



# Do not interrupt while I am speaking: Interruption Design in Everyday Chinese Conversations

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## Introduction

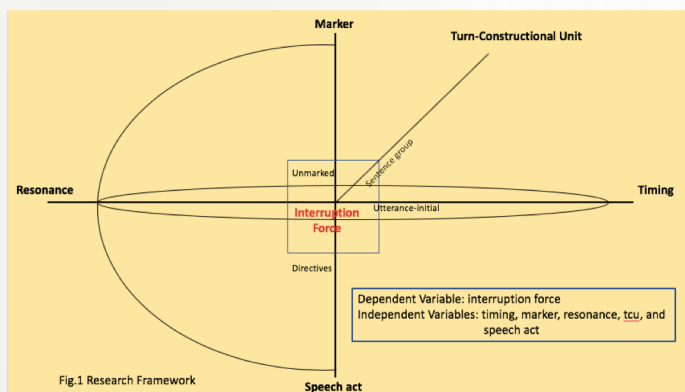
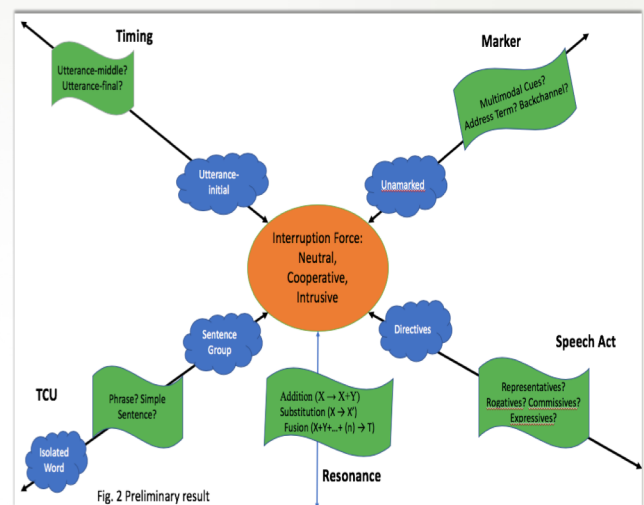
Conversational interruption is regarded as utterances initiated before the completion point of the current speaker (Zimmerman & West, 1975). As a form of simultaneous talk, interruption widely occurs in natural conversations such as talk among friends and family members. Since its violation against the one-speaker-at-a-time turn-taking rule proposed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), interruption has long been identified as an index of male and power dominance (Beattie, 1981; O'Reilly, 2008; Hutchby, 2008). However, interruption is not merely a sequential act but an interactional and moral evaluation by interactants and some linguistic and social parameters may have their play in how interruption is evaluated and measured. The current study aims at statistically designing a model to indicate the force of doing interruption from both linguistics variables and social variables, the former being **interruption timing**, **interruption marker**, **turn-constructual units**, **resonance**, and **illocutionary force**, the latter being gender, and social roles.

## Method

The force of doing interruption is classified as being neutral (minimal listener response, and clarifications to address the immediate communicative needs), cooperative (address the interruptee's positive face wants to show agreement and affiliation), and intrusive (threaten the interruptee's positive face want to show disagreement and disaffiliation). The independent variables that may exert an influence of the working of interruption force are interruption timing, interruption marker, TCU, resonance and other social factors. I will use 120 telephone conversations in Callhome Mandarin Chinese corpus to annotate the interruption turns and then use R language functions such as Conditional Inference Tree, Multiple Correspondence Analysis, and Logistic Regression to produce a model that indicates each weight of each variable to the final making of interruption force.

## Result

I currently finish designing its research framework and turn to data collection and annotation, so at this moment I cannot present a desirable model of interruption force statistically indicative of all the five variables. I can only report some single linear relation between the interruption force and subcategories in each variable. (Fig. 2)



For further information on  
timing, markers, TCU, resonance,  
and speech act, please scan:



Notes: The visualization of the relationship between interruption force and the five independent variables is inspired by Hart (2015).

## Literature cited

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