

---

# **The Accuracy of the Action Sequences in Conversation Class Textbooks Dialogues at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University**

*Ilham Pramudya Kusuma*

*Noerhayati Ika Putri*

*English Department, Universitas Airlangga*

---

## **Abstract**

This study attempts to analyze the accuracy of action sequences found in the dialogues of three conversation class textbooks at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University. Those three textbooks are chosen to be analyzed as the representative of the textbooks that are mostly used by Pusat Bahasa instructors. The main objective of this study is to analyze whether the peer dialogues are accurately presented in the four action sequences: invitation, offer, request, and apology found in those three textbooks. In analyzing the peer dialogues within those four action sequences, Conversation Analysis (CA) by Emanuel A. Schegloff (2007) is used as the parameter. The final result of this study shows that there are some inaccurate dialogues found in the four action sequences written in those three textbooks. Thus, the three textbooks analyzed should be revised in order to increase the education quality in Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University.

**Keywords:** conversation analysis , textbooks, action sequences, invitation, offer, request, apology

---

## **Introduction**

This study examines the accuracy of action sequences in the peer dialogues of conversation class textbooks at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University. The aim of this study is to know whether the Conversation Materials at Pusat Bahasa are accurate or not to be used as the sample dialogues based on Conversation Analysis.

In learning English conversation, students could use many reliable samples as their guides such as those from textbooks, eBook, etc. Those books are provided by many institutions and sources, for instance by book publishers, language schools, internet, and many more. Among all of them, textbooks still become the main tools for Indonesian people in learning English. They probably become one of the main sources in the teaching-learning process in Indonesia. Textbooks also have impact in affecting the students' evaluation and assumption to certain idea (Putri, 2007). In learning the good process of English conversation, especially at language schools, textbooks can be considered as frequently used and important one beside the teacher.

Textbooks can be used as one of the important tools by students. The effectiveness can be seen through the organization of the dialogue, whether the order of conversation are structured or not. The model learning of textbooks also should be authentic since it represents the native speaker conversation. Through the authentic dialogues, students are expected to be able to learn how to organize conversation as good as native speaker. By knowing the conversation structure, the students could know how to start and end a conversation in a good way.

One of language schools that provide textbooks for its conversation class is Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University. The conversation class textbooks of Pusat Bahasa consist of certain levels. They are pre beginner, beginner, upper beginner, pre intermediate, intermediate, and high intermediate. The textbook from each level has different topics and focuses. Since textbooks have the important role towards students' perception, it has to provide the accurate materials which reflect real language. The English materials in the textbooks of some language schools may be authentic or not. If it is authentic, it can be a good model for students. If it is not authentic or the dialogue is not accurate, it could be problematic because it cannot provide a culturally based model for students.

According to Betsy, English textbooks should provide the authentic materials or at least accurate materials which are based on the real language (2004, p.223). Therefore, in terms of conversation dialogues for example, the textbooks' writers are expected to be able to make some accurate dialogues which are adopted from authentic conversations.

## **Research Question**

Despite of the research, it is unclear how peer dialogues use in conversation textbooks. Therefore, this study aims demonstrate whether the Conversation Materials at Pusat Bahasa are accurate or not to be used as the sample dialogues based on Conversation Analysis. The research question is how is action sequences dialogues accurately presented in Conversation Class Textbooks used at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University?

## **Literature Review**

### **Authentic Materials**

In this study, the writer uses some theories that are related to the analysis of the study such as theory of conversation analysis and the description about the accuracy of action sequences in conversation textbook. Through the accuracy, the writer would find further whether the dialogues in textbooks are accurate enough like the authentic conversations that occur in daily life. The accuracy of textbooks is the most important part in analyzing the authenticity. Authenticity is one of important factors in creating Communicative Language Teaching. As Brown (2000) says that "the fundamentally communicative properties of language, and classrooms were increasingly characterized by authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks" (p.42). He also stated that "authentic language in the classroom to the total exclusion of any potentially helpful controlled exercises, grammatical pointers, and other analytical devices" (p.46).

### **Conversation Analysis**

Conversation Analysis is the study of talk and other forms of conduct (including the description of the body in gesture, posture, facial expression and on going activities in the setting) in all forms of interaction (Schegloff, 2002). According to Sidnell (2010) Conversation Analysis aims to 'describe, analyse, and understand talk as a basic and constitutive feature of human social life'. In analysing the data, there are also some basic principles. According to Seedhouse (2005), the basic principles of CA are as follows:

- a. There is order at all points in interaction: Talk in interaction is systematically organized, deeply ordered and methodic.
- b. Contributions to interaction are context-shaped and context-renewing: Contributions to interaction cannot be adequately understood except by reference to the sequential environment in which they occur and in which the participants design them to occur. They also form part of sequential environment in which a next contribution will occur.
- c. No order of detail can be dismissed a priori as disorderly, accidental, or irrelevant (Heritage 1984, p.s41): CA has a detailed transcription system, and a highly empirical orientation.
- d. Analysis is bottom-up and data driven: The data should not be approached with any prior theoretical assumptions, regarding, for example, power, gender, or race; unless there is evidence in the details of the interaction that the interactants themselves are orienting to it.

### **Action Sequences**

#### **Invitation**

Schegloff (2007) says that "preliminaries that project such specific imminent First Pair Parts (FPPs) are called type-specific pre-sequences" (pp.28-29). Further, he says that, "there are two functions of pre-invitations: to project the possibility that a base FPP (invitation) will be produced and also it makes relevant next the production of second pair part (response to pre-invitation)" (p.29). According to Schegloff (2007) pre-invitations have three types of responses: go-ahead, hedging and blocking responses.

## **Offer**

According to Schegloff (2007) in pre-offers, those who have something to offer will try to assess whether their offers will be accepted or not and that the offers will depend on the response of the pre-offers. Similar to pre-invitations, pre-offers response divided further into: go-ahead, blocking, and hedging response.

## **Request**

Request is another type of action sequences which has similarities with the previous two actions: invitation and offers. In a pre-request, an offer would be more preferred than a go-ahead response. This different preference involves different persons, an offer by someone who has something to offer rather than a request to the potential recipient (Schegloff, 2007).

## **Apology**

Robinson (2004) focuses on the sequential organizations of “explicit” apologies. He only talks about sorry-based units of talks and offers of apology that are different from other “offense-remedial-related actions” like “it’s my fault”, “forgive me”, “I beg your pardon” (p.293).

## **The Grouping of Correct and Problematic Dialogues**

Based on the characteristics as explained in the previous sub-topic, the writer uses several points to analyse the data further:

The correct dialogues:

- a. The turns of First Pair Parts (FPPs, or Fs) and Second Pair Parts (SPPs, or Ss) are relatively ordered.
- b. Follow the characteristics of action sequence responses.
- c. The situation is clearly explained in the dialogue. The context of the dialogue is not confusing since it represents a real life conversation (Putri, 2007).
- d. The problematic dialogues:
- e. The turns of First Pair Parts (FPPs, or Fs) and Second Pair Parts (SPPs, or Ss) are not relatively ordered.
- f. Do not show the characteristics of action sequences. For example, the invitation sequences do not preceded by the pre-invitation.
- g. The situation is not clearly explained. The context of the dialogue is confusing, there is no background information who is the speakers, where the dialogues take place.
- h. The preference structure is incomplete. The dialogue is missing a response to an action, whether invitations, requests, offers, or apologies, and other actions like questions, or pre-sequences (Putri, 2007).
- i. The dialogue uses statements or responses which do not occur naturally. In general, the statements or responses seem over exaggerated.

## **Related Studies**

There are many studies which has similarities to this research: that is analyzing the textbooks. As Wong (2002) did on her research entitled “Applying” conversation in an applied linguistics: Evaluating dialogues in English as a second language textbooks.” In her research, she tried to investigate the telephone conversation in thirty textbooks of English as a second language (ESL). Based on her analysis in analyzing the telephone dialogues by using the core sequences of real telephone openings she found that most of the telephone dialogues were not consisted of those four core sequences. Otherwise, the textbook writers should write more in authentic way in order to easily the second language learners in opening the telephone conversation.

The other study similar to this research was done by Putri (2007) entitled “Analyzing Preferred and Dispreferred Responses in four action sequences: invitations, offers, requests, and apologies in some ESL Textbooks used in Indonesia and/or other Southeast Asian Countries.” Based on her research in analyzing those eleven textbooks, she found that some of the dialogues are problematic.

The problematic dialogues were found since the incomplete preference structure and unclear situation or background information. She also found that there also a missing practices in the textbooks dialogues which are considered as some essential parts needed in order to easily the students to do natural conversations.

The other study similar to this research was done by Titiana (2009) entitled “Preferred and Dispreferred Responses in the Dialogues of Senior High School’s Electronic English Books.” In her research, she investigated three electronic English book provided by Department of National Education, Indonesia: Developing English Competence for Grade X, Grade XI, and Grade XII. The final results of her study there were some inaccurate dialogues found in the four action sequences written in those three textbooks. Instead of inaccurate dialogues, she also found grammatical mistakes in the dialogues of those three textbooks.

### The Study

The sources of data of this study were three conversation class textbooks which are used at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University. The writer chooses only three conversation textbooks based on the class availability at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University and also based on the materials suited to Conversation Analysis. Those three levels of conversation textbooks are: pre-beginner, beginner, and upper-beginner.

In collecting the data, the writer did several steps. Firstly, the writer comes to Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University to meet the Head of institution. Then, the writer explained about his research and asked permission to analyse the conversation textbooks at Pusat Bahasa. After that, the writer meets the Education staff to ask about the conversation class and borrowed textbooks suited to the action sequences of CA to be copied.

After getting the complete data, the writer analyzed them by using Conversation Class Analysis theory proposed by Schegloff as the parameter to analyse the accuracy of (peer) dialogues in those three conversation textbooks levels of Pusat Bahasa: Pre-beginner, Beginner, and Upper Beginner. The writer examined peer dialogues from the three conversation textbooks above, grouped the peer dialogues into several sequences, they are: invitation, request, offer, and apology. Then, the dialogue would be analyzed according to action sequences characteristics and accuracy structure based of Schegloff theory.

### Results and Discussion

As for the data presentation, all the analyzed peer dialogues were counted on the table. The data are as follows:

Book’s Level	Action Sequence	Correct Dialogue	Problematic Dialogue	Total
Pre-beginner	Invitation	1	0	1
	Offer	3	1	4
	Request	0	2	2
	Apology	1	0	1
	Total	5	3	8
Beginner	Invitation	0	0	0
	Offer	0	1	1
	Request	0	0	0
	Apology	1	0	1
	Total	1	1	2
Upper-beginner	Invitation	0	3	3
	Offer	1	4	5
	Request	0	4	4
	Apology	5	2	7
	Total	6	13	19

	Sub Total	12	17	29
--	-----------	----	----	----

Table of The Action Sequences

Through the analysis, it was observed that mostly the peer dialogues in the textbooks are written inaccurately. It was also observed that the peer dialogues, mostly represented in incomplete form. The following are some problematic peer dialogues written in the conversation class textbooks at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University:

### An example of invitation

(Upper-beginner Level, p.26)

- 1 Ida : → Would you like to see Michael Bubble' concert  
 2 on Monday night? He is playing at JCC.  
 3 Andi : Oh, I'm sorry, Ida, but I can't. I have to  
 4 work late this Monday.  
 5 Ida : Oh.....that's too bad.  
 6 Andi : Yeah, I really like Michael Bubble'.  
 7 Ida : Actually, are you doing anything on Tuesday  
 8 and Wednesday? He is playing those two nights  
 9 as well.  
 10 Andi : Well, I can't make it on Tuesday either, but  
 11 I'm free on Wednesday night. What time does it  
 12 start?  
 13 Ida : At eight sharp. How about meeting in front of  
 14 the club at about quarter after seven?  
 15 Andi : That sounds perfect. And let's go out for  
 16 coffee after the show.  
 17 Ida : Sure!  
 18 Andi : Ok, see you at 7:15, Wednesday.

The above dialogue should be preceded by the pre-invitation since the invitation sequences occurred in line 1. The turns of FPP and SPP of the dialogue above also not relatively ordered. Ida as the FPP cannot propose two sequences in one turn, the invitation sequence in line 1 should be responses first before she proposed the next sequence.

### An example of offer

(Upper-beginner Level, p.21)

- 1 Lena : Hi, Jade. Would you like to see a movie  
 2 tonight?  
 3 Jade : I'm sorry but I have to babysit.  
 4 Lena : → Oh. Then how about tomorrow night?  
 5 Jade : Yeah, that sounds great. Let's go tomorrow!  
 6 Lena : → Great! Let's meet at the bus stop after  
 7 school.  
 8 Jade : Sure, Ok.

As indicated by the arrows in line 4 and 6, the above dialogue is consist of two offer sequences. Based on the characteristics of action sequences, precisely offer sequences, the dialogue above should be preceded by pre-offer. As indicated in line 4, the first offer is propose by Lena as a second pair part to reschedule the time of watching movie, which is previously she proposed tonight then reschedule into tomorrow night. The second offer is about offering to meet at the bus after school as

indicated by the second arrow in line 6. Those two offer sequences then get the acceptance as presented by the response in the line 5 and 8.

### An example of request

(Pre-beginner Level, p.30)

- 1 Ari : → Hey, Benny, turn it down please. It gives me a  
2 headache.  
3 Benny : Okay, Ari don't tell me you don't like hard  
4 rock!  
5 Ari : It's too noisy for me.  
6 Benny : I think it's fanmtastic! Hey, you don't like  
7 music, do you?  
8 Ari : Sure, I enjoy listening to classical music.  
9 You know, beeth...  
10 Benny : ...Bethoven, Mozart, Hayden.. I know them all.  
11 Well, like to listen to classical music once  
12 in a while. But don't give me the heavy stuff.  
13 Ari : Maybe I've got something you like... Here it  
14 is... real good music. Put this on.  
15 Benny : Not right now; I'm not in the mood for it.  
16 What about jazz?  
17 Ari : Jazz is Ok., But I'm not crazy about it.  
18 Benny : Mind if I play some jazz music now?  
19 Ari : Go ahead, but keep the volume down.

The context of the above dialogue is about Ari who arrives to his dorm and find his new roommate, Benny, listening to loud music. As indicated by the arrow, the request sequence is occurs in line 1. Ari as the first pair part, does the request sequence in order to express his preferences about the music genre and in order to ask Benny, as his new roommate, turn down the volume. The request sequence does by Ari as the first pair part, it is better preceded by the pre-request.

### An example of apology

(Upper-beginner Level, p.25)

- 1 Student A: Would you like to go a movie Friday night?  
2 Student B: → I'm sorry, but I have to work.  
3 Student A: Then, how about Saturday night?  
4 Student B: Sure, that sounds great.

The context of the above dialogue is about the conversation between two friends propose go to movie theater in the Friday night. As indicated by the arrow, the apology sequence is occurs in line 3 and be classified as the apology second pair part prefaced an account. The above dialogue considered as problematic since it does not provide enough background information.

Based on the data analysis that represented on the table of the action sequences, among 29 analyzed action sequences, 17 of them are problematic dialogues. According to the data analysis, the writer assumes the problematic dialogues occur because of certain factors. Since the conversation textbooks developed by some imported books, it has a possibility that the textbooks written based on the intuitions. As Burns (1998) said that textbook writers often appear to rely on their native intuitions of written English grammar when designing pedagogic materials. The second factor is the unawareness towards the dialogue structures. Most of the analyzed dialogues were not written in the good structure. The third factor could be referred to economic reasons, since the dialogues should be written in a complete structure, then this situation correlated towards the uses of paper and the increasing outcome. Moreover, the above factors based on supported factors of related studies.

## **Conclusion**

This paper is focused on the accuracy of action sequences in Conversation Class Textbooks at Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University. The Analysis demonstrates how CA (Schegloff, 2007) can be applied to peer dialogues in the conversation class textbooks. As results of this research, the peer dialogues in those conversation textbooks mostly were written inaccurately. In invitations, among 4 dialogues, 3 of them are problematic since they do not preceded by some pre-action sequences, the turn of FPP & SPP are not relatively ordered, and do not have enough background information. In offers, among 10 dialogues, 6 of them are problematic. They are considered problematic since uses unnatural sequence & responses and do not preceded by some pre-action sequences. In requests, there are 6 problematic dialogues since they do not preceded by some pre-action sequences and do not have background information. While in apology sequences, among 9 dialogues, 2 of them are problematic. Simillar to previous studies done by Wong (2002), Putri (2007), and Titiana (2009) which analyzed the natural conversation at some textbooks, they also found inaccuracy. Furthermore, the analyzed textbooks should be revised in order to increase the education quality in Pusat Bahasa Airlangga University.

## **Work Cited**

- Brown, H. Douglas. (2000). *TEACHING by PRINCIPLES An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2nd Edition). California: Longman.
- Burns, Anne (1998). Teaching speaking. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 18: 102-123.
- Betsy, Parrish. (2004). *Teaching Adult ESL: A Practical Introduction*. Beijing: Higher Education Press
- Putri, Noerhayati I. (2007). *Analyzing Preferred and Dispreferred responses in four action sequences: Invitations, Offers, Requests, and Apologies in some ESL Textbooks used in Indonesia and/or other Southeast Asian Countries*. Master's Thesis. University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign.
- Robinson, J. D. (2004). *The Sequential Organization of Explicit Apologies in Natural Occuring English*. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*.
- Schegloff, E., Koshik, I., Jacoby, S., and Olsher, D. (2002). *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics. Conversation Analysis and Applied Linguistics*. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Seedhouse, P. (2005). Conversation Analysis and language learning. *Language Teaching*. 38(4), 165-187.
- Schegloff, E. (2007). *Sequence Organization in Interaction. A Primer in Conversataion Analysis Volume 1*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sidnell, J. (2010). *Conversation Analysis- an introduction*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Titiana, Nidia P. (2009). *Preferred and Dispreferred Responses in the Dialogues of Senior High School's Electronic English Books*. Unpublished undergraduate thesis. Airlangga University.
- Wong, J. (2002). "Applying" conversation in an applied linguistics: Evaluating dialogues in English as a second language textbooks. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 40, 37-60.