



Analysis of Conversational Structure in “Cerita Untungs” Podcast: About Education Curriculum in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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Podcasts are digital media where speakers communicate naturally, making them suitable for analyzing conversational structure. Although many studies explore conversations in classrooms, talk shows, and daily interactions, research focusing on Indonesian podcast, especially those discussing educational issues is still limited. Therefore, this study aims to identify and explain the five conversational elements proposed turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, back-channels, and adjacency pairs. The data were collected from a 36 minute episode of the Cerita Untungs podcast titled Kurikulum Pendidikan Indonesia Bikin Bodoh, Pak Nadiem Menteri Gagal, SMP Belum Bisa Baca?, which was transcribed and coded using a descriptive qualitative method. The results show 435 instances of turn-taking, 141 instances of pauses, 93 occurrences of overlaps, 153 back-channel responses, and 129 adjacency pairs. These features help organize the flow of the conversation and support the speakers in delivering their ideas clearly. The findings also indicate that the conversational patterns are influenced by the podcast's informal communication style and its discussion of issues related to Indonesia's education system. This study contributes to understanding Conversational structure in digital media and highlights the role of Indonesian podcasts as platforms for public discussion on social and educational issues.

Keywords: Conversational Structure, Turn-Taking, Back-Channels, Adjacency Pairs, Podcast

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INTRODUCTION

Conversation analysis is an important field in pragmatics because it helps us understand how people create meaning when they talk. It studies the rules and patterns that organize everyday communication. Sacks et al. (1974, as cited in Fatimah et al., 2024) explain that conversations follow a systematic structure that speakers use naturally. These structures include turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, back-channels, and adjacency pairs, which help manage how people speak and respond to each other.

Podcasts are a modern digital medium where people usually speak in a natural and spontaneous way. Because podcast conversations are not scripted, they show real communication behavior. In Indonesia, podcasts are becoming a popular platform for discussing topics such as education, politics, and social issues. The episode “Kurikulum Pendidikan Indonesia Bikin Bodoh, Pak Nadiem Menteri Gagal, SMP Belum Bisa Baca?” from the Cerita Untungs podcast discusses problems in the national education curriculum. This episode provides useful data for analyzing conversational structure in a real and informal context.

The speakers in the episode share their opinions about the effectiveness of Indonesia's education policies. Their interaction shows how conversational features help them explain ideas, respond to each other, and guide the flow of discussion. Many previous studies explore conversational structures in classrooms, radio programs, talk shows, or face-to-face interactions. However, only a few studies examine podcast conversations, especially those that discuss social and political issues in Indonesia. This gap shows the importance of studying conversational structure in podcasts

Previous studies, such as Radika and Setiawati (2020), this study showed how various types of turn-taking, like starting, taking over, interruptions, and overlaps, create a lively and interesting conversation in the podcast, making the discussion more even and engaging. Ningrum and Santoso (2021), the research focuses on turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, back channels, and adjacency pairs are important parts of the conversation that help keep it clear and smooth. Another study by Amelia (2022) focuses on the conversational structure and strategy used in conversation like turn-taking strategy, and adjacency pairs. A study by Bernardo et al. (2024) focused on turn-taking Analysis on Najwa Shihab's YouTube Channel together with Prabowo Subianto. Although these studies contribute important ideas, they do not focus on podcast conversations about public issues. Therefore, this research aims to address this limitation.

This study analyzes the conversational structure in the Cerita Untungs podcast using Yule's (2006) five elements: turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, back-channels, and adjacency pairs. The study identifies how these features appear in the conversation and explains their functions. By examining these elements, the research shows how the speakers build arguments, express their views, and maintain interaction throughout the discussion.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of conversational structure in digital media, especially in Indonesian podcasts. It also shows how podcast conversations support public discussions about important issues, such as education, in a natural and accessible way.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. This method was chosen because the goal of the research is to describe and explain the conversational structures that appear in a podcast. According to Yule (2006), conversation structure has several important elements: turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, backchannels, and adjacency pairs. By using a descriptive qualitative approach, the researcher can study these five elements in detail, not only by counting how many times they appear, but also by explaining how they function in the conversation.

The data of this study come from one episode of the Cerita Untungs podcast entitled Kurikulum Pendidikan Indonesia Bikin Bodoh, Pak Nadiem Menteri Gagal, SMP Belum Bisa Baca?. The podcast is hosted by Ari Untung with guest speaker Ibnu Yamin. This episode was selected because it discusses an important issue, the Indonesian education curriculum, which is widely debated in society. In addition, the conversation in this episode shows natural communication, making it suitable for analysis using conversation analysis.

The data collection process was carried out in several steps. First, the researcher watched and listened to the podcast many times to make sure every part of the conversation was well understood. Repeated listening also helped avoid missing any details. Second, the researcher created a complete transcript of the conversation. Every word was written as spoken, including pauses, overlaps, and short responses. The transcript was first written in Indonesian, then translated into English to support the analysis based on international theories. Third, the researcher carefully checked the transcript again to ensure accuracy, especially in representing pauses and overlaps.

After collecting the data, the next step was to analyze the transcript. The analysis focused on identifying five conversational features: turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, backchannels, and adjacency pairs. Each element was noted and categorized according to how it appeared in the conversation. The researcher also counted the frequency of each element. For example, the number of turn-takings showed how often the speakers changed

roles, while the number of backchannels showed how much support the listener gave during the talk.

The counting process gave a quantitative picture of how the conversation worked, while the explanations of each element provided qualitative insights. In other words, the research did not only present numbers but also explained how these features help the conversation run smoothly. To ensure accuracy, parts of the transcript were reviewed again at different times. Finally, the results of the analysis were connected to the theories in the literature review. This way, the study provides not only data but also shows how theories of conversation analysis can be seen in real-life practice in podcasts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study examines the conversation structure in the “Cerita Untungs” podcast episode about Indonesia’s education curriculum. The episode lasts 36 minutes, hosted by Ari with Ibnu as the guest speaker. The analysis focuses on identifying elements such as Turn-Taking, Pause, Overlap, Backchannel, and Agency Pair from the transcript. The results show how the speakers interacted, including their level of engagement and patterns of communication during the conversation. The details are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Frequency of Conversational Features in Ari and Ibnu’s Podcast

	Conversational Features	Frequency
	Turn-taking	435
	Pause	141
	Overlap	93
	Backchannel	153
	Agency Pair	129

a. Turn-taking

The turn-taking is the exchange of speaking turns between participants in a conversation, where the speaker and the listener switch roles without any fixed rules or signals. This means that each person has the same opportunity to speak and respond during the interaction. In the podcast, Ari and Ibnu take turns speaking naturally, showing how they share the conversation equally. The examples of their turn-taking can be seen in the following data.

[4.12– 5.52]

Ibnu: “The education system, uh, there are many complaints. The issues in society, especially from parents, teachers, and some young teachers, I noticed they complain about the current education system, especially about the problem you mentioned earlier, Mas Ari.”

Ari Untung: “Hmm.”

Ibnu: “For example, many junior high school students can’t read, and their math skills are still poor. This is actually something designed, intentionally made, because some rules were changed from before—maybe from your school days, Mas Ari, or from my school days into how it is now, where elementary and junior high school students will always graduate. So, there’s no such thing as failing a grade.”

Ari Untung: “They’ll never repeat a grade.”

The context of the conversation is a podcast between Ari and Ibnu. Ari asks Ibnu where the problem is. After asking, Ari pauses, giving Ibnu a chance to answer. Ibnu uses the chance to explain the problems in the education system, such as complaints from parents and teachers, and students’ reading and math skills. After Ibnu finishes, Ari gives a short response. This shows a turn-taking pattern between Ari–Ibnu–Ari. Therefore, this conversation is an example of turn-taking.

b. Pause

A pause is a break in speech used to think or to emphasize a point. In conversation, a pause is a moment of silence that marks a shift or change in the flow of talk. In the podcast between Ari and Ibnu, pauses naturally occur, for example, when a speaker takes time to think before continuing or wants to give emphasis to what is being said.

[2.14–2.21] Ari: "...what we think is surely elementary school material...(pause)...Many of them can't answer."

[3.45–3.52] Ari: "...Back when I was in elementary school...(pause)...it was hard for us to move up to the next grade."

The context of Ari's conversation above takes place during a casual discussion in the podcast. At that time, Ari was sharing his opinion about material he thought was at the elementary school level. While speaking, Ari stopped for a moment. The pause happened after the words "elementary school material" in the first example and after "when I was in elementary school" in the second example. This short pause of about 2 seconds shows that Ari was thinking before continuing to speak.

c. Overlap

Overlap is when two speakers talk at the same time. It refers to a situation where both the speaker and the listener talk at the same time. The overlaps in the conversation between Ari and Ibnu in the podcast appear in the following data.

[8.51- 8.54]

Ibnu: "Well, if it's the curriculum, there will definitely be differences."

Ari Untung: "Yeah." (interrupting)

Ibnu: "But the problem comes when the quality..."

The context of the overlap above is a discussion in the podcast when Ibnu is sharing his opinion about the curriculum. He says that if it is about the curriculum, there will always be differences, and continues his explanation. While Ibnu is still speaking, Ari Untung says "Yeah" to show agreement. This creates an overlap because they speak at almost the same time. It shows that in natural conversation, people sometimes talk together, especially to agree or support the other person.

d. Back-channel

A back-channel is a short response that shows the listener is listening without interrupting the speaker. It is the response the speaker expects from the listener, which can be in the form of words, body movements, or gestures. In the podcast between Ari and Ibnu, back-channels can be seen when one responds with small words or gestures while the other is speaking. The examples are shown in the following data.

[20.58- 21.01]

Ibnu: "I hope that in the future, the zoning system will be better if it is removed."

Ari: "Heem."

The context of this conversation, Ibnu is expressing his opinion that the school zoning system should be removed in the future. Ari responds with a short utterance "Heem". This response can be seen as a back-channel, which is a short signal that shows the listener is paying attention and interested, without interrupting the speaker's turn.

According to Yngve (1970), back-channel expressions such as "yes," "hmm," or "I see" are used to let the speaker know the listener is following the discussion. In this context, Ari's "Heem" fits the situation because it shows understanding, supports Ibnu's opinion, and keeps the conversation flowing. By giving this quick feedback right after Ibnu's statement, Ari helps maintain the smooth exchange of ideas and strengthens the cooperative atmosphere in the discussion.

e. Adjacency Pair

Adjacency pair is a set of two related parts in a conversation. This pattern happens naturally and always involves two speakers. In the podcast between Ari and Ibnu, adjacency pairs occur when one person asks a question and the other answers. The examples can be seen in the following data.

[2.39- 2.46]

Ari Untung: "...and now we meet with Mr. Ibnu Hasibuan. Assalamualaikum."

Ibnu Hasibuan: "Walaikumsalam Wr. Wb."

Ari Untung: "Mr. Ibnu, how are you?"

Ibnu: "Thank you, sir."

The context of this conversation is at the start of a podcast recording. The host, Ari Untung, welcomes the guest, Ibnu Hasibuan, by saying "Assalamualaikum", which is a polite greeting. Ibnu answers with "Walaikumsalam Wr. Wb.", which is the polite and expected reply. After this greeting, Ari asks "Mr. Ibnu, how are you?" to make the conversation friendly. Ibnu replies with "Thank you mas", which politely answers the question. These short exchanges show a common conversation pattern where one person's words lead to a clear and expected reply.

Schegloff and Sacks (1973) call this pattern an adjacency pair. It means that the first part of the conversation makes the second part happen naturally. In this example, the greeting and the reply, as well as the question and the answer, follow this pattern. This shows that both speakers understand and follow the normal rules of conversation. It also helps the conversation flow smoothly and keeps a friendly and respectful mood at the start of the podcast.

The results of the analysis shows that all five conversational features appear in the podcast. Turn-taking happens frequently, showing active participation by both speakers. Overlaps are also present, but most of them are short and used to signal agreement rather than to interrupt.

Back-channels such as "yes," "hmm," and "okay" occur many times. These responses indicate that the listener is paying attention and following the conversation. Pauses are also observed, both short and long, giving time for speakers to think and making some statements sound more serious. Finally, adjacency pairs, such as question-answer, are clearly visible in the data. These pairs help to connect turns and organize the conversation.

The findings also show that each conversational feature has its own role in shaping how the discussion flows. For instance, turn-taking not only gives both speakers the same chance to talk but also shows respect for each other's roles. Pauses make the talk sound more natural because they give time for thinking and help the audience to better understand the message. Overlaps, which are often seen as interruptions, in this case actually show agreement or enthusiasm, so they add energy to the discussion. Back-channels give short but continuous feedback, which encourages the speaker to keep talking with confidence. Adjacency pairs, such as greetings and question-answer exchanges, are also important because they follow cultural norms of politeness and create a friendly atmosphere from the start to the end of the podcast.

The combination of these features also shows that a podcast conversation can be both informal and well-structured at the same time. Even though the style of talk is relaxed, the presence of these features makes the discussion organized and easy to follow. This balance reflects the way people in Indonesia usually communicate in daily life—being supportive, respectful, and cooperative. Therefore, these findings not only describe the structure of this podcast but also give a picture of the wider communication style in Indonesian society. They also prove that even on digital platforms like podcasts, conversational features are still very important in building meaningful and effective interaction.

Discussion

Based on the data analysis, the conversation between the host, Ari Untung, and the guest, Ibnu Hasibuan, in the Cerita Untungs podcast shows five important conversational structures: turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, back-channels, and adjacency pairs.

The first feature is turn-taking. Yule (2006:122) defines turn-taking as the process in which speakers alternate roles without following strict rules. Every participant in the conversation has an equal opportunity to speak. In this podcast, Ari and Ibnu exchange turns naturally, showing that they understand when to start, when to pause, and when to allow the other person to speak. This practice keeps the conversation balanced and easy to follow. This finding supports Setyowati (2020), who noted that turn-taking helps maintain respect and clarity in both formal and informal setting.

The second feature is pauses. According to Yule (2006:125), a pause is a moment of silence that often gives the speaker time to think or to signals a change in the discussion. In the podcast, pauses occur when Ibnu is explaining complex issues, which allows the audience time to process the information. This finding is in line with Jefferson (1985), who argued that pauses can be meaningful rather than empty. However, if pauses are too long may disrupt the rhythm of the conversation.

The third feature is overlaps. Yule (2006:124) explains that overlaps occur when two people speak at the same time. In this podcast, overlaps happen when Ari gives short supportive comments like “Yeah” while Ibnu is still talking. This is not considered an interruption but rather a sign of active listening, making the conversation feel more lively. Ahmad (2019) found similar patterns in Indonesian talk shows, where overlaps are often used to show enthusiasm. Still, if overlaps are too frequent, they could confuse the audience.

The fourth feature is back-channels. As described by Yule (2006:129), back-channels are short signals like “uh-huh” “yes” that show attention without talking over the talk. In the podcast, Ari often uses short responses like “Heem” to show that he is following and supporting what Ibnu is saying. This creates a cooperative stmosphere and strengthens the connection between speakers. Suryani (2022) also foud that Indonesian speakers often use short phrases as “iya” or “begitu” in everyday conversation. Compared to English, these local backchannels carry cultural meaning, showing both attentiveness and politeness.

The last feature is adjacency pairs. Yule (2006:132) states that adjacency pairs are paired utterances that naturally occur together, such as a question followed by an answer or a greeting followed by another greeting. In the podcast, Ari says “Assalamualaikum” and Ibnu replies “Walaikumsalam Wr. Wb.” Another example is when Ari asks “How are you?” and Ibnu responds “Thank you mas.” These patterns are not only conversational structure but also reflect Indonesian cultural values of politeness and help set a warm and respectful tone for the conversation.

In summary, these five conversational structures make the podcast engaging, natural, and culturally appropriate. They help both speakers maintain mutual respect, ensure clarity of ideas, and encourage interaction. At the same time, some features such as overlaps and pauses can have both positive and negative effects depending on how they are used. Overall, the analysis shows that podcasts can be a rich source for studying conversational structures, and that theories of conversation analysis can be effectively applied to understand how Indonesian speakers interact in digital media.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the conversation in the Cerita Untungs podcast between host Ari Untung and guest Ibnu Hasibuan has turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, back-channels, and adjacency pairs. Trese features maintain balance, clarity, and engagement in the discussion. Turn-taking happens because both speakers get a chance to speak and respond during the discussion. Both Ari and Ibnu understand when to talk and when to let the other person speak, so the conversation flows naturally and stays balanced.

Pauses are also used in the conversation to give time for thinking, to highlight important points, or to show a change in the topic. Overlaps happen when Ari and Ibnu speak at the same time, usually because of quick reactions or agreement. Back-channels appear when one speaker gives short responses—like “Heem”—to show they are listening and

paying attention without interrupting.

Adjacency pairs are seen when greetings are answered right away or when questions get immediate answers. These patterns follow natural conversation rules and cultural habits, helping to make the talk friendly and respectful. In general, these five conversational structures help make the podcast conversation smooth, interesting, and polite.

The results of this study are useful in several ways. For podcast creators, knowing about conversational structures can help make their shows more interesting for listeners. For teachers and students, podcast scripts can be used as real examples to teach how people talk in everyday conversations. For other researchers, the way this study was done can be used to compare different kinds of podcasts or study conversations in more than one language. Future studies could also measure speaking time in detail or compare podcasts from Indonesia with those from other countries.

This study also shows that podcasts are not only for entertainment but also for meaningful discussion in Indonesian society. Podcasts give space for informal conversations that still deal with serious issues, such as education, politics, and culture. The way people speak in podcasts reflects cultural values, such as respect, politeness, and cooperation. Of course, this study has some limitations. It only looked at one episode, so the findings may not represent all kinds of podcasts. Also, the focus was only on spoken words, without including non-verbal elements like gestures, facial expressions, or tone of voice. These parts are also important for full understanding of communication.

For future research, it would be useful to study more podcast episodes from different themes like economy, health, or politics. Researchers can also compare Indonesian podcasts with those from other countries to see the similarities and differences in conversation styles. Another important step is to analyze non-verbal communication, such as gestures and intonation, because these add more meaning to spoken interaction.

In conclusion, this research proves that podcasts mirror the natural way people talk, even when the topic is serious. Features like turn-taking, pauses, overlaps, back-channels, and adjacency pairs help make conversations smooth, clear, and engaging. These findings are important for students, teachers, researchers, and media creators. They show that podcasts can be more than just entertainment—they are also a medium for sharing ideas, teaching communication skills, and supporting cultural values of respectful and cooperative dialogue.

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