatively minimal prompt appears more effective. On the other hand, a longer prompt appears more conducive to assessing target pragmatic actions and forms, although the issue of card-directed gaze remains a concern. One potential tweak that could address this issue (along with the lack of topical development) is to reduce the number of cards to just one rather than four. This would eliminate the affordance of easy topic shift, encouraging participants to expand on the topic via their own discussion and also reducing the amount of necessary reading.

Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that more research is necessary going forward, particularly the sort of ethnomethodological analysis that takes into account not only test-takers' utterances, but also the full assemblage of multimodal resources they utilise during test interaction. As this study has shown, spoken utterances alone are not sufficient to observe, analyse and describe the complexity of conversation test data and therefore close, micro-attention to the embodied work done by the participants can reveal new insights into conversation test design.

Appendix 10.1

Transcription conventions

The transcripts follow standard Jeffersonian conventions (Jefferson, 2004), with embodied elements shown via a modified version of the conventions developed by Mondada (2018). The embodied elements are positioned in a series of tiers relative to the talk and rendered in grey.

|| Descriptions of embodied actions are delimited between vertical bars

|---> The action described continues across subsequent lines

---| The action reaches its conclusion

>> The action commences prior to the excerpt

--->> The action continues after the excerpt

..... Preparation of the action

---- The apex of the action is reached and maintained

,,,,, Retraction of the action

~~~~~ The action moves or transforms in some way

A The current speaker is identified with capital letters

Participants enacting an embodied action are identified relative to the talk by their initial in lower case in another tier, along with one of the following codes for the action:

-gz gaze

-lh left hand

-rh right hand

-bh both hands

-px proximity

-hd head

-gs gesture

Anonymised framegrabs are positioned within the transcript relative to the moment at which they were taken.

Following Greer, Ishida and Tateyama (2017), Japanese talk has been translated via the following additions:

First tier: original Japanese rendered in Hepburn romanisation; second tier: word-by-word gloss (italicised Courier font); third tier: vernacular translation (italicised Times font).

## 10 General and explicit test prompts

In cases where the turn extends over several lines, the third-tier vernacular translation only appears after the end of the complete TCU. If the Japanese consists of a single morpheme embedded within an otherwise English turn at talk, the third tier translation is not given.

Abbreviations used for Japanese morphemes in the word-by-word gloss tier are as follows:

|     |                                    |                                |
|-----|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| COP | copula (e.g., da, desu)            |                                |
| HM  | hesitation marker (e.g., e::, ano) | CoS change-of-state token (ah) |
| RT  | receipt token                      |                                |
| NG  | negative morpheme (-nai)           | VOL volitional verb form       |
| GER | gerundive verb form                |                                |

### Recommended readings

**Day, D., & Mortensen, K. (eds.). (in press). Special issue: Inscribed objects in professional practices. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice*.**

This special issue focuses on how speakers enlist inscribed objects (such as post-it notes, text, drawings and forms) in interaction, and how these multimodal co-optings therefore reflexively constitute specific professional practices. The seven papers in the issue each use multimodal conversation analysis to investigate the way writing and reading can be incorporated into instances of spoken conversation by drawing on objects that are available in the immediate environment. The authors draw on a variety of naturally occurring interaction in professional settings, including planning meetings, service encounters, medical interviews and theatre rehearsals. They view the meaning of the inscription as contingent, dynamic and evocable for the interactional practices at hand. One study particularly relevant to our chapter is the paper by Hazel, who shows how drama directors use their notes as structuring devices to accomplish topic shift as they give advice to actors on their performance.

**Galaczi, E. D. (2008). Peer-peer interaction in a speaking test: The case of the First Certificate in English examination. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 5(2), 89–119.**

Using a mix of quantitative analysis and CA, [Galaczi \(2008\)](#) examines the speaking practices of participants during the peer-peer conversation section of the Cambridge First Certificate in English examination. Although it does not take a multi-modal approach, her study still provides many insights about dyadic test interaction and turn-taking. She asserts that the sequential



progression of these tests follow three global patterns: collaborative, parallel and asymmetric. She further argues that there was a strong relationship between pattern type and the scores students received on the tests, with collaborative participants receiving higher scores than the other types. This is reflected in our own study, where test-takers in the short-prompt tests would often express their own opinions toward the prompt rather than address or remark on what had just been stated before by their interlocutor. Although ratings did not directly factor into our analysis, it was clear to us that this style of topic development required less interactional competence than effectively tying responses in earlier turns in situ. Galaczi's work provides a comprehensive and statistically grounded look at dyadic conversation test interaction and should prove valuable to anyone interested in the subject.

**Goodwin, C. (1980). Restarts, pauses, and the achievement of a state of mutual gaze at turn-beginning. *Sociological Inquiry*, 50(3–4), 272–302.**

Within the field of conversation analysis research, few researchers are as prolific and influential as Charles Goodwin. In one of his relatively lesser-cited papers, [Goodwin \(1980\)](#) explores how interactants engaged in turns at talk achieve a framework of mutual orientation. Analysing a collection of cases, he observes that speakers will often begin a TCU while a recipient is not gazing toward them. Partway through its production, the recipient's gaze moves to the speaker and once mutual gaze is secured the speaker restarts their sentence without bringing the original to completion. From this he asserts that establishing the gaze of a recipient is preferred and a way of displaying *proper hearership*. Applying this to the current chapter, it is clear that the prevalent gaze patterns in the long-prompt tests are indeed problematic. By spending so much time gazing toward the artefacts in the environment both during turn production and reciprocity, the test-takers are engaged in a dispreferred behaviour that can greatly impact how their communication skills are perceived. Using video-recordings as data and a novel transcription scheme that temporally captures gaze, [Goodwin \(1980\)](#) is still a very relevant read to those interested in gaze and turn-taking practices.

**Hazel, S., & Mortensen, K. (2019). Designedly incomplete objects as elicitation tools in classroom interaction. In D. Day and J. Wagner (eds.). *Objects, bodies and work practices* (pp. 216–249). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.**

[Koshik \(2002\)](#) documents an interactional practice she terms “designedly incomplete utterances”: Teachers elicit student participation by formulating a turn that is grammatically unfinished and upwardly intoned, and thus invites the students to co-complete the turn. In this chapter, Hazel and Mortensen extend on Koshik's research by examining how such questioning is carried out in classrooms through the use of inscribed objects, such as a cloze activity

on a written handout or co-constructively via emergent handwritten notes on a whiteboard. It is not simply the graphic layout of the text that marks it as incomplete, but also the participants' sequentially occasioned joint attention to that absence through the practices of talk that publicly treat that absence as something to be completed, and by extension remembered. As is the case in the analysis in our chapter, written elements that make up the interactional ecology are conscripted into the talk in order to achieve momentary local purposes.

## Notes

## References

- Aaltonen, T., Arminen, I., & Raudaskoski, S. (2014). Photo sharing as a joint activity between an aphasic speaker and others. In M. Nevile, P. Haddington, T. Heinemann, & M. Rauniomaa (Eds.), *Interacting with objects: Language, materiality and social activity* (pp. 125–144). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ahmadi, A., & Montasseri, Z. (2019). Interactional competence in paired vs. group oral tests. *Teaching English Language*, 13(1), 1–26. Retrieved from [www.teljournal.org/article\\_86905.html](http://www.teljournal.org/article_86905.html)
- Akhondi, M. (2007). *Effect of prompt length on student's speaking performance and use of target vocabulary*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universiti Putra, Malaysia. Retrieved from [http://psasir.upm.edu.my/id/eprint/5495/1/FPP\\_2007\\_3.pdf](http://psasir.upm.edu.my/id/eprint/5495/1/FPP_2007_3.pdf)
- Akhondi, M., Malayeri, F. A., & Samad, A. (2010). Assessing speaking: Manipulating the facet of the length of prompt in an oral proficiency interview setting. *Iranian EFL Journal*, 6(3), 86–108.
- Alfonzetti, G. (1998). The conversational dimension in code-switching between Italian and dialect in Sicily. In S. J. Sigman (Ed.), *Codes-switching in conversation: Language, interaction and identity* (pp. 180–211). London: Routledge.
- Beach, W. A. (1995). Conversation analysis: “Okay” as a clue for understanding consequentiality. In S. J. Sigman (Ed.), *The consequentiality of communication* (pp. 121–61). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Brooks, L. (2009). Interacting in pairs in a test of oral proficiency: Interaction in a paired speaking test: Constructing a better performance. *Language Testing*, 26(3), 341–366.
- Broth, M., Laurier, E., & Mondada, L. (Eds.). (2014). *Studies of video practices: Video at work*. London: Routledge.
- Brown, A., Iwashita, N., & McNamara, T. (2005). *An examination of rater orientations and test-taker performance on English for academic purposes speaking tasks*. Monograph Series MS-29. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from [www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-05-05.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-05-05.pdf)

## 10 General and explicit test prompts

- Button, G., & Casey, N. (1984). Generating topic: The use of topic initial elicitors. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action* (pp. 167–190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Button, G., & Casey, N. (1985). Topic nomination and topic pursuit. *Human Studies*, 8, 3–55.
- Carroll, D. (2005). *Co-constructing competence: Turn construction and repair in novice-to-novice second language interaction*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, UK.
- Davis, L. (2009). The influence of interlocutor proficiency in a paired oral assessment. *Language Testing*, 26(3), 367–396.
- Day, D., & Mortensen, K. (in press). Inscribed objects in professional practice. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice*.
- Depperman, A., Schmitt, R., & Mondada, L. (2010). Agenda and emergence: Contingent and planned activities in a meeting. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(6), 1700–1718.
- Ducasse, A. M., & Brown, A. (2009). Assessing paired orals: Raters' orientation to interaction. *Language Testing*, 26(3), 423–443.
- Egyud, G., & Glover, P. (2001). Readers respond. Oral testing in pairs-secondary school perspective. *ELT journal*, 55(1), 70–76.
- Galaczi, E. D. (2008). Peer – Peer interaction in a speaking test: The case of the first certificate in English examination. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 5(2), 89–119.
- Gibson, J. (1979). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Goodwin, C. (1980). Restarts, pauses, and the achievement of a state of mutual gaze at turn- beginning. *Sociological Inquiry*, 50(3–4), 272–302.
- Goodwin, C. (1981). *Conversational organization: Interaction between speakers and hearers*. New York: Academic Press.
- Goodwin, C. (1994). Professional vision. *American Anthropologist*, 96(3), 606–633.
- Goodwin, C. (2013). The co-operative, transformative organization of human action and knowledge. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 46, 8–23.
- Goodwin, C. (2018). *Co-operative action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Greer, T. (2016). On doing Japanese awe in English talk. In G. Kasper & M. Prior (Eds.), *Emotion in multilingual settings* (pp. 111–130). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Greer, T. (2019). Initiating and delivering news of the day: Interactional competence as joint- development. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 146, 150–164.
- Greer, T., Bussinguer, V., Butterfield, J., & Mischinger, A. (2009). Receipt through repetition. *JALT Journal*, 31(1), 5–34.
- Greer, T., Ishida, M., & Tateyama, Y. (Eds.). (2017). *Interactional competence in Japanese as an additional language*. Honolulu, HI: National Foreign Language Resource Center.
- Greer, T., & Leyland, C. (2018). Naming an activity: Arriving at recognitionals in team-teacher planning talk. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 126, 52–67.

## 10 General and explicit test prompts

- Greer, T., & Leyland, C. (in press). Inscribed objects as resources for achieving progressivity in lesson planning talk. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice*.
- Greer, T., & Potter, H. (2008). Turn-taking practices in multi-party EFL oral proficiency tests. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(3), 297–320.
- Hall, J. K., Hellermann, J., & Pekarek Doehler, S. (Eds.). (2011)[RefCheck1]. *L2 interactional competence and development*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Hauser, E. (2008). Nonformal institutional interaction in a conversation club: Conversation partners' questions. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5, 275–295.
- Hayashi, M. (2009). Marking a “noticing of departure” in talk: Eh-prefaced turns in Japanese conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(10), 2100–2129.
- Heath, C. (1983). Interactional participation: The coordination of gesture, speech and gaze. In V. D'Urso & P. Leonardi (Eds.), *Discourse analysis and natural rhetoric* (pp. 85–97). Padova: Cleup Editore.
- Heath, C. (1986). *Body movement and speech in medical interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, C., Hindmarsh, J., & Luff, P. (2010). *Video in qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Holt, E. (2010). The last laugh: Shared laughter and topic termination. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(6), 1513–1525.
- Iwashita, N. (1998). The validity of the paired interview format in oral performance assessment. *Melbourne Papers in Language Testing*, 5(2), 51–65.
- Jefferson, G. (1984). On stepwise transition from talk about a trouble to inappropriately next- positioned matters. In J. Heritage & J. M. Atkinson (Eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 191–222). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jefferson, G. (1993). Caveat speaker: Preliminary notes on recipient topic-shift implicature. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 26(1), 1–30.
- Jefferson, G. (2004). Glossary of transcription symbols with an introduction. In G. Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation* (pp. 13–31). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kasper, G. (2013)[RefCheck2]. Managing task uptake in oral proficiency interviews. In S. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 258–287). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kendon, A. (1970). Movement coordination in social interaction. *Acta Psychologica*, 29, 100–125.
- Kormos, J. (1999). Simulating conversations in oral-proficiency assessment: A conversation analysis of role plays and non-scripted interviews in language exams. *Language Testing*, 16(2), 163–188.
- Koshik, I. (2002). Designedly incomplete utterances: A pedagogical practice for eliciting knowledge displays in error correction sequences. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 35(3), 277–309.
- Lam, D. M. (2016). Contriving authentic interaction: Task implementation and engagement in school-based speaking assessment in Hong Kong. In G. Yu

## 10 General and explicit test prompts

- & Y. Jin (Eds.), *Assessing Chinese learners of English* (pp. 38–60). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lam, D. M. (2018). What counts as “responding”? Contingency on previous speaker contribution as a feature of interactional competence. *Language Testing*, 35(3), 377–401.
- Lazaraton, A. (1997). Preference organization in oral proficiency interviews. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 30, 53–72.
- Lazaraton, A. (2002). *A qualitative approach to the validation of oral language tests*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Majlesi, A. R. (2014). Finger dialogue: The embodied accomplishment of learnables in instructing grammar on a worksheet. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 64, 35–51.
- May, L. (2009). Co-constructed interaction in a paired speaking test: The rater’s perspective. *Language Testing*, 26(3), 397–421.
- May, L., Nakatsuhara, F., Lam, D., & Galaczi, E. (2019). Developing tools for learning oriented assessment of interactional competence: Bridging theory and practice. *Language Testing*, 37(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532219879044>
- McNeill, D. (1985). So you think gestures are nonverbal? *Psychological Review*, 92(3), 350–371.
- Mondada, L. (2006a). Participants’ online analysis and multimodal practices: Projecting the end of the turn and the closing of the sequence. *Discourse Studies*, 8(1), 117–129.
- Mondada, L. (2006b). Video recording as the reflexive preservation and configuration of phenomenal features for analysis. In H. Knoblauch, B. Schnettler, J. Raab, & H. G. Soeffner (Eds.), *Video analysis* (pp. 51–68). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Mondada, L. (2018). Multiple temporalities of language and body in interaction: Challenges for transcribing multimodality. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 51(1), 85–106.
- Mondada, L. (2019). Contemporary issues in conversation analysis: Embodiment and materiality, multimodality and multisensoriality in social interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 145, 47–62.
- Sacks, H. (1967). *The search for help: No one to turn to*. Doctoral dissertation, ProQuest Information & Learning.
- Sacks, H. (1992). *Harvey Sacks: Lectures on conversation*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Sandlund, E., & Sundqvist, P. (2011). Managing task-related trouble in L2 oral proficiency tests: Contrasting interaction data and rater assessment. *NOVITAS-ROYAL*, 5(1), 91–120.
- Sandlund, E., & Sundqvist, P. (2013). Diverging task orientations in L2 oral proficiency tests – A conversation analytic approach to participant understandings of pre-set discussion tasks. *Nordic Journal of Modern Language Methodology*, 2(1).
- Sandlund, E., Sundqvist, P., & Nyroos, L. (2016). Testing L2 talk: A review of empirical studies on second-language oral proficiency testing. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 10(1), 14–29.

## 10 General and explicit test prompts

- Seedhouse, P. (2013). Oral proficiency interviews as varieties of interaction. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 199–219). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Seedhouse, P., & Harris, A. (2011). Topic development in the IELTS speaking test. *IELTS Research Reports*, 12.
- Seo, M. S., & Koshik, I. (2010). A conversation analytic study of gestures that engender repair in ESL conversational tutoring. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(8), 2219–2239.
- Sidnell, J., & Stivers, T. (Eds.). (2013). *The handbook of conversation analysis*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Strömmer, M. (2016). Affordances and constraints: Second language learning in cleaning work. *Multilingua*, 35(6), 697–721.
- Svennevig, J. (2012). The agenda as resource for topic introduction in workplace meetings. *Discourse Studies*, 14(1), 53–66.
- Svinhufvud, K., & Vehviläinen, S. (2013). Papers, documents, and the opening of an academic supervision encounter. *Text & Talk*, 33(1), 139–166.
- Taylor, L. (2001). The paired speaking test format: Recent studies. *Cambridge ESOL Research Notes*, 6.
- van Lier, L. (2000). From input to affordance: Social-interactive learning from an ecological perspective. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 245–260). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Youn, S. J. (2020). Managing proposal sequences in role-play assessment: Validity evidence of interactional competence across levels. *Language Testing*, 37(1), 76–106.

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed review on interaction in L2 testing see Sandlund, Sundqvist and Nyroos (2016).

<sup>2</sup> This percentage represents the average time participants spent gazing at the cards during a representative selection of clips from our collection.

<sup>3</sup> The participants often treated the incorporation of textbook phrases as laughable, but not the repetition of the words on the prompt cards.