Conversation Analysis on Turn-taking Strategies in Oprah Winfrey Show

Hendar

Hendar, *Widyatama University*

Email: *h.hendar@widyatama.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to identify the types of turn taking used by Oprah Winfrey, the host of The Oprah Winfrey Show. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. In descriptive qualitative method, the data were systematically and accurately analysed based on the theory applied in the study. The main theory on types of turn taking strategies used in this study is taken from Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). The data obtained are classified into three types of turn taking strategies; taking the turn, holding the turn and yielding the turn, and each of which is divided into three or four subtypes or subcategories of turn taking strategies. The results of this research showed that of 35 data found in Oprah Winfrey Show, there were 26 (74,5%) data on yielding the turn, 6 (17%) data on taking the turn, and 3 (8,5%) data on holding the turn. The most dominant of subtypes of yielding is prompting. it is no wonder that Oprah as the host of The Oprah Winfrey Show dominantly asks, greets, invites, offers, questions or requests her guests in her Show as clearly seen at least in 3 episodes of her Show.

Keywords: conversation analysis, turn taking strategies, talk show

INTRODUCTION

Conversation is a type of spoken interaction in which two or more people communicate an idea. It iss also a way of using language in a social context, doing things with words with other people [1]. Hence, conversation is a cooperative activity in the sense that two or more people are involved. It encompasses how people retain their interactions and how they interact with one another. It encompasses how people maintain their interaction as well as how their conversations are structured in a conversation. According to [2], it is like a dance, with the conversation partners effortlessly coordinating their movements. Others compare it to traffic crossing an intersection, where there is a lot of alternate activities but no crashes. As a result, it is necessary to understand conversation analysis in order to comprehend how people take turns in their spoken interactions. Conversation analysis is an approach that looks at the way in which people take and manage turns in spoken interactions. The basic rule in conversation is that one person speaks at a time, after which they may nominate another speaker or another speaker may take up the turn without being nominated [3]. [4], the pioneer of conversation analytic approach, argued that the basic unit of conversation is the "turn," which is a shift in the direction of the speaking "flow" that is indicative of regular conversation. So, the small unit of conversation is a turn which control the flow of interaction in exchanging the right to speak. Therefore, this is important to understand about turn taking in order to prevent phenomena of misunderstanding in a conversation.

Turn taking is the way conversationalists manage the conversation. The function of turn taking is to make the conversation flows well. It begins when someone as the first speaker takes the turn to speak firstly. Then, another one as the second speaker gets chance to speak when the first speaker seems to end his/her speaking.

In conversational analysis, turn-taking describes a set of practices that speakers use to construct and allocate speaking turns [5].

Turn-taking strategy is very important to learn in conversation. In turn-taking strategy, it can be seen how participants manage and take turns speaking in a conversation. In addition, in the turn-taking strategy participants can achieve the goals of their conversation. [6] declares that one of the most fundamental facts about conversation is that the roles of the speaker and the listener change with remarkably little overlapping of speech and few silences. This can be achieved by applying the system of „turn–taking" which is the basic form of conversation organization

The purpose of this research is to identify the types of turn taking used by Oprah Winfrey, the host of The Oprah Winfrey Show. This Show, sometimes known as The Oprah Show or simply Oprah, was an American daytime syndicated talk show that ran for 25 seasons in Chicago, Illinois, from September 8, 1986, to May 25, 2011. It is still the highest-rated daytime talk program in American television history, produced and presented by its namesake, Oprah Winfrey [7].

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Turn-taking

According to [8] Turn-taking is a phenomenon where participants in a conversation take a turn to speak. They described the way participants organize their conversations. They further explained that there were 3 components of turn-taking; firstly a turn-taking component that contains the main content of speech and is constructed from various types of units (Turn-Construction Unit or TCU). The end of the TCU is the point at which the turn can end and a new speaker can begin. This point is known as the relevant transition point or TRP. Secondly, turn allocation component. This component is the technique that selects the next speaker. Within this component there are two types of techniques. First the current speaker selects the next speaker. The second technique is the next speaker. Finally, choosing itself, the rules that construct the turn. This component is the rule for appointing the next turn taker. This rule is to avoid overlapping gaps in a conversation.

2.2 Turn-taking strategies

In a conversation, participants must have the ability to manage their roles so that the conversation goes well. In fact, some participants were not able to manage their respective roles. Sometimes the listener cannot understand what the speaker is saying well or the listener takes over the conversation without waiting for the speaker to end his speech. This causes overlap in the conversation.

To prevent this problem, participants must understand several strategies to find out the rules that exist in the conversation. [9] says there are three basic strategies in the turn-taking system. Those strategies are taking the turn, holding the turn and taking yielding the turn.

2.2.1 Taking the Turn

This strategy is very useful for participants taking turns speaking in a conversation. In taking turns, the next speaker can continue the previously discussed topic or can even start a new topic. In this case, the speakers can express their personal opinion like approval. Strenstorm divides taking the turn into three types, namely; starting up, taking over and interrupting [9]

A. Starting up

Starting up is taking a turn to talk when someone starts the first conversation or at the beginning. Starting up can be difficult, because often the speaker is not prepared to speak at the beginning of the conversation. Starting up is divided into two, namely a hasistant start and a clean start. Usually in starting up the speaker says filled pause like *uh/um*, in English. In addition, you can also say verbal fillers such as; *well, I mean, you know* that serves as a pause. This occurs when the first speaker is not prepared to speak directly to the topic of conversation. The speaker does this as well to let you know that the speaker needs a little time.

Example:

X: *you know, hmm I'm very busy right know.*

It expresses that the speaker wants to say something but needs a little time by using the filled pause (:*m* in English) and the verbal <filler> *you know*. On the other hand, verbal <filler> *well* can be used for both types of start. The word well is also commonly used in clean starts. The speaker says the word well at the beginning of the conversation to make the speech clear.

B. Taking Over

This section is used when the speaker takes a turn to speak after the previous speaker. Taking over is connected by the words uptake or links. The word uptake begins with the word appealer such as "you know" and is continued by the word uptake such as; yeah, oh, well, no, ah, yes. Uptake strategy occurs when the next speaker understands what the previous speaker has said and allows the conversation to continue. On the other hand, the uptake strategy does not always occur with the appealer.

Example

X: *but I got a telegram last Friday --,*

   Saying that there was a trouble a foot you know

Y: *yeah, trouble a leg anyway.*

From the example above, speaker X uses "you know" to give a turn to speaker Y. Next, speaker Y responds to speaker X. The following is an uptake without an appealer:

Example:

X: *nobody knows about it*

Y: *oh, that's right*

The example above shows speaker Y using uptake without an appealer. Another taking over strategy is to use links or conjunctions or conjunctions such as; and, because, and but. In this case the speaker uses conjunctions to connect the previous sentence,

Example:

X: *I'm sure I'm leaving right now*

Y: *but it's raining.*

C. Interrupting

Interrupting occurs when a speaker takes a turn while another speaker is speaking. Interrupting is divided into two, alerts and meta comments. Alerts (hey, listen, look) are used to catch the attention of others. Speakers who use alerts usually speak in a loud voice and high intonation.

Example:

X: *you can not leave right now just for**

Y: **LISTEN* I'm not gonna come back home late*

(Y interrupted X by using the word Listen and a high intonation, so that X could not continue his speech)

In addition to alerts, in interrupting there is a meta comment. Strategy words in meta comments such as; can I just tell, let me just, may I halt you. This method is more formal and polite.

Example:

X: *there is something more important than**

Y: **can I just tell this one is important too?*

Speaker Y interrupts X in a polite manner.

1.2.2   Holding the Turn

Holding the turn is the speaker who is speaking maintaining his turn. This happens when the speaker still wants to have a chance to speak but it is a bit difficult to plan what to say next at the same time. The speaker may pause and resume the conversation. There are four ways to prevent the speaker from stopping the conversation, namely by filled pause or verbal filler, silent pause, repetition and new start (Strenstrom, 1994:75).

A. Filled pause or verbal filler

Filled pause or verbal filler is used to indicate that the speaker will not give a turn to talk to the other participants and has even planned what to say next. However, in this case the speaker should not take too long a pause because it will indirectly give a turn to talk to the other participants.

Example:

X:....*and all this way done :-- by – kind of letting - : --. Well really by it just : -- sort of - starting from nothing.*

(The example above shows the speaker is thinking about what to say next and only lasts a short time)

B. Silent Pause

Silent pause can function to hold the turn to speak. The other participants can understand to keep listening to the speaker until the speaker is finished. The duration of silent pauses is longer than filled pauses.

Example:

X: *and finally .. (0.3) you know what's really going on.*

The speaker uses a silent pause for four seconds (0.3) to hold his or her turn. The speaker needs some time to think about what is being said.

C. Lexical Repetition

Lexical repetition requires at least one word, here is an example of lexical repetition

Example:

X:..*because I think is doesn't make any problem if if if if you stay here for longer   and watch my kids.*

Furthermore, lexical repetition can consist of clauses such as:

X:.*and he said how old do you think this child---and I had no clue. You see she was she was she was an Asian child between the age of.*

In addition to a lexical repetition consisting of one word and a clause part, a lexical repetition can also consist of both in one turn of speech, as seen in the example below:

X:..*it was so awful to let them stay here – I mean I mean you know they they they ever stole some stuff here*

In the last example, speaker (X) intends to hold off his turn by repeating some words and parts of the clause.

D. New Start

New start is used if the speaker cannot continue the conversation, then the speaker creates a new conversation.

Example:

X: *but I feel somehow. The sheer fact of not having to have, to have. this really sort of – it's for one thing it does nark me that*...

The example above shows that the speaker cannot continue his ideas by using lexical repetition, silent way, filled pause and verbal fill, and can only start with a new conversation.

Sometimes participants forget what they are going to say next. They try to remember by repeating words, using pauses and verbal fillers until they realize that they have to start the conversation again.

2.2.3 Yielding the Turn

The last strategy is yielding the turn. In this strategy, the previous speaker gives a turn to speak for the next speaker directly. There are several ways to use this strategy such as; prompting, appealing, and giving up [9].

A. Prompting

In participant prompting – participants ask other participants to respond clearly and forcefully. Prompting consists of apologizing, greeting, inviting, offering, questioning or requesting.

> Example:
> X: *Hi, Haley!*
> Y: *Hi Dave*
> X: *Would you like to have some tea in my house, please?*
> Y: *Yes, I'd love to.*

In the example above, speaker Y responds to speaker X to answer the invitation or shrimp from X

B. Appealing

Appealing is a way of giving a turn to speak openly to the listener. The response given by the listener is *the question tag, all right, ok, you know, you see*.

> Example:
> X: *you have finished your duty, right?*
> Y: *yes, I have*

Speaker X uses the word "right" to get a direct response from the other person directly.

C. Giving Up

In this strategy, the speaker realizes that he can't say much more. The speaker gives a turn to talk to his opponent by stopping with a long pause. This will encourage the listeners to take their turn.

> Example:
> X: *I did many mistakes today and don't know to make them up (0.6)*
> Y: *chill out we're gonna face it together.*

METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative method as the research design. In descriptive qualitative method, the data were systematically and accurately analyzed based on the theory conversation analysis as explain in this research. According to [10] descriptive analysis is used to define and provide a larger image of the researched object using the data or sample; whereas, [10] defines quantitative analysis as research that uses data in the form of figures as a tool to examine and evaluate the study, especially in the case of quantitative research.

The main data of this research are from three episodes of The Oprah Winfrey Show taken randomly, It contains the conversation happened between Oprah as the host of that Show and her guests. The conversations are then transcribed, coded, analysed and classified based on the types (taking the turn, holding the turn and yielding) and subtypes of taking turns strategies. They are starting up, taking over, interrupting, filled pause or verbal filler, silent pause, lexical repetition, new start, prompting, appealing and giving up.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data on the types of turn taking strategies take from The Oprah Winfrey Show are classified into 3 main categories taking the turn, holding the turn and yielding the turn, and each of which has its own subcategories as taking the turn categories has 3

subcategories, they are starting up, taking over and interrupting. Holding the turn consists of filled pause or verbal filler, silent pause, lexical repetition, and new start, while yielding the turn comprise with prompting, appealing and giving up. Here are 3 analyzed sample data found in The Oprah Winfrey Show,

Data 1
Oprah (H)*: here we sit...*

in the town hall theater which I understand had meaning for you because when   I first talk to my producers that go we're not going to Whitney's house we're not sitting in the living room we're not and they said, ... ^no whitney wants to do it at this place because it holds special memorie=s and value. why? (question)

Whitney (G): (0)*very dear one..<BR mmm BR> my mother.. I was thirteen ..<BR mmm BR> my mom had put a show together ..<BR mmm BR> ,*

which included my brother myself in her act and we sang back home for her (Hx) (Answer)

Based on the conversation fragments in above data, the turn-taking strategy used by the participants is *taking the turn in the form of starting up* as shown that Oprah started a conversation by asking her guest, Whitney, the reason why the interview was conducted at the Town hall Theater. The question is the first question in the conversation. In other words, Oprah takes the initiative to start a conversation. Furthermore, the starting up that occurred was a clean start, this can be seen from the clear pronunciation. In the conversation fragment in this data, there are 2 moves with an H/G pattern. The move made by the host is in the form of a question. Meanwhile, the two moves made by Guest are answer. The move in the form of a question can be seen in the section "no whitney wants to do it at this place because it holds special memories and value. why?".

Data 2
Jane (G)   : *In fact In fact I decided I needed to learn a few more swings so I'm taking dancing classes that are out Marie's (comment)*
Oprah (H) : *(2.0) !you? <HI you are HI> (Laughter) (applause) (comment)*
Oprah(H) : *well you know how many people are here coming to this show was on your bucket list of things to do (1.0) for a lot of you I know that is thank you thank you for making that happen today. you have a bucket list, what it is? What's on your list? (question)*

Jane (G) : *oh ^gosh (2.0) when ten I separated ten years ago I thought what are the things that I want to do before I die that I could never have done with I was with him (comment)*

In this data, the turn taking strategy used by Oprah is *holding the turn with verbal filler type*. This can be seen when Oprah says "well you know" in the third move. Holding the turn is done by Oprah to maintain her turn to speak with the aim of starting a new topic. This can be seen when Oprah asked questions about the "list to do" planned by Jane, whereas previously Oprah only responded to Jane's previous words about the dancing class that Jane had attended.

Data 3
Oprah (H) : *So you would be screaming in the closet? (Question)*
Clayton (G): *umm (2.0). yeah (Answer)*
Oprah (H) : *So what would happen when you were screaming in the closet? (question)*
Clayton(G) : *(2.0) uum the the this so you know they put dish soap in my mouth and just leave it they wouldn't rinse it out. I mean I just had to you know under that taste I mean I just I still to this day I can't stand the smell of it just because of (answer)*

In this data, the turn taking strategy used by Oprah is *yielding the turn in the form of questions given to the interlocutor*. Yielding the turn performed on this data twice. The first yielding the turn is in the first move, which is So you would be screaming in the closet?. Another yielding the turn occurs in the third move "So what would happen when you were screaming in the closet?".

Based on the data analyzed, The following data on table 1 are the results of turn taking strategies found in The Oprah Winfrey Show.

Table 1

The Result of Turn Taking Strategies

No	Types of Turn Taking Strategies	Frequency	Percentages
1.	Yielding the turn	26	74,5
2.	Taking the turn	6	17
3.	Holding the turn	3	8,5
	Total	35	100

The table 1 shows that of 35 research data obtained, the highest score from the yielding the floor is 26 (74,5%). Then, the middle score from the taking the turn was 6 (17%). Furthermore, the lowest score from the holding the turn was 3 (0.25%). Based on the table, the dominant aspect that it is found in The Oprah Winfrey Show; was Yielding the turn.

Different from table 1, table 2 below shows more specifically the subcategories of turn taking strategie

Table 2

Subcategories of Turn Taking Strategies

No	Main categories of Turn taking Strategies	Subcategories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Taking the turn	Starting up	3	8.5
		Taking Over	3	8,5
		Interrupting	0	0
2.	Holding the turn	Filled Pause (Verbal Filler)	3	8,5
		Silent Pause	0	0
		Lexical Repetition	0	0
		New Start	0	0
3.	Yielding the turn	Prompting	26	74,5
		Appealing	0	0
		Giving up	0	0
	TOTAL		35	100

From table 2, it can be seen that the most dominant subcategories of yielding turn strategies is prompting. It is the strategy in conversation of how participant asks other participants to respond clearly and forcefully. In The Oprah Winfrey Show, it is no wonder that Oprah as the host of that show dominantly asks, greets, invites, offers, questions or request her guests in her Show as clearly seen at least in 3 episodes of The Oprah Winfrey Show of as the sample of this research.

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the obtained data on types of turn taking strategies and patterns of conversation found in 3 episodes of Oprah Winfrey Show based on the conversation analysis theory, it can be concluded that types of turn taking strategies used by Oprah Winfrey differ in types of turn taking strategies and patterns of conversation significantly as seen in the following data in terms of the types of turn taking strategies, of 35 data obtained, it was found respectively 26 data (74,5%) on yielding the turn strategy, and it was dominant strategy found in 3 episodes of Oprah Winfrey Show, 6 data (17%) on taking the turn and the last 3 data (8,5%) on holding the turn.

REFERENC

1. Czarniawska-Joerges, B. and B. Joerges, *How to control things with words: Organizational talk and control.* Management Communication Quarterly, 1988. **2**(2): p. 170-193.DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318988002002003.
2. De Jaegher, H. and E. Di Paolo, *Participatory sense-making.* Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences, 2007. **6**(4): p. 485-507.DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-007-9076-9.
3. Duncan, S., *Some signals and rules for taking speaking turns in conversations.* Journal of personality and social psychology, 1972. **23**(2): p. 283.DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/h0033031.
4. Tuan, Y.F., *Language and the making of place: A narrative-descriptive approach.* Annals of the Association of American geographers, 1991. **81**(4): p. 684-696.DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1991.tb01715.x.
5. Sacks, H., E.A. Schegloff, and G. Jefferson, *A simplest systematics for the organization of turn taking for conversation*, in *Studies in the organization of conversational interaction*. 1978, Elsevier. p. 7-55.
6. Dolcos, C.M., *Conversational Analysis In Jane Austen's "Pride And Prejudice" And John Ball's "In The Heat Of The Night".* Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Philologica, 2014. **15**(3): p. 319-328.
7. Miller, W.R. and G.S. Rose, *Toward a theory of motivational interviewing.* American psychologist, 2009. **64**(6): p. 527.DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016830.
8. Wilson, M. and T.P. Wilson, *An oscillator model of the timing of turn-taking.* Psychonomic bulletin & review, 2005. **12**(6): p. 957-968.DOI: https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03206432.
9. Wiemann, J.M. and M.L. Knapp, *Turn-taking in conversations.* communication theory, 2017: p. 226-245.DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315080918-19.
10. Golafshani, N., *Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research.* The qualitative report, 2003. **8**(4): p. 597-607.