READING NOTES

STIVERS ET AL. 2009 — 6 APRIL 2020

MEASUREMENTS:

Independent variables (question):
- ⑤ Questioner is gazing at recipient?
- ⑥ Req. for info vs. other request/repair.

Independent variables (response):
- ② Response is answer?
- ③ Answer is confirming?
- ④ Response has visible component?

① RESPONSE OFFSET (in 10 ms increments, rounded to nearest 100 ms)
↳ Dependent variable

DATA: POLAR QUESTIONS (ONLY)

are polar Qs really representative? would we predict that?

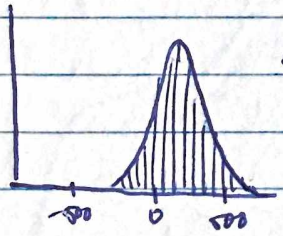
- Spontaneous informal conversation from 10 typologically diverse languages: 2-6 particips.
- 350 consecutive questions from 5-17 interactions (101 conversations in total)
- Beginning of response = start of vocal or gestural response

Contrasting hypotheses

UNIVERSAL:
Based on predictions from CA (& Psych), interactional need for fluent temporal co-ordination forms a basis for similar timing and mechanisms for marking & dealing w/ delay

CULTURAL VARIABILITY:
Based on predictions derived from ethnographic work — conversational timing varies radically across cultures such that long silences or overlaps may be the norm, with variable mechanisms for marking & dealing with delay.

RESULTS



← Something like this distribution was found in all languages
"no-gap, no-overlap" - like pattern
Variation in means: Jp (shortest): 7.29 ms — Da (longest): 468.88
... medians: 0-300 // mean of means 208
... of medians 100

but rounded data make this hard to take as precise

estimated effect in msec

Non-answers	SLOWER (132) ⟹	significant in all languages
Confirmations	⟸ FASTER (207)	sig. in 7/10 languages
Visible response	⟸ FASTER (187)	sig. in 7/10 languages
Questioner gaze	⟸ FASTER (64)	sig. in 5/10 languages
Info request	⟹ SLOWER (130)	(only given in overall model)

} not clustered by grammatical features of polar questions, nor by cultural relatedness.

» Subjectively "on time" responses were much longer in some languages, but only by a difference of ~150 ms; subjectively notable delays are, in absolute terms, different across languages, suggesting a kind of "calibration" for timing.

correlation w/ speaking rate?

is the most common case at issue, or what happens at the fringes?

"ROBUST UNIVERSALS"

CONCLUSIONS:

Overall support for the universal system hypothesis, but evidence for culture-specific calibration in (A) what feels "normally" timed and what feels delayed and (B) the features of Qs and Rs that lead to shorter and longer offsets within language; gaze by the questioner appeared particularly variable in the dataset.

LOADED POINTS @ END:

- Interactional universals are more robust and easier to find than grammatical ones.
- Interactional system is stable & separable from the languages & cultures in which they are expressed
- (Primordial) interaction preceded language in human evolution, and formed the context for its development (ie. shaped the formation) >* culture

sufficient evidence? what more would we like to see?