Conversation analysis, conversational style and preference structure
spoken interaction (governed by two principles: speakers cooperate and take turns)
Some important terms for conversation analysis:
floor - turn - turn-taking - floor-holding devices - local management system - transition relevance place - overlap (overlapping speech) - simultaneous speech - backchannels (backchannel signals/backchannelling) - pause - attributable silence - conversational style - high involvement style - high considerateness style - adjacency pair - first part - second part - insertion sequence - question-answer sequence - preference structure - preferred and dispreferred social acts - preface - hesitation

attributable silence:

1. Jane: *Dave I'm going to the store.*
   (2 seconds)
   Jane: *Dave?*
   (2 seconds)
   Jane: *Dave - is something wrong*?
   Dave: *What? What's wrong*?
   Jane: *Never mind*.

floor-holding devices:
2a. *There are three points I'd like to make - first ...*
  b. *There's more than one way to do this - one example would be ...*
  c. *Did you hear about Cindy's new car? - she got it in ...*

adjacency pairs:
There are many almost automatic patterns in the structure of conversation.

	FIRST PART	SECOND PART
3.	A: *What's up*?	B: *Nothing much*.
	A: *How's it going*?	B: *Jus' hangin' in there*.
	A: *How are things*?	B: *The usual*.
	A: *How ya doin'*?	B: *Can't complain*.
4.	A: *What time is it*?	B: *About eight-thirty*.
	A: *Thanks*.	B: *You're welcome*.
	A: *Could you help me with this*? B: *Sure*.	

insertion sequence:
5. Jean: *Could you mail this letter for me*?   (Q1 - Request)
   Fred: *Does it have a stamp on*?   (Q2)
   Jean: *Yeah*.   (A2)
   Fred: *Okay*.   (A1 - Acceptance)

6.	FIRST PART	SECOND PART	
		PREFERRED	DISPREFERRED
	Assessment	agree	disagree
	Invitation	accept	refuse
	Offer	accept	decline
	Proposal	agree	disagree
	Request	accept	refuse

	FIRST PART	**SECOND PART**
7a.	*Can you help me?*	*Sure.*
b.	*Want some coffee?*	*Yes, ple*ase.
c.	*Maybe we could go for a walk.*	*That'd be great.*

restatement of assessment in order to avoid silence:

8. Sandy:	*But I'm sure they'll have good food there.*
	(2 seconds)
Sandy:	*Hmm - I guess the food isn't great.*
Jack:	*Nah - people mostly go for the music.*

hesitations and prefaces in dispreferred second parts:

9. Becky:	*Come over for some coffee later.*
Wally:	*Oh - eh - I'd love to - but you see - I - I'm supposed to get this finished - you know.*

Preference structure

Adjacency pairs represent social actions. Not all social actions are equal when they occur as **second parts of some pairs**, some are preferred and some are dispreferred. For example, an acceptance is structurally more likely than a refusal. This structural likelihood is called preference. The term is used to indicate a socially determined structural pattern. **Preference structure** divides second parts into **preferred** (the structurally expected next acts) and **dispreferred** (the structurally unexpected next acts).

In any adjacency pair, **silence** in the second part is always an indication of a dispreferred response. Silence as a response is risky since it can be regarded as non-participation in the conversational structure.

How to do a dispreferred second	**Examples**
1. delay/hesitate	pause; *er; em; ah,*
2. preface	*well; oh*
3. express doubt	*I'm not sure; I don't know*
4. token Yes	*that's great; I'd love to*
5. apology	*I'm sorry; what a pity*
6. mention obligation	*I must do X; I'm expected in Y*
7. appeal for understanding	*you see; you know*
8. make it non-personal	*everybody else; out there*
9. give an account	*too much work; no time left*
10. use mitigators	*really; mostly; sort of; kinda*
11. hedge the negative	*I guess not; not possible*

From a pragmatic perspective, the expression of a preferred act clearly represents closeness and quick connection, while the expression of a dispreferred represents distance and lack of connection.

Some symbols from *A Corpus of English Conversation*:

A,B,C	speaker identity (surreptitious speaker – doesn't know about recording)
a,b,c	speaker identity (non-surreptitious speaker)
* yes *	simultaneous talk
(laughs)	contextual comment
<<yes>>	incomprehensible words
.. ·_ _ _ ·	pauses