THE PREFERENCE STRUCTURE
FOUND IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION
BETWEEN BROADCASTER AND CALLER

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Abstract

Preference structure is a part of conversational structure that manages people's communication. Preference structure divides second parts into preferred and dispreferred (Levinson, 1983:336). This research was intended to analyze how the preference structure was applied in telephone conversation between broadcaster and caller. This research was qualitative. The data consisted of a transcribed telephone conversation and it was collected through the following steps: recording, transcribing, selecting, and reporting. It was revealed that the broadcaster and the caller produced preference structure from opening to closing. However, they performed dispreferred second pair parts in greeting, question, offer, and thanking. This implies that they had not known the appropriate expressions. It was concluded that the conversation in this study was less structured and patterned. It is important to pay attention not only to the linguistic components, but also the pragmatics in which the conversation takes place, including the participant, the context, and the topic.

Keywords: preference structure, preferred and dispreferred, telephone conversation, broadcaster and caller

INTRODUCTION

Some media are needed to help the English learners in learning and using spoken English conversation in good structure. One of the media is a radio program called “English Corner” on Suara Kudus 88 FM, a private commercial radio station in Kudus. It is an interactive English conversation program between broadcaster and caller by telephone. In this program, the broadcaster invites listeners to be the callers in order to give their opinions based on a topic. The broadcasters usually give a long explanation and make small conversation about the topic before inviting listeners to join with.

Radio as one of the news media has played an important role in transmitting messages (Effendy, 1978:57). Radio is very easy to be used and accessed so that is why many people are interested in listening radio. Moreover, there are some persons who pay attention in broadcasting. Radio is used to motivate people to think about and to act on something. Radio broadcast has its own purposes similar to other mass media as a part of the communication media and process. Deeply concern, radio is a medium of information and education. Many educators use radio as a media in getting information relates with their fields because it is one of the means of communication helping people to understand the spoken language.

Problem in oral communication especially for those learning a foreign language can be resulted by the insufficient knowledge in this language. The lack of ordinary vocabulary,
ordinary background, and different attitudes are the problems faced by people in communication so that they do not understand others easily.

Based on the above explanation, I was interested in analyzing a radio telephone conversation in English Corner Program. This program is a media where broadcaster and listener as caller can participate in speaking English. However it is not an easy thing to do. Consequently, the broadcaster should improve his method and technique in developing speaking skill, mainly in using preference structure as a significant part of the communication competence. So, I presented the preference structure found in the telephone conversation between the broadcaster and the caller.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Turn and Turn Taking**

We may start with the obvious observation that conversation is characterized by turn taking: one participant, A, talks, stops; another, B, starts, talks, stops, and so we obtain an A-B-A-B-A-B distribution of talk across to participants. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) state that one of the basic problems in conversation is the coordination of turn taking. They specify two facets of this thing. The first is how turns are exchanged with minimal gap and minimal overlap. And the second is how conversational turn exchange is locally achieved. So in this case, an ordered set of rules operated locally and recursively at each turn transition place to resolve recurrent problems of turn transition. Based on other analyses the content and social meaning of turn transitions are important in achieving orderly transition and thus these factors should figure in accounts of the production and interpretation of turns of talk.

A conversation is a string of at least two turns (Francis, 1992:151). Some turns are more closely related than others and he isolates a class of sequences of turns called adjacency pair which has the following features. They are two utterances long, the utterances are produced successively by different speakers, and the utterances are ordered. The first must belong to the class of first pair parts and the second to the class of second pair parts. The utterances are related and not any second part can follow any first part except an appropriate one. The first pair part often selects next speaker and always selects next action. It sets up transition relevance, an expectation which the next speaker fulfils. In other words the first part of a pair predicts the occurrence of the second.

**Adjacency Pairs**

An adjacency pair is a term used in conversational analysis refers to a pair of conversational turns by two different speakers. The production of the first turn (called a first pair part) makes a response (a second pair part) of a particular kind. For example, a question "What's your name?" requires the addressee to provide an answer in the next conversational turn. A failure to give an immediate response is noticeable and accountable.

Adjacency pairs are utterances produced successively by two speakers. The second utterance is identified as related to the first as an expected follow up. From the two pairs, the first utterance constitutes a first pair part and the next utterance constitutes a second pair part.
Now we need to point out that adjacency pairs consist of two utterances each spoken by a different speaker. In standard British conversation examples might be a greeting-greetings pair "Hi"-"Hi", “How are you doing?”-"Fine, thanks", or a thanking exchange "Thanks"-"My pleasure", "Thanks a lot"-"Not at all" (Hughes, 2002:180).

Adjacent pair seems to be a fundamental unit of conversation organization. Canale (1983: 18) describes adjacency pair is the basic structural unit in conversation. So when a speaker delivers a pair part functions as the first pair part the interlocutor should deliver the appropriate second pair part. Some examples of adjacency pairs are:

1. Request – acceptance  
   A: Can I have some more coffee?  
   B: Sure. Help yourself  

2. Question – answer  
   A: Do you have the time?  
   B: It's five o'clock

Preference Structure

There is a rule governing the use of adjacency pair. In having production of first part of some pairs, a current speaker must stop speaking and next speaker must produce the point of a second part to the same pair Levinson (1983:304). The criterion for adjacency pair which is termed as a conditional relevance given a first part of pair, second part is immediately relevant and expectable. For example if the first part is an offer, the second part is acceptance or a refusal, the first is a question, the second is an answer, etc Levinson (1983:308).

There are two categories of responses or the second parts other pair, namely preferred and dispreferred. These categories are the alternatives of the second parts of the adjacency pair. These are included in preference organization (Levinson, 1983:307).

The preferred second refers to the second parts which are relevant to the first part and they have an equal rank or standing like in the first parts for example: request-acceptance, blame-denial, question – answer, greeting-greeting, etc. While the dispreferred seconds are not relevant and acceptable of the first parts for example request-refusal, assessment-disagreement, etc. Levinson (1983:336) describes adjacency pairs simply as the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST PART</th>
<th>PREFERRED SECOND PARTS</th>
<th>DISPREFERRED SECOND PARTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>request</td>
<td>acceptance / compliance</td>
<td>refusal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offer / invite</td>
<td>acceptance</td>
<td>refusal / rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment</td>
<td>agreement</td>
<td>disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question</td>
<td>expected answer</td>
<td>unexpected answer or non answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blame</td>
<td>denial</td>
<td>admission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Correlations of content and format in adjacency pair seconds
The most frequently used adjacency pair is question-answer. Other examples of expected pairings are greeting-greeting, information-acknowledgement, etc. Adjacency pairs are pairs of utterances that usually occur together. The most often used adjacency pair is question-answer but there are others such as:

1. Greeting-greeting
2. Congratulations – thanks
3. Apology – acceptance
4. Inform – acknowledge
5. Leave taking – leave taking

(METHODS)

Research Design

To design the study, I used conversational analysis. The methodological preference of the conversational analysis is derived from ethnomethodology (Levinson, 1983:295). Conversational analysis is a kind of qualitative research. The research is based on observations in the media where I got the data. In doing this study I used descriptive analysis and research result in the qualitative data. In this research I observed the preference structure found in telephone conversation between broadcaster and caller in English Corner program on Suara Kudus 88 FM.

Source of Data

The data of this research consist of the recorded conversation. The research was taken from English Corner Program on Suara Kudus 88 FM. The English Corner Program is an interactive English program broadcasting every Sunday starts from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. It presents a topic weekly.

Subjects

The subjects in this study were the caller and the broadcaster having a phone conversation and delivering the preference inside it.

Procedures of Data Collection

The first step in collecting data was recording. I recorded to get the data in the form of spoken language. I listened and transcribed the conversation. And then I played the records repeatedly to ensure that there were no words skipped. I identified the sentences and categorized them into the preference structure. The procedures of collecting data are divided into several steps: recording, transcribing, selecting, and reporting.

Data Analysis

In the core of analysis I applied the correlations of content and format in adjacency pair by Levinson (1983). They consist of first part and second part. Moreover, the second part is categorized as preferred and dispreferred.
I described the recorded data of the conversations between the broadcaster and caller. Here, I analyzed the data by describing how the preference structure occurred. After describing and interpreting all the data, I discussed the problems in this study.

FINDINGS
Preference Structure in the Phone Conversation
I choose the related data which is in line with the preference structure from the telephone conversation. Here they are the preferred and the dispreferred second pair parts.

(1) T1  B : Hello, good morning. Who’s speaking please?
       T2  C : Diana.

   The broadcaster (B) greeted in this opening which is realized in T1 by the ritual of the greeting "Hello, good morning". The caller (C) responded it by delivering dispreferred second pair part when C did not respond the greeting and directly told her name. This opening part was indicated by greeting expression. B greeted C but C did not respond the greeting. B continued asking about C’s identity in T1 also. And C could take her turn in giving a response of answer.

(2) T5  B : Diana, Lady Di?
       T6  C : Oh. No ((laughing))

   The assessment delivered by B in T5 was to ensure that he did not misspell C's name. In this context B was humorous person so B made a joke by guessing another name for C. And C’s response in T6 was disagreement and regarded as a dispreferred second.

(3) T7  B : // Where are you? OK, Diana. Where are you?
       T8  C : I’m in Muria Indah.

   The structure of opening in this part was not relevant. The utterance "How’s your life today?" should have preceded the question-answer about the C's identity in T7. The utterance should be delivered by B directly after the initial response greeting "Hello, good morning" in T1.

(4) T9  B : Sorry, Muria Indah?
       T10 C : Yes.

   B ensured to get the C’s address by expressing “Sorry” in T10. The second pair part indicates the preferred. We can know it by the agreement produced as the assessment delivered in the first pair part.

(5) T11 B : Yeah how about your life today Diana?
        T12 C : I think mm…today is very busy day. I have a lot of activity and e… I'm confused just to…. So OK?

   Greeting delivered by B in T11 was reopening. B asked C about her condition and C answered indirectly that she was not fine. C shared what was going on today. Unconsciously, C led the conversation into the topic.

(6) T14 C : OK. By the way may I ask you a question?
       T15 B : Yes, please.
Interruption in T14 indicated that C attracted B to pay attention with something which C wanted to ask. The second preferred pair part "Yes, please" indicated B gave permission to C to continue the speech. The expression aimed to interrupt in this conversation was "By the way may I ask you a question" and was not preceded by "I'm sorry" which could be more polite as interruption gambit. B gave C a chance to continue her idea about the topic in T15. So the word "Yes please" aims as permission. When C took the next turn, C made an interruption to deliver a question to B.

(7) T16 C : OK. How long have what's that…this program e…. been running? I mean English Corner for in the Suara Kudus. OK?
   T17 B : OK. Maybe for two years.
   T18 C : OK

C made a small talk indicating that topic establishment started. The small talk was about the program because it was the first time for C called to the program. Question-answer pair part was started in T16 and was ended by C in T18. It showed that C was satisfied with the answer delivered by B.

(8) T19 B : // Well yeah. Oh. You just listen e… this program for today.
   T20 C : // Yes. This is the first time for me to what's listen the program. So I was surprised I was surprised to know that

T20 showed comment delivered by C in order to explain about the program. C did not fail to explain it completely from the first time C listened to it until C explained about a hope for the program.

(9) T24 C : Like the what? The program in Suara Kudus I think. It's a good program for everybody who wants to speak English or who wants to practice English.
   T25 B : // OK

T24 symbolizes assessment when C gives an opinion about the English program. B produces backchannel signing that B agrees with C. Furthermore, B gives the floor or the turn to C in explaining the opinion.

(10) T28 C : Mm.. OK today perhaps I want to
   T29 B : Mm..Yeah

B produced backchannel in T29 which delivered feedback to C during the interaction and also allowed C to continue talking.

(11) T30 C : Request a song. The title is……………. from Bryan Adams
   T31 B : Bryan Adams? What’s the title?
   T32 C : What’s that? I can't...what's that? The title OK is I forget

When C requested a song in T30 actually C did not find what the title was. So C just mentioned the singer. B tried to confirm what actually the title of a song C wanted to request in T31. However C did not give appropriate response.

(12) T37 B : OK
   T38 C : // OK. I want also to say hello to what's that? Mr. Banu. I just want to say hello. And I hope that I will know what's that more about another people who join this program and so I will have new friends in English Corner. OK.
B tried to make the flow of C's utterance was not being interrupted for a while. It made C could finish in giving regards.

(13) T41  B : Or do you want to tell about story e...do you have experience about go to the other country? Who speak with English?
    T42  C : No

In T41, B offered C to tell the story about an experience of life but C simply said “No” as the refusal. C did not give further reason or even prolonged the utterance to indicate the refusal.

(14) T56  C : Thank you.
    T57  B : ((laughing)) OK. That’s all? Thank you very much for Diana.

The response in this preclosing was dispreferred. The second pair part should have been "You're welcome". In fact B repeated thanking expression to C in T57 after gave a question indicating preclosing. So there was an inappropriate response of thanking before they closed the conversation.

(15) T58  C : Bye
    T59  B : Bye

The first and second pair parts in this closing were relevant indicated that "Bye" delivered by C was responded in the preferred second. The closing expression was very simple because both of the speakers said "Bye" as the final farewell. The closing section was common that was farewell-farewell (T58-T59).

**Preferred and Dispreferred Second Pair Parts**

All turns are constructed by adjacency pairs. The turns are related to each other. The kinds of the responses of the pairs are preferred and dispreferred. The preferred pairs in this conversation are:

(a) Request-acceptance

T14  C : OK. By the way may I ask you a question?
    T15  B : Yes, please.

(b) Question-answer

T16  C : OK. How long have what's that...this program e... been running? I mean English Corner for in the Suara Kudus. OK?
    T17  B : OK. Maybe for two years

(c) Assessment-agreement

T24  C : Like the what? The program in Suara Kudus I think. It's a good program for everybody who wants to speak English or who wants to practice English.
    T25  B : // OK

(d) Farewell-farewell

T58  C : Bye
    T59  B : Bye

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(d) Farewell-farewell

T58  C : Bye
    T59  B : Bye

While the dispreferred second pair parts in this conversation are:
(a) Greeting-no response
T1 B : Hello, good morning. Who’s speaking please?
T2 C : (0.0) Diana.

(b) Question-unexpected answer
T31 B : Bryan Adams? What’s the title?
T32 C : What’s that? I can't...what's that? The title OK is I forget

(c) Offer-refusal
T41 B : Or do you want to tell about story e...do you have experience about go to the other country? Who speak with English?
T42 C : No

(d) Thanking-question
T56 C : Thank you.
T57 B : ((laughing)) OK. That’s all? Thank you very much for Diana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred and Dispreferred Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>request</td>
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<tr>
<td>offer</td>
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<tr>
<td>assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thanking</td>
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<tr>
<td>farewell</td>
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CONCLUSION
In conclusion, the conversations between the broadcaster and the caller constituted natural conversation and they applied the patterns of preference structure. The features of preference structure happened from opening to closing. The caller was more frequently produced the dispreferred second pair parts than the broadcaster. The dispreferred occurred in greeting, question, offer, and thanking. The occurrences of overlaps and gaps did not have effect to transition on turn taking in general.

REFERENCES


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