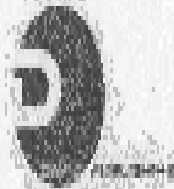


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Speaker's Cues Inviting Back Channel Responses in Spontaneous Persian Conversations

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In a conversation, one way of showing that the hearer is listening to the speaker is to produce the vocal signals which are called "BC (back channel) signals". These types of signals like "uh-uh", "hmm" and "mm" provide feedback to the current speaker that the message is being received. They also indicate that the listener is not objecting to what the speaker is saying. Although producing BC signals appears to be universal, their usage in different societies seems language specific and is tied with the culture. In particular, BC production does not rely on the sole listener. This study concerns lexical, grammatical, prosodic and semantic factors which are involved in back channeling in the Persian conversations.

Keywords: BC (back channel) signals, Persian, turn taking, conversation, feed back

Introduction

In the study of interaction between two people, it is usual to designate two parties as the speaker and the other as the hearer or the listener. The listener's role in conversations is not a passive one and during the speaker's turn, the listener shows his/her participation or understanding by producing short utterances like "hmm" or "mm". However, the main focus of studies has been on the primary speaker, as the main source of information in the conversation. Recognizing the importance of listener's role in interaction, more studies have focused on the listener. One of the first authors who noticed and described some of the interaction phenomena that nowadays we call BC (back channel) signals was Fries (1952), who analyzed a corpus of telephone conversations, in which he distinguished a set of "listener responses". Two decades later, Yngve (1970, p. 568) drew attention again to these utterances and coined the term BC:

The passing of the turn from one party to another is nearly the most obvious aspect of conversation... The distinction between having the turn or not is not the same as the traditional distinction between speaker and listener, for it is possible to speak out of turn and it is even reasonably frequent that a conversationalist speaks out of turn... because of the existence of what I call the back channel, over which the person who has the turn receives short messages such as "yes" and "uh-huh" without relinquishing the turn.

Duncan and Fiske (1977) broadened the term BC to include sentence completion, request for clarification, brief restatement and nonverbal responses, such as head nods and shakes.

It appears that BC behavior is a universal feature of human communication, but the specific BC behavior is particular to languages and cultures. Researches indicate linguistic and cultural differences in regard to the frequency, type and function of BC responses. For example, Tao and Thompson (1991) reported that English speaker had higher frequency of BC responses than Chinese speakers. White (1997) also examined the effect of Japanese versus American culture on the production of BC responses. White (1997) concluded that culture differences between the United States and Japan, regarding politeness and face concerns, are responsible for the differences in the usage and function of BC responses in American English and Japanese. Wannaruk (1997) investigated the similarities and differences in BC behavior by Thais and Americans in term of frequency, type, location and function. The data of his study revealed that Thais employed BCs more frequently than Americans, the most frequent location in both languages was at clausal units and the most frequent type was "understanding". The results of these studies show the importance of examining the differences between two languages as well as enhancing mutual understanding.

Some scholars addressed the transfer of BC behaviors in bilingual speakers. Proficient bilingual individuals have access to two language systems and cultures. Bilinguals switch from one set of codes to another just as they switch from one language to another. Heinz (2003), in examining monolingual and bilingual German speakers, found significant differences in the frequency and placement of BC responses among monolingual German speakers and monolingual American English speakers. The author also reported that native Germans who have become proficient in American English, use more BC responses and more often in overlapping positions than monolingual Germans do. These results show a contradiction of accommodation theory. Accommodation theory offers a sound framework for the study of conversational strategies in interpersonal encounters. From an accommodation perspective, it would seem that balanced bilingual speakers tend to converge with other native speakers of their first language when they engage in a friendly conversation. Within this framework, LI (2006) concerned Chinese and Canadian listeners when they talked with other Chinese or Canadian speakers and observed convergence in listeners' and speakers' BC style. LI (2010) continued his study by considering the relationship of BC responses and enjoyment of conversations in an intercultural setting. LI (2010) found a negative correlation between the frequency of BC responses and participants' self reported level of enjoyment of conversation.

Also, the function of BCs has been discussed by several researchers. For example, in her study of Japanese BC behavior, Maynard (1989) discussed six functions of Japanese BCs: (1) continuer; (2) display of understanding of content; (3) support toward the speaker's judgment; (4) agreement; (5) strong emotional response; and (6) minor addition, correction, or request for information. Gardner (1998) discussed the central canonical use of three exponents of minimal tokens: "mm", "yeah" and "mmhm". He asserted that "yeah" with falling intonation contour is an acknowledgement, "mm" is a weaker acknowledgement and "mmhm" with fall-rising intonation function is a continuer.

Rather than examining the effects of language and culture on the production of BC responses, some researchers focus on the usage of gender specific BCs. Coates (2003), in summing up various research work, stated that women are said to be more polite and more cooperative and make use of more BCs in conversation than men. Women are also believed to employ more questions as a conversational strategy. Men, on the other hand, are said to follow strategies of non-cooperation. They interrupt and take hold of the floor without regard to timing, and they are more unwilling to give support in the way of BCs. Dixon and Foster (1998) found gender differences regarding

BC usage in South African speakers. They reported that men use more supporting BC signals than women do when addressing a female audience. Their results show a contradiction of Coates' (2003). Feke (2003) employed contrastive conversation analysis to study BC responses, occurring in conversations among native English and native Spanish speakers of both sexes. The result showed a difference in the usage of BC items by males and females, and suggested a possible ranking of accommodations to the opposite sex BC style.

Furthermore, Olatéju and Kehinde (2006) examined the role of BC items in highlighting the hilarious and comic effect of Ola Rotimi's comic play *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* which is meant to ridicule the selfishness and naivety of neo-colonial politicians. They identified 20 different BC items in relation to the characters involved. Their study showed the importance of using BCs properly.

A rather large amount of research about Japanese BC has been conducted, in comparison with that concerned with other languages and in the area of acquisition research of Japanese as a second language. For example, White (1989) found that "Japanese appear to have a higher overall baseline for back channeling in daily conversation" (p. 67). BC production in Japanese is approximately twice as high as in English. Ishida (2006) also reported qualitative differences between native speakers and learners of Japanese, with regard to the interpretation of BC cues and the social context in which they are used. Miyata and Nisisawa (2007) divided Japanese BC signals into two types, namely utterance-internal and utterance-final. They observed a delay in acquisition of the utterance-internal type. Kogure (2007) indicated that Japanese speakers often nodded along with verbal BCs and exploited every communicative channel, such as nods and smiling to avoid silence. According to Kita and Ide (2007), in Japanese, final particles played an important role in eliciting BC responses, and Japanese ideology of communication and social relationships were probably motivations for BC responses. Furthermore, Japanese BCs can be divided in terms of the level of formality. For example, Angles, Nagatomi, and Nakayama (2000) discussed the function of Japanese BCs "hai", "ee" and "un" and noted that level of formality decreases in this order.

Hence, the concept of being a good listener is closely related to producing BC responses at appropriate times, but when are the times appropriate? Although the production and nonproduction of a BC is ultimately up to the listener, it has been long assumed that there are some places in the dialog where BCs are specially welcomed and these places are determined partly by the speaker who has the turn with various cues. Following this assumption, many researchers examine different cues signaling BC responses.

Ward (1996), one of the researchers who write about prosodic cues, suggested that prosodic cues in Japanese include a low pitch point, a slow volume increase, pitch increase, specific pitch contours, and onset of silence at the end of an utterance. Also, Angles et al. (2000, p. 69), in examining Japanese considered other cues, such as syntactic breaks in the sentences e.g. after a gerund ("verb-te"), a conjunctive "kedo" or "ga (but)" or verb—"kara (because)". In further studies, Ward and Al Bayyari (2007a) investigated prosodic cues for back channeling in Egyptian Arabic. They reported three prosodic cues at work in interlocutor's speech. The first strong prosodic cue is a pitch upturn at the phrasal end. The second rare prosodic cue is a low flat pitch associated with a lengthened vowel at the disfluency point. Finally a sharp pitch down slope is the most frequent cue, called "downdash". The downdash is set off from preceding and following pitch contours by sharp corners. Moreover, Ward and Al Bayyari (2007b) mentioned the importance of visual cues in turn taking and discussed that hand gestures were the most common and the best cues for back channeling.

There are some researches which provide a handful of qualitative facts for learners. One problem for the learners is to know when it is appropriate to produce BC. A learner who lacks back channeling skill can easily appear uninterested, ill informed, thoughtless, or indecisive. According to Ward, Escalante, Al Bayyari, and Solorio (2007), learning these behaviors is quite different from most language production skills. Here, the aim is to help the learners "when exactly should I say it", rather than "what should I say" or "how should I say it". Ward et al. (2007) presented training software which enables learners to acquire basic Arabic BC skills. Recently, Ward and Al Bayyari (2010) investigated the effect of an Arabic prosodic cue, a steep continuous drop in pitch, in English speakers. Their article shows that English native speakers misinterpreted this cue as something sounding like an accusation or expression of resignation, but training can alleviate this negative affect.

Most of spoken dialog systems, especially in Persian, produce no response until after the speaker finishes an utterance, in contrast, humans are very responsive. Incorporating the result of research on BC timing into these systems can be useful. Accordingly, some researchers try to improve human-computer interaction. For example, Rajan, Craig, Gholson, Person, and Graesser (2001) incorporated human-like behavior into the dialogs delivered by an animated agent. In their research, a large number of feedback items used during dialog and the system's feedback were mostly positive occurring at speech acts and noun phrase boundaries. Truong, Poppe, and Heylen (2010) suggested a rule for predicting BCs based on pitch and pause. In short, the model predicted a BC when there was a pause of a certain length that had been preceded by a falling or rising pitch. Besides, Wrede, Kopp, Rohlfing, Lohse, and Muhl (2010) argued that in order to produce sufficient feedback in human-robot interactions, a robot had to take the goal of interaction into account, involving task orientation and social orientation.

These studies on BC behavior have provided important findings, and point to the relevance of the native and non-native speakers' performance data. However, no research has been done so far to explore the proper time of back channeling in Persian.

This Study

In this study, BCs are considered as short utterances which do not take the floor. Ward and Tsukahara's (2000) definition of BC feedback seems to be applicable to this study but with a certain refinement. They define a BC signal as a response directly to the content of the utterance of the other which is optional and does not require acknowledgment by the other. Here we exclude the optional concept, because there are cases in Persian where the production of BCs is obligatory, such as the case of the pseudo-tag question discussed in Section "Lexical Factors".

BC responses, as a strategy in conversation, have never been addressed before in Persian. There seems to be several reasons for this, but the most important one is that the focuses of previous studies were on the primary speakers and the role of the listeners in conversation was neglected. Another reason as Ward (1997) mentioned is their effortless, unconscious and quick production. The purpose of this study is to examine some cues in speakers' speech which show the listener when the time is proper for back channeling.

To clarify the purpose of this paper, we suggest some study questions: (1) Is there any lexical factor as a cue for BC responses? (2) Are clausal unit and end of utterances signals of back channeling? (3) What are the prosodic cues in speaker's speech? Are high pitch and low pitch regions important cues? (4) Are semantic factors important cues of this response token?

Methods

The findings and conclusions of this research are based on the data collected from the spontaneous conversations, to allow the study of diverse dialogs and rich interaction, and to have a broader view of the time and place of BC responses. Various factors such as the participant's gender, dialect, age, relative or non-relative relationship, educational level, also topics of conversations and setting were not considered and controlled in this paper, though we were aware of the possible effects of these factors on the BC responses, because our goal in the present research was to find significant patterns revealed by the interaction rather than searching for linguistics rules or socio-cultural factors. So, the prime focus of the research is the internal organization and linguistics cues in inviting BC responses, and no attention is paid to paralinguistic factors. We think the recent subject (i.e., considering the effect of socio-cultural factors on BC responses) can be a good topic for the future researches. The corpus used in this study is 120 minutes of conversation, involving 6 conversations with 12 participants: 10 females and 2 males. Their age ranged between 23 and 45. All of the participants were native speakers of the Persian language from the different cities of Iran. In all conversations, the participants were not aware of being recorded. As a result, all of the conversations were natural. After all recordings were done, the participants were informed about the concern of the study and they were asked for permission.

All recordings had only two speakers. Recording locations included class, university, dormitory, restaurant, taxi and clinic. The relationship between conversants ranged from relatives and close friends to strangers. One of the authors was present in all conversations as a friend or a third person, but her own BC productions were excluded from the analysis. Recording was done using a digital voice recorder known as IC recorder and the conversations were uploaded to a computer for analysis. As an aid, we used the Praat software in order to analyze the prosodic features of the conversations. The analysis was done by listening directly to the data, not solely relying on transcription. By definition given in the previous section, the corpus contains 233 BC responses. The five most frequent BC responses were: "âre (yeah)", "hmm", "xob (okay)", "ee", and "hâ".

Results

In this section, we discuss different factors in speakers' utterances signaling BC responses.

Lexical Factors

As a lexical factor, we considered the role of conjunctions in back channeling in the Persian conversations, because conjunctions are words that join two or more words, phrases or clauses. They can be considered as gluing words. Contrary to Japanese, conjunctions were not an important cue in the Persian conversations. In our corpus, only in five cases the listener produced BC responses after conjunctions, but these responses were due to other factors more important than conjunctions. It seems lengthened vowel whether in conjunction, preposition or complementizers followed by a pause acts as a cue for producing BCs in Persian (see Example 1).

Example (1) A: be masxare goft am ine (pause) ba?:d (pause)

With mock said. 1st person singular¹ it.is² (pause) then (pause)

"Mockingly I said it is then"

¹ "am" is a suffix (a portmanteau morph which shows person and number) attached to the verb "goft" and it signals the agreement of the verb with the null subject.

² The vowel "e" is a short form of the linking verb "ast (is)" that is used in spoken form.

B: (laughter)

In Example 1, the speaker was laughing while speaking; the listener also laughed to show his interest in listening. We consider "laugh" as a BC, since it appears in a BC's position, and based on the definition, it is a direct response to the content of the speaker's utterance, and also it is optional and does not require acknowledgment. Here, the pause before and after the conjunction and the lengthened vowel is the cue.

Example (2) A: *ye kârte etebâri bud ke hezâr dolâr tuš³ bud bâ:*

One card credit was that thousand dollar in-it was with

"There was a credit card with one thousand dollar in it and"

B: *xob*

Okay

A: *ye čize dige ham bâ ye gušiyê aapel bâ:*

One thing other also with one cellphone Apple with

"There was another thing and an Apple cell phone and"

B: *xob*

Okay

In Example (2), the lengthened vowel is crucial in eliciting "xob" as a BC. In our corpus, five conjunctions, three prepositions, and two complementizers with lengthened vowel acted as a cue for the production of BCs.

The most important lexical factor was the use of a pseudo-tag question in the interlocutor's speech. In Persian, we do not have tag question patterns like those in English, instead there are some emphatic short questions at the end of utterances, such as "xob (okay)", "âre (yeah)", "mage na (isn't it)" that we called them "pseudo-tag questions". They are not considered as full-fledged tag questions, because these are the fixed expressions and do not change regarding different subjects or the verbs. These utterances are frequently used and when there is a pause after them, the listener must produce a kind of BC response; otherwise, the conversation would be distorted. But when there is no pause after them and the speaker continues to speak, producing a BC signal is optional.

Example (3) A: *inja ro negah kon, xob.*

here obj.marker⁴ look V. Imperative⁵, okay.

"Look at here, okay."

B: *xob*

okay

As shown in Figure 1, the BC response was produced after "xob" which functioned as a lexical cue (see Example 3). As far as analysis reveals, the production of the BC signal is optional here.

Example (4) A: *hamin dafe dobâre gofte mamanan ina mixân biyân, xob (pause)*

This time again said mother-my they want come.3rd person pl⁶, okay

"This time she said again that my mother and the others want to come, okay"

³ "tuš" is a word with two morpheme "tu (in)" and "š (it)".

⁴ "ro" is an object marker that comes after the object in the spoken Persian. In this sentence "inja" is the object.

⁵ "negâh kon" is a compound verb, consisting of a noun followed by an auxiliary verb. The auxiliary verb does not have any lexical meaning, but it has the grammatical function.

⁶ "n" also is an abbreviated suffix which shows agreement with a plural third person subject.

B: vây⁷

In Example (4), because of the pause, producing the BC response is obligatory. Of the 233 BC instances in the corpus, 34 appear after “xob (okay)”.

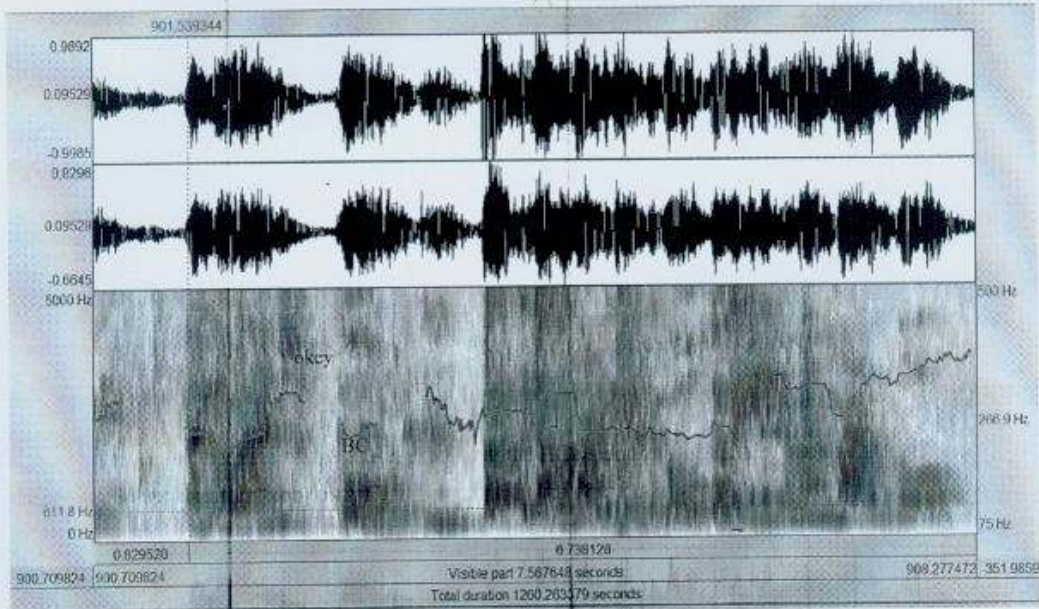


Figure 1. Prosodic counter in Example (3).

Grammatical Factors

In the Persian language, because of the existence of the object marker and rich agreement system between subject and verb, the order of the constituents is not fixed compared to English. In the written form, the great majority of the simple sentences have the SOV (subject-object-verb) word order, but in the spoken form the word order is much more flexible. Considering this point and with the exclusion of overlapping BCs⁸, almost all other BCs in our corpus were at the end of sentential or clausal units. This is, in part, because at the end of syntactic units, the semantic content is almost complete. So the listener wants to show his/her understanding or perception of these bits of information with producing BC signals.

During prosodic analysis, we understood that these syntactic units have a falling intonation and sometimes they are followed by pauses. As a result, we concluded that the grammatical completion points with a falling intonation and following pauses are important cues.

Example (5) A: čeqad mattabeš⁹ nazdik bud
How much clinic-his near was
“How near was his clinic!”

⁷ A non-lexical BC signaling surprise.

⁸ Overlapping BC is the one when speaker and the listener are speaking at the same time during the discourse for some moments, with the speaker keeping the floor.

⁹ “eš” in the word “mattabeš” is a clitic showing possession.

B: âre bâbâ

Yeah, father

"Yeah, right."

Example (6) A: ruye kabinet gozâştam. Suratiye

On cabinet put. 1st person.sing.¹⁰ past pink.is¹¹

"I put it on the cabinet. It is pink"

B: ee¹²

In Example (6), the end of the syntactic unit, "suratiye", with a falling pitch functions as a cue for BC production "ee" (see Figure 2).

Out of 233 BCs in the corpus, 147 occurred at the grammatical completion points, whether sentential or clausal. Within these 147 BCs, 112 had a falling pitch, 12 had a falling pitch followed by a pause, and 23 had a rising pitch.



Figure 2. Prosodic contour in Example (6).

Prosodic Cues

With the definition given in before, we sought for prosodic features of the speaker's utterances that preceded BCs. We found that, as in American English and Japanese, a falling pitch region is a cue which shows the listeners the time of back channeling. Thus, this raises the possibility that falling pitch region may be a universal factor in human languages for signaling BCs. But we should keep in mind that their production is optional and

¹⁰ "am", at the end of the verb, shows agreement with the null subject.

¹¹ "e" at the end of the word "surati" is a short form of the verb "ast (is)", the semivowel "y" is inserted between the vowels for phonological consideration.

¹² "ee" is a kind of non-lexical BC signaling some degree of surprise.

depends on the listener's decision.

Example (7) A: to?ârofam kardam biyân tu xune

to?ârof¹³.also make,.1st person.sing.past come.3rd person.pl¹⁴ inside house

"I asked them to come into the house"

B: xob

okay

Figure 3 shows pitch contours in Example (7). In the picture, it is shown that BC signals are preceded by a falling pitch region.

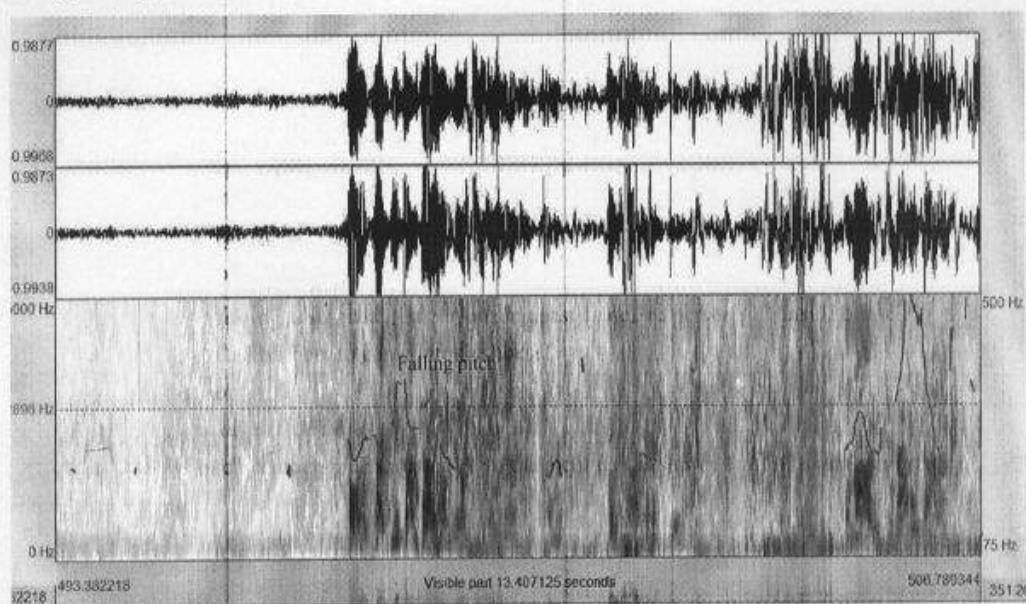


Figure 3. Pitch contour in Example (7).

Example (8) A: yani in tori nist ke begim marzeš já be já šode.

Mean it way is not that say.1st person.pl¹⁵ boundary-its place to place become

"It doesn't mean that we say its boundary has been changed."

B: hmm, âre

hmm, yeah

Example (9) A: ba:deš ye mesâl âvorde

After-that one example brought.3rd person sing. past participle

"After that he/she has mentioned one example."

B: bale

yes

¹³ There does not exist a literal translation for the word "to?ârof" in English. Making "to?ârof" is a tightly culture-dependent behavior which reflects the politeness and power relations in the Persian language community.

¹⁴ "am" and "n" show the agreement of the verbs with their null subjects.

¹⁵ "im" also shows agreement of the verb with the subject.

In Figure 4, the speaker wanted to give the floor to the listener, but the listener refused to take the turn by producing a BC feedback after a long pause.

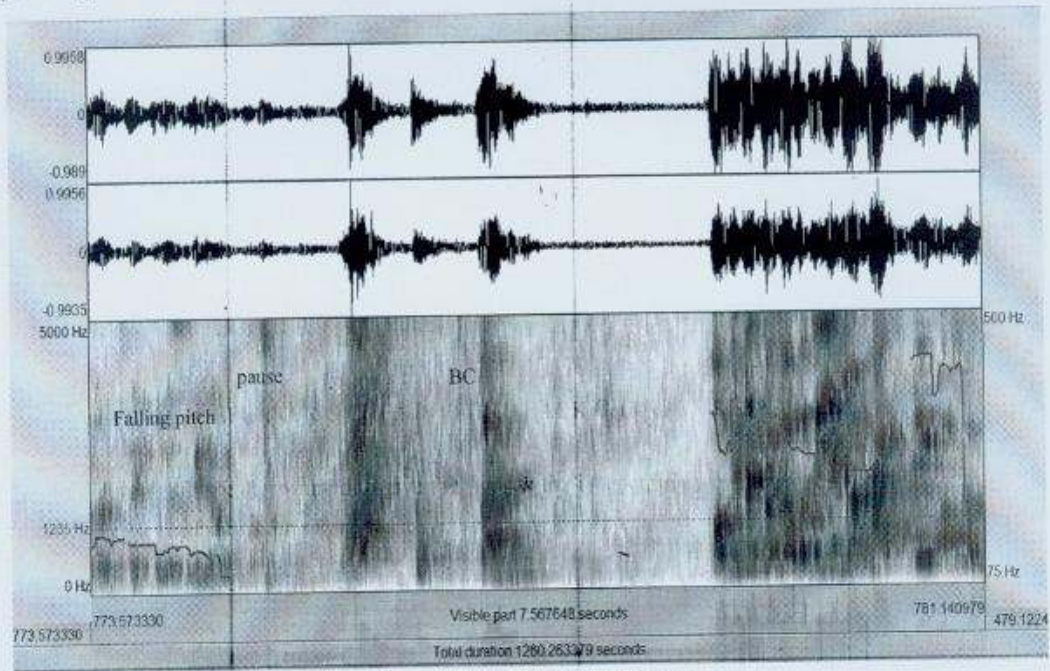


Figure 4. Pitch contour in Example (9).

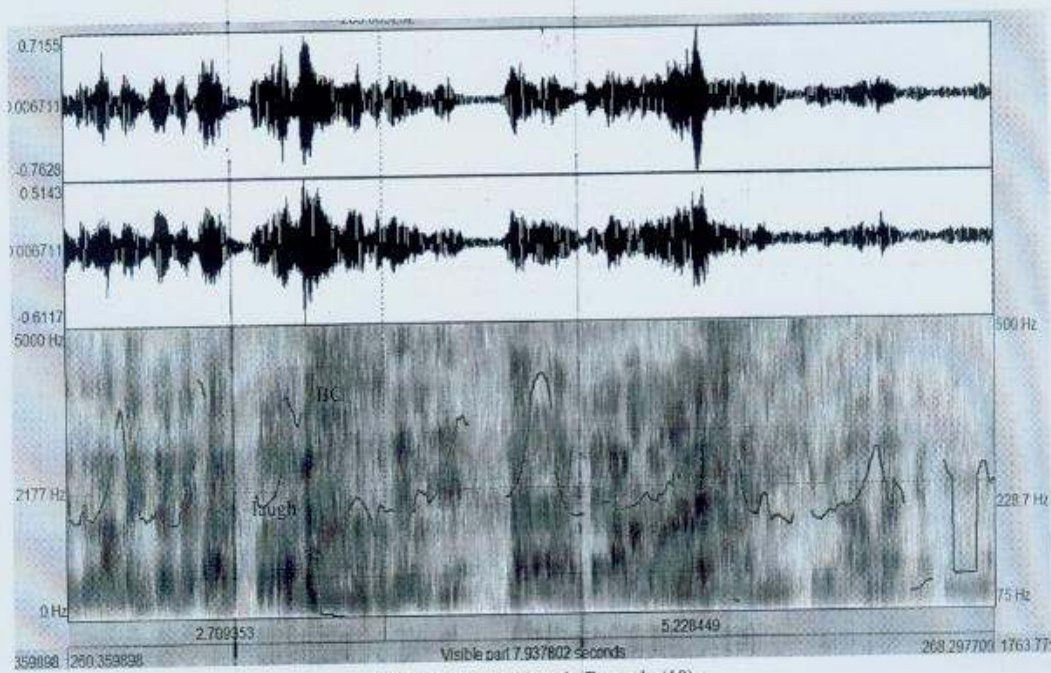


Figure 5. Pitch contour in Example (10).

There were some examples that BC tokens come after a rising intonation at the end of a grammatical point followed by a pause. These BCs also had a rising intonation showing surprise. Accordingly, we speculate that with the exclusion of question rising intonation, rising pitch region at the end of the speaker's utterance followed by a pause or hesitation is a cue for the listener to show his/her surprise. This speculation should be examined in a larger corpus for its accuracy. However, the correlation is not perfect; it does not mean that all of the surprise BCs with rising intonation are preceded by a rising pitch region. In the corpus, there were many instances in which a rising-falling BC is preceded by a falling pitch region, showing surprise (see Example 10 and Figure 5).

Example (10) A: ?unam ke be internet hassâs! (laughter)

He/She-also that to internet sensitive (laughter)

"He/She is also (the person) whom is sensitive to the internet!"

B: jeddi?

really?

To sum up the discussion above, we can say that a falling pitch, pause and rising pitch are prosodic cues in the Persian conversations for the listeners to produce the BC signals. Moreover, there is a possibility that sometimes intonation can tell the listener the type of the needed BC. In the corpus, 112 BCs were produced after a falling pitch region, eight after a falling pitch region and a pause, and 23 after rising pitch region.

Semantic Factors

Thirty-two of the BCs in the corpus were overlapping BCs, in which, for some moment, the speaker and the listener are speaking simultaneously. Four of these overlapping BCs were restating of the speaker's speech at the same time the speaker was uttering it. Also 23 overlapping BCs occurred near the grammatical completion points, or after a pause, simultaneously with the speaker taking the turn again. These examples were not considered as a violation of grammatical and prosodic cues (see Examples 11-12).

Example (11) A: sarâsar ?az vitamin poroto?ino in êizâst () (pause)//mavâde moqazi dâre

Full of vitamin protein-and these things (pause)//substance nutritious has

"It's full of vitamin, protein and such things//it has nutritious substances"

B: bâle

yes

Example (12) A: be nazaram tu hamun sâlon be komake ye parde?i ke ...

To opinion-my same hall with help-of one curtain that

"In my opinion, in the same hall with the help of a curtain that"

B: //tu hamun sâlon bale

In same hall yes

"In the same hall, yes"

But in five cases, the listener react only to the semantic content of the speaker's utterance and show his/her attitudes. The nature of these semantic contents closely depends on the context of the utterance, and cannot be predicted.

Asking question for clarification (7) and giving suggestion (3)¹⁶ are due to some semantic factors too. For

¹⁶ These are some kinds of BCs that the listener produces to show his participation in the course of the conversation.

example, during the discourse, the listener mishears an utterance and asks for clarification, or because of the speaker's hesitation, gives a suggestion to help the speaker find the proper word (see Examples 13-14).

Example (13) A: *hamin juri raftam joloye xânume*

This way went. 1st person sing in front of woman.the¹⁷

"I went in front of the woman with this appearance."

B: *kodum xânume?*

Which woman?

Example (14) A: *kâr dâre*

Job has. 3rd person sing

"He/She has a job"

B: *çi?*

what?

A: *sare kâr mire*

To work go. 3rd person sing

"He/She goes to work"

The low frequency of suggesting the speakers' intention was probably due to the fact that it was not easy for the listener to predict what the speaker was going to say.

Table 1 shows the frequency of different back channel signals and the cues related to them in the corpus of this study.

Table 1
The Frequency of BC Responses Regarding Different Cues

Different cues	Frequency of BCs
Lengthy vowel	10
Grammatical units	147
Falling pitch	112
Rising pitch	23
Falling pitch and pause	12
Pseudo-tag questions	34
Semantic factors	19
Overlapping BCs at the grammatical completion point and falling pitch region	23

Conclusions

To answer the first study question, we conclude that pseudo-tag questions in the Persian conversations, like English tag questions, are important lexical cues showing the time of back channeling. Besides, the grammatical completion points are more plausible points for occurring non-overlapping BCs, because at these points the semantic content is almost complete. These results confirm the findings of the previous researches (e.g., Wannaruk, 1997). It seems the most important cue in the Persian speakers' speech for back channeling is the grammatical completion points with a falling intonation and following pauses. Since the falling pitch at the end

¹⁷ "e" in the word "xânume" make it known. In other word, the whole phrase means a special woman.

of the grammatical point was found an important cue in other languages such as Japanese (Ward, 1996) and English (Ward & Tsukahara, 2000), we suppose it can be considered a universal cue. Furthermore, lengthened vowel in preposition, conjunction and complementizer signal the production of BC responses in Persian, but in English as Wannaruk (1997) asserted the conjunctions themselves signal BC production. The place and time of a few overlapping BCs are determined by some semantic factors varying in different contexts. We have also found that the prosodic cues related to back channeling in the Persian speakers' speech are a falling pitch region, pauses and sometimes rising pitch. Finally, sometimes a mixture of these cues signals time of back channeling, for example, at the end of an utterance with a falling pitch, followed by a pause, the listener gives a feedback.

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