INDONESIAN-BALINESE MULTI-PARTY CASUAL CONVERSATION: INDEXING EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY THROUGH QUESTION AND ANSWER SEQUENCE

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ABSTRACT. Questions are commonly described as a kind of sentence that request information from a person who is regarded as knowing by another person who is regarded as unknowing (Stivers, 2010). With regards to epistemic (knowledge) status of the participants in conversation, question and answer sequence can consequentially indexes the party who produces the question as K- (unknowing) vis a vis the party whom the question is being directed to or the party who answer as K+ (knowing) (John Heritage, 2013). This paper presents a detailed and in-depth study on a single multi-party conversation among friends, in Indonesian-Balinese (language). This study employs the qualitative method of Conversation Analysis (CA). CA employs naturally occurring conversation as its data and attends to the details of the talk-in-interaction. This paper presents how participants index and claim their epistemic authority within a question and answer sequence, which happens to be intertwined with another sequence, which is teasing. One participant produces a question to another participant. This question may be answerable to the other participants, since they are working in a similar field (scientist). It is revealed that in question and answer sequence, participants do orient to their relative epistemic statuses among each other. The participant who has the highest epistemic status and authority exercises and claims his epistemic authority by disqualifying and disregarding responses from other participants who has lower epistemic status than him.

KEYWORDS: question and answer, epistemic status, epistemic authority, teasing

PERCAKAPAN BAHASA INDONESIA- BALI SEHARI - HARI DENGAN PESERTA LEBIH DARI DUA: WEWENANG PENGETAHUAN DALAM UNTAIAN PERCAKAPAN TANYA-JAWAB

ABSTRAK. Secara umum pertanyaan digambarkan sebagai jenis kalimat yang meminta informasi dari seseorang yang dianggap sebagai pihak yang tahu (K+) oleh pihak lain yang tidak tahu (K-) " (Stivers, 2010). Dalam hal status pengetahuan, untaian percakapan pertanyaan dan jawaban dapat secara tidak langsung menunjukkan status keilmuan dari peserta percakapan, orang yang memberi pertanyaan dianggap sebagai orang yang tidak tahu (K-) sedangkan orang yang menjawab dianggap sebagai orang yang tahu (K+). Makalah ini menyajikan sebuah studi terperinci dan mendalam tentang percakapan multipartai di antara teman-teman, dalam bahasa Indonesia-Bali. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif Analisa Percakapan atau Conversation Analysis (CA). Metode Analisa Percakapan menggunakan percakapan yang terjadi secara alami sebagai datanya dan memperhatikan rincian percakapan secara mendetail dalam interaksi. Makalah ini menyajikan bagaimana peserta menunjukkan dan mengklaim otoritas atas kepemilikan pengetahuan (epistemic) mereka dalam untaian percakapan tanya jawab, yang kebetulan saling terkait dengan urutan lain, yaitu menggoda. Seorang peserta mengutarakan sebuah

pertanyaan kepada seorang peserta lain. Pertanyaan ini dapat juga dijawab oleh peserta lainnya karena mereka bekerja di bidang yang sama (ilmuwan). Terungkap bahwa dalam untaian percakapan tanya jawab, peserta berpedoman kepada status epistemik mereka yang sifatnya relative antara satu sama lain. Peserta yang memiliki status epistemik dan otoritas tertinggi menjalankan wewenang dan klaim epistemiknya dengan mengabaikan jawaban dari peserta yang sekiranya memiliki peringkat epistemik lebih rendah dari dirinya.

KATA KUNCI: question and answer, epistemic status, epistemic authority, teasing

INTRODUCTION

Heritage and Raymond (2005; 2006), introduced the feasibility of studying epistemic authority in assessment sequence in naturally occurring conversation. In their works, they showed that the participants are in fact aware of their relative epistemic (knowledge) statuses. In one case, one participant may have more knowledge than the others (referred to as the K+ person); while in other case one participant may have less knowledge than the others (referred to as the K- person). They also pointed out and elaborated how these K+ and K- epistemic statuses influence the way one produces an assessment (opinion or commentary), and response to that assessment. For example, a person who deems that he/she has less knowledge (K-) than his/her interlocutor may add tag question at the end of their conversational turn to indicate that she is unsure of what she just said. This tag question may then be regarded as seeking confirmation from the other participants. Raymond and Heritage' works (2005 & 2006) above have given a ground to study epistemic authority in assessment sequence of naturally occurring conversation.

There is actually a sequence where indexing epistemic statuses is supposed to be at its heart. That sequence is question and answer sequence. "[Q]uestions are traditionally defined as a sentence type that seek information from someone being treated as knowing by someone who is unknowing" (Stivers, 2010, p.2776). From relative epistemic of K+ and K- viewpoint, as asserted by Heritage and Raymond (2005 and 2006), it can be argued that question is asserted by a K- to a K+ participant. With regards to sequential position, then the turn that occurs after a question is consequentially relevant to be identified as produced by a K+ person.

Supporting the above supposition, in his more recent work, Heritage (2012) specifically enlisted the possibility of what he calls as information seeking turn from K- to K+ participant. He also enlisted interrogative sentence as a grammatical resource to perform request for information by a K- person (Heritage, 2012b). Hence, those confirming that epistemic status of not knowing can indeed be indexed through information seeking turn by performing interrogative syntax. In addition, Heritage also mentioned that although epistemic authority is an ever-present issue in conversation; there can be certain subtlety in identification as a consequence of sequential maneuvers that the participants perform in conversation.

Takanashi et. al (2006) have explored the sequential implication of triadic (three participants) conversation to the application of epistemic authority. They underscored the complicacy or subtlety in applying epistemic right in conversation, especially in assessment

(opinion or commentary) sequence, owing to the complicacy presented by more than two participants configuration. They found and explicated how the participants utilized shared knowledge and interpersonal relationship as means of indexing their epistemic statuses in assessment (opinion or commentary) sequence.

Sack, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) in their seminal paper on Conversation Analysis (CA) have also previously noticed this issue of complicacy of speaker selection in multi-party conversation. Furthermore, in their paper, Sack, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) also stated that "a current non-speaker, if interested in speaking next, will be under constraint to self-select at first possible transition point, and at each successive such point" (p.712). In other word, there is a pressure towards turn competition in multi-party conversation.

In two-party question and answer conversational sequence, the distribution and indexing of K+ and K- is rather straightforward. The person, whom the question is being directed to is referred as the K+; while the person who produces the question is the K-. In multi-party conversation, it may not be that straightforward. The conversation is also attended by persons other than the one to whom the question is being directed to in the conversation. Those individuals may have the knowledge to answer the question and may self-select themselves to answer the question. Thus, there are more than one K+ person. The question then, firstly, who has the right to answer the question, therefore playing out the role as the K+ person. The second question is then if it is possible to have more than one K+ person in a conversation, how this situation is then handled in conversation. Hitherto, the two questions above have escaped the attention of other CA researchers. The findings of this paper will contribute to our deeper understanding of conversational interaction, especially in the delicacy of how epistemic statuses in multi-party conversation environment are indexed.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs conversation analysis (CA) both as theoretical framework and analysis tool. In terms of paradigm, CA is closer to the phenomena being studied, which is language in social interaction. Conventional linguistic approaches may employ elicited data to study language, while CA favors naturally occurring conversation. It has the perspective of human interaction as organizational and procedural and see language as language-as-used (Have, 2007; Sidnell, 2010).

Conversation Analysis (CA) is built upon two fundamental ideas: turn taking and sequence organization. People take turns to talk. Hence, the basic unit of analysis in CA is Conversational Turn, instead of conventional linguistic units such as sentence. Conversational Turn then can be divided into its smaller unit which is Turn Constructional Unit (TCU). A completed TCU may be a prosodic and syntactical unit, as well as a completed action in pragmatic sense. At the end of a TCU, a speaker change may occur. That point is termed as Turn Relevance Place (TRP).

Often, some turns can only be followed or responded only by limited type of turns, for the first turn to be logically connected to the response. For example, a question can only

be followed by an answer to make them logically connected or sensible. People may respond to a question with a response that is not the answer to the preceding question, thus making the conversation logically challenging to be understood. They can be heard as merely exchanging gibberish, or the hearers have to do mental gymnast to logically understand the two turns. The two turns that are logically connected and produced in adjacent position is termed as Adjacency Pair. The first turn in an Adjacency Pair is termed as the First Pair Part (FPP) and the second one is termed as the Second Pair Part (SPP).

In addition, upon the completion of the FPP, the absence of the SPP is observable. For example, in a question and answer Adjacency Pair: at the TRP or the possible completion of the question FPP, a response or SPP in the form of answer is relevant. Consequently, absence of an SPP in the form of answer following a question FPP is observable. Its absence can even be understood as indication of trouble, whether it is trouble in understanding the question, trouble in producing an answer, or trouble of some other kinds.

Then, two or more turns which has time-sensitive connection to one another belong to a (conversational) sequence. A single pair of Adjacency Pair can make up a whole conversational sequence (Schegloff, 2007). However, it is often the case that the SPP is not produced straight away, hence resulting in an expanded Adjacency Pair. This expanded Adjacency Pair can also make up a single conversational sequence. Other than Adjacency Pair based, a conversational sequence can also be constructed based on completion of a pragmatic action. In trouble-telling sequence, the sequence technically initiated through "inquiry" or "noticing", and then went through several stages such as delivery of the trouble and then optimistic projection, before concluded through transition into other topic (Jefferson, 1988)

DATA

The data of this study was a naturally occurring five-party conversation in Indonesian-Balinese. The conversation was recorded in Singapore. There were five participants in this conversation, from right to left: Agus, Yasa, Made, Evi, and Okta (Figure 1: Okta, Evi, Made, Yasa & Agus). In protecting the participants' identities, their names are pseudonymized and their image (Figure 1: Okta, Evi, Made, Yasa & Agus is rendered into line-drawing in this paper. Since the conversation is done in Indonesian and Balinese, the part of conversation done in Balinese is underlined to mark the difference.

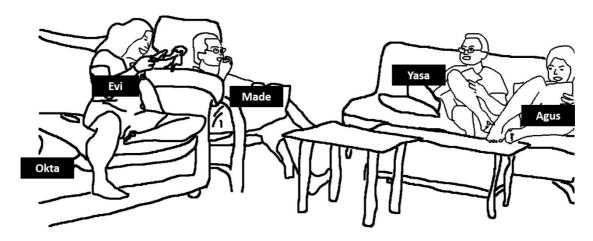


Figure 1: Okta, Evi, Made, Yasa & Agus

All participants were flat-mates. As can be seen in the picture (Figure 1: Okta, Evi, Made, Yasa & Agus, they were comfortable with each other and very well engaged in the conversation. The recording was done in their living room in the evening. They were spending their pastime by watching television and chatting. Evi was holding a banana, Made was holding a cut of papaya, Yasa was holding an envelope, while Agus was holding a book. Because of the limitation of camera angle, Okta was outside of the frame for most of the time. In addition, Okta was also cooking. Hence, she was moving back and forth from the living room to the adjacent kitchen. However, her voice was captured very well throughout the conversation and she was well involved in the conversation.

The analyzed conversation revolves around the topic of Agus' job. Agus, Yasa and Made are scientists. Though they were not working on the exact same field, their object of interest was the same: research in engineering and technology. Thus, they have a rough idea of each other's job and day to day tasks. Evi, on the other hand, was an architect. Her day to day tasks were very different from Agus, Yasa, and Made. Okta is Made's wife, hence she is more knowledgeable on Made's day to day tasks than Evi. Okta was also a research student, hence she might have more knowledge on Made, Agus and Yasa's job and day to day tasks than Evi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are two extracts discussed in this paper. Both are expanded question and answer sequences. In the two extracts, Evi who is not familiar with Agus' job, keeps on trying to gain information about his job. As we can observe later, Agus as a person whom the questions being directed to again and again fails to produce answers to Evi's question. Line 1 in Excerpt 1 is the beginning of the first sequence.

1. Evi : *Kamu kerjanya ngapain <u>ja men</u> di (0.2) kantormu*, You work-DET what work PART PART at office-your

2. Gus? What are your works at the office, Gus? / What do you usually do at the

office, Gus? Kenapa? 3. Agus Pardon? 4. Evi Kamu ngerjain apa aja di kantormu? You working what only at office-your What do you do at the office? 5. Agus Oh (.) banyak,= Owh, many : =Nonton YouTube tadi. 6. Made Watch YouTube earlier Earlier (you said you/ I saw you) watch YouTube 7. Evi What? 8. Made Tadi nonton YouTube Earlier watch YouTube Earlier (you said you/ I saw you) watch YouTube 9. Okta : Nonton YouTube Watch YouTube 10. All ((laugh)) 11. Evi Nonton [YouTube] Watch YouTube [Kalau] gak eksperimen,= 12. Agus If not experiment If not doing experiment 13. Evi = YouTube((nodding her head while staring at Agus)) 14. Agus Baca paper↓ Reading paper 15. Okta : [Yeah::: Keto kone, tadi katanya] si, nonton YouTube Like that earlier said Yeah, really, earlier (someone) said watching YouTube 16. Evi ((unclear)) 1 17. Agus : Itu ini ku, temenku di samping That this my, friend-my at side ((hand gesture shake left and right)) ((laugh)) That is my, my colleague besides me 18. Okta O:::h 19. Yasa Aduh Asik je ye oo EXCL Cool PART he okay He's so lucky 20. Agus Sing ada boss NEG exist boss in addition In addition, the boss was absence too

Conversational Extract 1

Evi has just came from her room, bringing banana on her hand. As she sits down and peels the banana in her hand, she produces a question (Line 1 & 2, Conversational Extract 1). She says *kamu kerjanya ngapain ja men di kantormu, Gus?* 'What do you usually do at the office, Gus?' As Evi says, Gus at the end of her turn, it is evidenced that her question is directed at Agus. Consequently, Agus is being selected as the next speaker, a person who must answer Evi's question. In terms of epistemic status, by asking for information about Agus' job and

specifically marking Agus as the next speaker, Evi can also be construed as indexing herself as the less knowledgeable person (K-) and Agus as the more knowledgeable person (K+).

After an expansion, in which Agus indicates his trouble in understanding Evi's question (Line 3, Conversational Extract 1) and Evi rephrases her turn (Line 4, Conversational Extract 1), Agus produces a 'response'. He says *banyak* 'many' (Line 5, Conversational Extract 1). This turn has the potential to be understood as an answer to Evi's question (Line 1). However, as the form suggest (*ja men* 'what are'), the question specifically requests Agus to produce a list of things he does at work. Saying *banyak* 'a lot' does not address that specification. In that sense, Agus response only partially answer the question.

Then, latching to Agus' response, Made says *nonton YouTube tadi* '(Just now you said you) watch YouTube' (Line 6, Conversational Extract 1). Made employs the word *tadi* earlier, which can be understood as either referring to a point in time when he witnessed Agus watching YouTube in his office, or to a point in time when Agus said that he watched YouTube in his office. Made's answer (Line 6, Conversational Extract 1) is then responded with a disbelief by Evi. In line 7 (Conversational Extract 1), she produces an exclamation in the form of rising ↑A. In turn, her disbelief is then responded through a reformulation by Made. He says *tadi nonton YouTube* (Line 8, Conversational Extract 1), which similar to Line 5 (Extract 1).

Made's response (Line 8) is then followed by a repetition from Okta (Line 9), which invites a laughter from all of the participants (Line 10). The laughter is then followed by another repetition from Evi (Line 11, Conversational Extract 1). The laughable or object of the laughter (Glenn, 2003; Glenn & Holt, 2013; G. Jefferson, 1979) in this turn is possibly the mismatch between watching YouTube and office. YouTube is a video sharing website and internet based application. Though one may find many tutorial and educational videos in YouTube, much of the videos in it are entertainment in nature. In addition, the place (a University) where Agus works has a reliable and fast internet connection, a condition ideal for video watching activity. It is an open secret for staffs to watch YouTube in the office from time to time, though they are actually expected to do only work-related tasks in the office. Hence, the laughable here is the mismatch between being at the office and watching (potentially entertainment videos in) YouTube.

Line 6-11 (Conversational Extract 1), can be seen as a teasing sequence. First of all, a tease is commonly directed at the innocence, naivety, or peculiarity of one's action or statement (Drew, 1987). Here the tease can be seen as being directed specifically at the naivety of Agus who is watching YouTube in his office when he is supposedly doing work related tasks. Secondly, a tease is closely related to laughter. As Made's turn (Line 6) is produced with a grinning smile and a hint of laughter, his turn can be construed as an invitation to smile or laugh to other participants (Jefferson, 1979).

Though Agus appeared to be accepting the tease well, as he also laughs alongside other participants (Line 10, Conversational Extract 1), his next action can be understood as a defense or poker face response (Drew, 1987). It is an attempt to defend himself to get himself out of the "ridiculed" position. In overlap with Evi's repetition (Line 11), Agus says *kalau gak experiment, baca paper* 'if not doing experiment, reading paper' (Line 12 and 14). As a

scientist in Engineering, Agus is expected to perform experiment and reading paper (journal article). In so doing, he indicates that he is doing what he is supposed to be doing in the office.

In response to Agus' defense (Line 12), instead of accepting it as a serious answer, Evi tries to tease him even further. In overlap with the second part of Agus' turn *baca paper* 'read paper' (Line 12), Evi says *nonton YouTube* 'watch YouTube (Line 13). However, disregarding Evi's response Agus continues with the second part of his turn (Line 14).

Agus' line 12 and 14 can be seen as a continuation to his own turn, earlier in the conversation (Line 5). In Line 5 he says *owh banyak* 'oh, many' in response to Evi's question on what his tasks at the office. Line 12 and 14 can be seen as an explication of *owh banyak* 'oh, many'. In line 1, Evi addresses the question to Agus and the question is about Agus' work, consequently it indexes Agus as the higher bearer of knowledge or epistemic authority in the matter of Agus' work. As Agus can be understood as continuing his statement earlier in Line 5, he can be seen as exercising his epistemic authority. He disqualifies previous answers to Evi's question (Line 1) from other people: Made (Line 6 and 8), Okta (Line 9) and Evi (Line 11).

The attempt to tease Agus does not stop at Evi's turn (Line 13). In Line 15, Okta says *Yeah::: Keto kone, tadi katanya si, nonton YouTube* 'Yeah, really, earlier (someone) said watching YouTube. Okta's response can be seen as an attempt to disqualifies Agus' version of what he does at the office (Antaki & Horowitz, 2000).

Instead of acceptance, this attempt to disqualify Agus' version of story then gains a clarification. Agus then clarifies that it was his colleague who sits beside him who is watching YouTube (Line 17, Conversational Extract 1). This clarification does not meet any further attempt of disqualification from Okta or other participants. Evidently, Yasa then produces a turn commenting about Agus's clarification (Line 19) and then Agus response to that comment (Line 20). The conversation then moves away from teasing Agus activity of watching YouTube at the office.

In addition, Okta displays her 'change of state' (Heritage, 1984) from not knowing to knowing (Line 18). This change of state token 'oh' (Line 18) indicates Okta's acceptance of Agus' version of what he does at his office. At the same time, it also marks her as the less knowledgeable person in this matter. She does not know, has less knowledge, or has false knowledge about the actual person who watched YouTube in the office. Agus' is the bearer of the knowledge of who watches YouTube in his office.

1. Evi : Kamu buat mesin apa gimana?=

You make machine what how Do you make a machine or what?

2. Agus : =Enggak

No

3. Made : Dari baca dulu, Oh ini ni kayaknya enak dicoba

From reading first Owh this this (PART) like-DET good to be tried

From reading first, owh, looks like this one is good to be tried

4. Evi : Oh gitu?

Owh, like that

5. Made : Hm ((agreement) [makanya bisa-] ((cut off))

So can

That is why (one) can

6. Agus : [AKU bikin] gini, LED, bikin lampu

I make this LED make lamp

I make this LED, I make lamp

7. Evi : *Ah, serius* serious

Are you serious? ((I don't believe you))

8. Agus : *Ya*

Yes

Conversational Extract 2

Conversational Extract 2 occurs later in the talk. Here Evi again directs her question towards Agus and asks about Agus' work. The way Evi produces her question in Line 1 (Conversational Extract 2) gives a potential to be understood as a polar question (Stivers, 2010). Polar question invites answer in the form of either affirmation or negation. Agus' response in Line 2 reflects that constraint. He merely produces a negation. Though he possibly has prepared a longer response, Made jumps in and produces a potentially rival answer. He says 'from reading first, owh, looks like this one is good to be tried; (Line 3, Conversational Extract 2).

It appears that Evi has regarded Made's answer (line 3) as a sufficient answer. As an evidence, she says *owh gitu* 'owh, like that' (Line 4, Conversational Extract 2), which can be understood as an indication of her change of state of knowledge: from not knowing into knowing. Indirectly, this expression (Line 4, Conversational Extract 2) can also be understood as indexing Made as a person who is more knowledge on Agus' work than her.

Made, on the other hand, does not seem to be satisfied with his own response. He continues with more talk. After producing an acceptance to Evi's change of state token, he initiates another turn with *makanya bisa* 'that's why (one) can' (Line 5). This potentially more talk is then aborted. His *makanya bisa* 'that's why (one) can' (Line 5) is in overlap with the initial part of Agus' turn (Line 6). As a result of this overlap, he discontinued his turn and after *makanya bisa* 'that's why (one) can', Made is no longer speaking.

In the next turn (Line 6), Agus claims back his epistemic authority. In so doing he affirms his position as the highest bearer of the knowledge about his job. In overlap with Made's attempt to initiate a new turn (Line 5), Agus says *aku bikin gini LED*, *bikin lampu* 'I'm making this LED, making lamps' (Line 6, Conversational Extract 2). This response can be seen as an attempt to claim epistemic authority, since it totally disregards Made's previous responses (Line 3 and 5). It does not bear any indication of building upon Made's responses (Line 3 and 5). Instead of making a connection to Made's previous turns (Line 3 and 5), Agus can be seen as making a connection from his own previous turn (Line 2).

The other participants appear to give up to Agus as the bearer of the knowledge of what he is doing at work. After Line 6, Agus' response does not meet any resistance from Made or other participants. It is only Evi who displays her disbelief (Line 7). Her disbelief

may be resulted from Agus claims that he is MAKING LED (Light Emitting Diode). Though Agus experiments on different formula of making LED, thus he can be said to make LEDs (in a very small scale and number); he does not actually produce LED lamp for public consumption. His explanation that he is making LED is rather misleading. However, as indicated by the absence of response from the other participants, Agus' response appears to be deemed as sufficient response to Evi's question in Line 1 by the other participants. Evidently, there is no further response from other participants.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on above analysis, it is feasible to detect how participants exercise their epistemic authority in question and answer sequence. First and foremost, participants do aware and orient to the epistemic (knowledge) imbalance in the conversation. In fact, it is the epistemic imbalance that is the driving force of the question and answer sequences observed in the data (Conversational Extract 1 and 2). Evi as the K- speaker, who required information, kept on pursuing answer for her question. As observable, this constraint still applies even in the non-serious context of teasing.

The participants indeed orient to the relative epistemic statuses among each other. Agus was the one who had the right to answer, therefore playing out the role as the K+ person. His right to answer was derived from two factors. Firstly, he was the one to whom the initial question, from Evi, was being directed to. Then secondly, the question was about his job. So, among other speakers he was the one who has the highest access. He exerted his right by defeating other participant's (Okta) attempt to disqualify his version of story and easily disregarding other participant's (Made) answers.

The above analysis has showed how epistemic authority is indexed among multiple participants in question and answer sequence. It is very interesting to perform similar study in which there is perhaps more than one direct K+ bearer. In this study, hierarchically, one participant (Agus) has the utmost K+ status, because the knowledge in question is about his job. Though other participants may have the idea of what he does at his office, the person who experiences the work is only one, Agus.

The concepts utilized in this analysis were coming from conversation in other languages and those concepts work very well in Indonesian-Balinese conversation. By considering that the data is in language contact situation of Indonesian - Balinese, this study also has presented evidences toward universality in conversation on epistemic engine, as well as grammatical resource in conversation and the nature of turn taking in multi-party conversation. Since there are very limited study on conversational Indonesian, let alone conversational Indonesian in language contact situation of Indonesian – Balinese, more studies need to be done to Indonesian – Balinese conversation.

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