

TURN-TAKING STRATEGY ANALYSIS IN DANGER MOUSE SERIES 2 EPISODE 56 (2017)

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the turn taking strategies employed in the animated show Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56 (2017). Using a qualitative descriptive method, the researchers transcribed the episode and applied Stenström's framework to identify the types of the turn taking strategies, including taking the turn, holding the turn, and yielding the turn. The findings reveal that various strategies are used to manage conversational flow, such as clean starts, uptakes, interruptions, pauses, and repetitions. These strategies help express character emotions and interactional dynamics, even in a fictional context. The result shows that the dialogue mirrors real life spoken interactions, indicating that turn taking strategies are essential in building coherent and engaging conversations in animated storytelling. The study concludes that turn taking mechanisms in fictional narratives can effectively reflect natural language use, enhancing both character development and narrative clarity.*

Keywords: *Pragmatics, Turn-Taking Strategies, Stenström.*

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is a part of language study that focuses on how people understand meaning based on context. As Yule (1996) explains, pragmatics helps us learn how people make sense of each other in communication. It is not only about what the words say, but also about what the¹ speaker means in different situations. For example, if someone says "It's cold in here," they might not just be stating a fact but asking someone to close a window. This shows how important context is when people talk with others. In everyday conversation, pragmatics helps us understand indirect language and the speaker's real intention.

This naturally connects how communication is widely recognized as the key to maintaining and nurturing human relationships. It serves as the foundation for understanding, connection, and cooperation among individuals. Communication can mean that people are talking with each other and as a form of sociability (Ashidiq & Sariyati, 2022). Whether in personal, social, or professional settings, effective communication allows people to express their thoughts, share emotions, resolve conflicts, and build trust. Without it, misunderstandings and disconnection can easily arise, weakening the bonds between people. According to Rofi'i and Nurhidayat (2019), as cited by Noval, Athallah & Pujiati (2022), the understanding of information by both the messenger and the receiver is a sign of effective communication. As such, effective communication is essential, as people have long agreed, to sustain and strengthen relationships with others.

Communication is closely tied to the study of pragmatics because pragmatics focuses on how meaning is constructed and understood in real-life interactions. This type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said (Yule, 1996). It's helping us to understand how people achieve successful communication even when the language used is indirect or incomplete. For example, when someone says, "It's cold in here," they might not just be stating a fact. Pragmatically, they could be requesting someone to close a window or turn up the heater. Thus, pragmatics is appealing because it's about how people make sense of each other linguistically (Yule, 1996). Major concepts within pragmatic theory include speech acts, deixis, implicature and conversation analysis or as we know, turn-taking system.

Turn-taking system describes the way participants in a conversation exchange speaking in a respectful and organized way. It facilitates smooth communication by preventing people talking over each other or leaving long pauses. According to Ghilzai and Baloch (2016) as cited by Noval, Athallah & Pujiati (2022), Turn-taking refers to the exchange of turns between a speaker and a listener, or someone taking over a simultaneous conversation. The turn-taking system ensures that all participants in a conversation have the opportunity to speak and be heard, maintaining a balanced and cooperative exchange of ideas. As highlighted by Rosanti and Mulyani (2023), the goal of a conversation is for each person to have a turn talking about a particular topic. It is crucial that both the speaker, as well as the listener, are aware of the topic to be discussed. This highlights the importance of mutual understanding and active participation in conversations to achieve effective communication.

In the conversation from Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56, turn taking happens at certain points called Transition Relevant Places (TRPs)—these are natural pauses where one speaker can stop and another can start talking. For example, when someone finishes a sentence, runs out of things to say, or takes a breath, it gives a chance for someone else to talk. As explained in Mey (2001), “all those points in conversation are places where a natural ‘transition’, a relay of the right to speak to the next speaker, may occur.” According to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) as cited by Rivai (2019), there are three main rules for turn taking. The first following guidelines for taking turns are first, the current speaker has the right to speak when the next speaker chooses them. Second, if the current speaker does not choose the next speaker, anyone can speak next. This is known as “self-selection”. Third, if the speaker does not choose the next speaker or if “self-selection” does not exist, the current speaker may resume speaking. This means that a speaker can suggest turn-taking in a variety of ways during face-to-face communication. Stenström (1994), as explained by Noval et al. (2022), said that there are three main ways people take turns in conversations: taking the turn, holding the turn, and yielding the turn. This system is very helpful in keeping the conversation clear and fair for everyone.

Taking the turn happens when someone starts speaking or jumps into a conversation. According to Stenström (1994), this can be done in three main ways: starting up, taking over, or interrupting. Starting up happens when a speaker begins a new turn, either with a clean, confident start or a hesitant one using fillers. Taking over involves joining the conversation by responding to or building on what someone just said, often using linkers. On the other hand, interrupting happens when a speaker breaks in before the other person has finished using alerts or metacomments. Stenström (1994) said that taking the turn may be tricky since some turns clearly respond to or build on what was said before, while others may introduce unrelated ideas. For example, the following beginnings such as,

- a. “yes I DID know once a FRENCHMAN,”
- b. “well really I I’m just SAYING that...,”
- c. “but OFFICIALLY.. He never changed”

These examples show how speakers use certain phrases at the beginning of their turn such as yes, well really, or but to express disagreement, doubt, or clarification in conversation. Some responses stay on the same topic, while others shift away. Some make the connection to the previous statement obvious, while others are more indirect. Understanding these choices helps us see how people negotiate meaning and manage disagreement in everyday talks. Another example from Tango and Afriana (2024) found in their study of The Ellen Show that Will Smith and Ellen often used ways like clean starts and interruptions to take their turn in a fun natural way. This shows that taking the turn helps keep the conversation going and makes it more interesting.

Holding the turn is when someone keeps talking because they are not done yet. Stenström (1994) explains that this strategy is used by the speaker in order to avoid getting interrupted, especially when the speaker is still thinking about what to say next. To hold

the turn, Stenström (1994) divide into several techniques such as filled pauses and verbal fillers, which signal that they are thinking and intend to continue. Speakers may also use silent pauses, placed at moments where the sentence feels incomplete, to signal more is coming. Another common strategy is repetition, where the speaker repeats a word or part of a sentence to buy time. Finally, when a speaker gets stuck might do a new start—abandoning the sentence and starting again with a different structure. For example:

Speaker A: Uhm, uhh, there was no damage done at all— they had, uh, the guy had obviously—uhm, uh...

Speaker B: Sorry, just a minute, David.

Based on the conversation example above, speaker A tries to hold the turn using several strategies. The filled pauses (“uhm”, “uh”) show hesitation while thinking, and the silent pauses (represented by dashes) are placed mid-sentence to signal that the speaker hasn’t finished. There’s also a new start, as the speaker shifts from “they had..” to “the guy had obviously...”, showing a change in sentence direction to keep talking. While there is no clear repetition of the same word here, the restart indicates the speaker is rephrasing to stay in control. Despite these strategies, speaker B interrupts, indicating that the turn-holding effort was unsuccessful. This illustrates that such strategies may not always be effective, especially when the listener interprets the pause as a possible turn-transition point. Another example, In the Cinderella movie, Gupta and Rustipa (2021) found that the stepmother used pauses and repeated words to keep her turn and finish what she wanted to say. This helps listeners know that the speaker is still talking and needs more time.

Yielding the turn means giving the other person a chance to speak. According to Stenström (1994), This can be done in three ways: prompting, appealing, or giving up. Prompting occurs when the speaker uses certain speech acts—such as asking a question, making a request, or offering something—that strongly invite a response. Appealing is when the speaker uses expressions to gently signal that a response is expected. Lastly, giving up is when the speaker either finishes their thought or stops speaking, often pausing to indicate that the listener may now take the floor. Stenström also notes that this strategy may happen willingly or unwillingly, depending on the situations and what the speaker wants to say. The speaker may give up their turn by using certain expressions. This can be seen in the example where,

Speaker C: “Well, have we decided then, the grand tour?”

Speaker B: “Yes.”

Speaker A: “You’re staying here, are you?”

Speaker C: “Yes, we’ve got to do a grand tour.”

In this case, speaker A asks a clear question (“you’re staying here, are you?”), which pushes the listener to respond. Speaker C does not reply to B’s earlier short answer but instead responds directly to A’s question. This shows that questions are powerful ways to take the next turn, as they naturally expect an answer. As a result, the flow of the conversation shifts from B to A, showing how this example shows how speakers can yield the turn by using prompting acts such as questions. Another example shown by Ashidiq and Sariyati (2022) found that Warren Buffet’s interview showed good examples of this, like using question tags or short pauses to let others talk next. This kind of turn-taking helps make conversations more polite and respectful.

Turn taking is closely connected to how language is used in spoken discourse because it shows how people manage their conversation, especially when they speak one after another. It’s evident that not only in daily conversation, Ghilzai and Baloch (2016) notes that turn-taking has been witnessed in official and conversational settings such as conferences, speeches, debates, and talk shows. Furthermore, the turn-taking system can also commonly be found in fictional dialogues such as cartoon series.

To understand turn-taking more clearly, this study looks at how the characters speak to each other in Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56. This cartoon was chosen because it uses

simple and casual English, similar to everyday conversations. Even though it is an animated show, the way the characters talk often reflects how people speak in real life. Based on the background explanation, the research problem statements in this study are:

1. What kind of turn taking strategy occurs in conversations in Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56?
2. How turn taking strategy occurred in the conversation Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56?

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative method to analyze turn taking strategies used in Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56. The episode was selected because it features casual spoken English in an animated context, making it a good source for studying how characters manage conversation in a fun and relatable way. The data for this study were obtained from the cartoon video, which was watched and transcribed by the official BBC website. According to Given (2008), qualitative research is used to systematically describe and understand the meaning of non numerical data. Similarly, Mayring (2004) describes qualitative research as a rule based process that involves organizing and interpreting language data carefully. To analyze the data, this study used Stenström's (1994) theory to find the types of turn taking, and Mey's (2001) theory to explain how and why the turn taking happened in the conversation. This analysis helps explain how the characters manage their conversation and how the dialogue flows in a natural and organized way, even within an animated setting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Types of Turn Taking Strategy.

Table 1: Types of Turn Taking Strategy.				
No	Types of Turn Taking Strategy		Qty	
1.	Taking the turn	Starting up	Clean start	2
			Hesitant start	-
		Take over	Link	1
			Uptakes	1
		Interrupting	Alert	1
			Metacomments	-
2.	Holding the turn	Silent pause		1
		Filled pause		2
		Repetition		1
		New start		1
3.	Yielding the turn	Prompting		1

Appealing	-
Giving up	1
Total	12

A. Taking The Turn

In conversations, “taking the turn” refers to when a speaker begins or takes over a speaking role in interaction. As described by Stenström (1994), this can happen in several ways: starting up (clean start or hesitant start), taking over (uptake or link), or interrupting (alert or metacomments). In the episode Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56, the characters often take the turn in natural and funny ways. Even though it’s a cartoon, the way they speak reflects how people talk in real life.

Datum 1

Clean start (00:48-00:57)

Penfold

It's a bit early for all this, isn't it, Chief? I haven't even had my porridge

Danger Mouse

Evil doesn't have a snooze button, Penfold!

For context, the reason why Danger Mouse said that above, it’s because there’s already a problem waiting to be saved early in the morning which causes Penfold to complain by saying that he hasn’t eaten his breakfast.

This data is part of clean start because Danger Mouse begins his speech clearly and confidently without using any hesitation markers like “well,” “uh,” or pauses. He immediately takes the turn and delivers a complete statement, showing that he had already planned what to say. This type of clean start indicates a well prepared and assertive speaker, which fits Danger Mouse’s brave and action focused personality. Also, this line shows that it occurs during urgent situations when the character needs to act quickly and maintain control of the conversation.

Datum 2

Clean Start (01:56-02:08)

Penfold

Bernard?

Snuggles jumps off Nelson’s Column onto a rainbow pony and swings Bernard up behind him. They gallop off.

Danger Mouse steps up, watching them go.

Danger Mouse

Let me handle it, Penfold. I know who's behind this...

For context, Danger Mouse and Penfold just encounter a new problem after looking at Snuggles stealing Penfold’s teddy bear, Bernard.

In this data, Danger Mouse again uses a clean start by starting his turn smoothly, without delay or verbal fillers. He jumps directly into action with a clear intention, showing no signs of hesitation. This line is structured and purposeful, meaning he was ready to speak and take control of the situation. This type of turn taking reflects his leadership role and supports the fast paced nature of the scene.

Datum 3

Uptake (06:40-06:48)

Professor Squawkencluck

(INCOMPREHENSIBLE BABBLE)

Danger Mouse

Sorry Professor, what was that?...

Penfold

I think she's speaking Spanish.

For context, since the world seems to be in danger because of Snuggles, Danger Mouse tries to contact Professor Squakencluck but unfortunately, she seems to be in disbelief after knowing that her partner has died.

This data is an example of an uptake because Penfold responds directly to Danger Mouse's previous confusion by humorously acknowledging the professor's emotional outbursts. He doesn't wait for a full pause but smoothly takes over the turn with a short, relevant reaction. The use of "I think..." shows he's reacting thoughtfully to the ongoing conversation. This data also shows that uptakes help maintain a natural flow in conversation, especially in fast, comedic dialogues where characters build off each other's words.

Datum 4

Link (04:40-04:50)

Danger Mouse

I don't know? Get another one?

Penfold wails.

Danger Mouse

Don't worry, Penfold I'm sure dawn will convince Snuggles to put everything back to normal.

For context, Penfold here is stressing out because he over thinks that he can't get his teddy bear back. That's why Danger Mouse tries to give him a solution.

The italic sentence is a clear example of linking because it continues the conversation by logically connecting to Penfold's earlier worry about his teddy bear, Bernard. Danger Mouse uses "I'm sure..." as a reassurance, showing a cooperative and supportive turn taking move. It also helps the scene move forward by transitioning to the next plan. This data also supports by identifying linking as a turn taking strategy that helps build continuity and coherence between turns, especially when characters respond to each other's emotions or concerns.

Datum 5

Alert (03:26-03:29)

Danger Mouse

...Just needs a bit of finesse and-

Penfold (O.S)

(shouting)

Now you listen here, Missy!

For context, Danger Mouse and Penfold have already arrived at Dawn's house and in this context, Danger Mouse suddenly is called by The Colonel through some kind of teleportation communication about the problem going on in the city. Meanwhile, Penfold here is shouting at Missy reporting her teddy bear, Snuggles', behaviour.

This line is an example of interrupting using an alert, as Penfold forcefully takes the turn by saying "listen," a typical attention grabbing word used to interrupt ongoing speech. The phrase "Now you listen here" shows urgency and emotion, signaling that he doesn't want to wait for Dawn to finish speaking. This line also shows how such a strategy occurs when a character, like Penfold, feels strongly and wants to challenge or confront someone without waiting their turn.

B. Holding The Turn

In conversations, "holding the turn" means when a speaker keeps their speaking role and avoids being interrupted while the speaker continues talking. According to Stenström (1994), this can be done using different strategies: filled pauses and verbal fillers, silent pauses, repetition, or new start if the speaker gets stuck. In Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56, the characters use several of these techniques to hold the turn especially during emotional or fast paced scenes.

Datum 6

Filled Pauses (03:43-03:52)

Penfold pulls the journal off his face and reads.

Penfold

"Life is a hole. Like the darkness in my soul. I am alone. Even the charge is out on my phone."
(emotionally to camera)

For context, Dawn here tries to push Penfold away with her powers, but Penfold suddenly grabs onto her diary book, therefore he tries to read it.

Although this line is written as a poem, it reflects the function of verbal fillers or pauses through its dramatic rhythm and pacing. Penfold reads his poem with emotional pauses that mimic real life hesitation and stalling. While there are no classic fillers like "uh" or "well," the slow, reflective structure gives the speaker time to hold the floor and express vulnerability. This data supports the research by showing that even in scripted dialogue, characters use poetic pacing and stalling techniques to hold the turn when expressing deep emotion or dramatizing a moment.

Datum 7

Filled Pauses (06:51-06:58)

Danger Mouse (CONT'D)

'Professor Donkey' is gone! My life is ruined.

Danger Mouse hangs up.

Danger Mouse (CONT'D)

Looks like we're on our own, Penfo- Oh good grief.

For context, this scene is still the same as Data 3. After realizing that Danger Mouse can't rely on Professor Squakencluck by looking at her state, he hangs up the call.

This line contains a pause and shift, marked by the dash, that functions similarly to a filled pause in spoken interaction. Danger Mouse begins a statement and abruptly changes course, which mimics real conversation stalling—where the speaker needs a brief moment of hesitation to help him hold the turn while expressing surprise or frustration. It supports the research by identifying this kind of pause as a turn holding strategy, especially in fast paced animated dialogue where characters still need moments to reflect or shift tone mid sentence.

Datum 8

Silent Pause (08:59-09:20)

Danger Mouse

WAIT! I know you're both upset, but things change. People change. Teddies change!

Penfold

I don't want them to!

Danger Mouse

Not helping, Penfold... What I'm saying is, if you love something, you have to set it free!

Dawn and Snuggles look at each other, thoughtful. Beat.

For context, here Danger Mouse is trying to solve the problem by being the third person between Dawn and Snuggles, but Penfold is offended because of the word 'teddies change' since he's still stressed out about his missing teddy bear.

This line uses a strategically placed silent pause, marked by the ellipsis, to give Danger Mouse time to mentally organize his next thought while still holding control of the turn. The pause helps emphasize a shift from frustration to more thoughtful messages, showing how characters can use brief silence to manage their emotions and continue speaking. This also shows how it occurs during moments where the character needs to stay in control and deliver an important line without interruption.

Datum 9

Repetition (05:23-05:37)

Snuggles

Okay, I'll send the toys home, but only if you say 'pretty please.'

Dawn

Pr- Pr- Prrrrrr- UGH!

Dawn hair flicks, knocking Snuggles and the toys over.

For context, here Danger Mouse and Penfold successfully bring Dawn to talk to Snuggles. Dawn tries to convince Snuggles by saying sorry and to give the lost teddy bear back, but Snuggles teases her by wanting her to say 'pretty please' which makes Dawn, who is still upset at Snuggles refuses.

The italic sentence is an example of repetition as a turn holding strategy, where Dawn repeats the initial sound "Pr" in a deliberate stall. She is clearly resisting the instruction to say "pretty please," and the repeated sounds give her time to build frustration and comedic tension before finally refusing. This also shows that in this context, it helps the characters stay in control of the conversation while expressing emotion and delaying compliance.

Datum 10

New Start (05:06-05:17)

Danger Mouse

Repeat after me Dawn... "I'm really sorry I was mean to you, Snuggles. Please stop scaring people."

Penfold is in near tears and tapping Danger Mouse's arm. Danger Mouse sighs.

Danger Mouse (CONT'D)

And please give Bernard back.

For context, this scene is still the same as Data 10. In here Danger Mouse tries to give Dawn a briefing before talking to Snuggles in his hiding.

In this line, Danger Mouse makes a new start after previously coaching Dawn on what to say to Snuggles. He initially directs her to apologize, but after Penfold interrupts with concern for Bernard, Danger Mouse adjusts his speech and adds a new request: "And please give Bernard back." This shift shows real time adjustment to include Penfold's concern while still holding the turn. It also shows how new starts can be used to respond to changing context or interruptions, helping the speaker maintain coherence and control within a fast moving dialogue.

C. Yielding The Turn

In conversations, "yielding the turn" happens when a speaker gives up their speaking role and lets someone else talk. Stenström (1994) explains that this can be done in a few ways: by prompting, by appealing, or by simply giving up when they have nothing more to say. In Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56, characters often yield the turn in lively and expressive ways. These turn yielding moments, whether dramatic or humorous, reflect how people naturally signal when it's someone else's turn to speak, even in a cartoon setting.

Datum 11

Prompting (09:00-09:08)

Danger Mouse

WAIT! I know you're both upset, but things change. People change. Teddies change!

Penfold

I don't want them to!

For context, This is the same scene as Data 8, Danger Mouse is trying to solve the problem by being the third person, but Penfold is offended because of the word 'teddies change' since he's still stressed out about his missing teddy bear.

This data shows how Danger Mouse interrupts the rising tension between Dawn and Snuggles with a calming message. His words serve as a soft type of prompting, where he opens up the conversation for a more thoughtful or emotional response. Instead of directly

inviting someone to talk, he says something that makes it likely others will want to reply. This shows how prompting can be used to manage emotions and shift the tone of a scene, especially when the goal is to prevent conflict or encourage understanding.

Datum 12

Giving Up (09:59-10:16)

Snuggles and Dawn look at each other. Danger Mouse is in the middle.

Snuggles

I'M SORRY I WAS SO ANGRY!

Dawn

Me tooooo!!!!

Dawn takes the Tiara and puts it on, turning back into Pink Dawn. They hug, crushing Danger Mouse. He manages to squeeze out of the middle of their embrace.

Danger Mouse

I'll just... give you some space...

For context, Dawn and Snuggles are finally having the conversation between the two and begin to hug, meanwhile Danger Mouse is crushed between them but he manages to escape as he gives them the time they need to reconnect.

Looking at the italic line, Danger Mouse sees that Dawn and Snuggles are having an emotional moment and decides to step away. His words show that he is choosing to stop talking and let the other characters continue the scene. This is a calm and respectful example of giving up the turn, showing that sometimes a speaker needs to back away to allow others to have their own moment. It reflects how turn-taking is not only about speaking, but also knowing when to stop.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56, various turn-taking strategies are prominently used throughout the characters' conversations. The writers found that characters employ techniques for taking the turn, holding the turn, and yielding the turn. Specifically, strategies like clean starts, uptakes, links, alerts, silent pauses, filled pauses, repetitions, new starts, prompting, and giving up are all evident. These various methods illustrate how characters manage the flow of dialogue, indicating when they initiate speech, maintain their speaking turn, or pass it to another participant. The type of these strategies reveal a dynamic and structured conversational environment within the animated series.

The occurrence of these turn-taking strategies in Danger Mouse Series 2 Episode 56 not only mirrors real-life spoken interactions but also effectively supports the narrative and character development. For instance, Danger Mouse often uses clean starts to assert leadership and drive the plot forward, reflecting his confident personality. Conversely, Penfold's use of repetition and filled pauses highlights his emotional state or comedic timing, allowing him to hold the floor during moments of stress or humor. Even in a fictional and comedic context, these strategies are crucial for expressing emotions, building character dynamics, and ensuring the dialogue feels natural and engaging. This demonstrates how carefully constructed animated dialogue can effectively reflect and utilize natural language use to enhance storytelling and create a believable conversational rhythm.

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