

Prosody and the brain II: Turn-taking

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Turn-taking in conversation is a relatively under-studied domain, since studying interactive language use involving comprehension and production at the same time is challenging. All the same, it is fascinating that conversationalists can exchange turns so quickly, with only very small gaps in between. Prosodic cues in speakers' ongoing turns appear to be a good candidate for listeners to determine when the current turn is about to end, although their role has been challenged in the past (e.g., De Ruiter, Mitterer, & Enfield, 2006). In this session, I will first cover a number of non-brain imaging (experimental and corpus) studies showing the importance of final prosodic cues in determining turn ends in turn-taking. If time allows, I might also briefly describe some EEG studies looking at other aspects of the turn-taking process. I will end with an ERP study showing that the prosodic phenomenon of silence, or the timing of turn-taking, can be crucial to prepare the listener for the content of the upcoming response.