

# INTERRUPTIONS AND OVERLAPS OCCURING IN AN INDONESIAN TELEVISION TALK SHOW *INDONESIA LAWYERS CLUB – TV ONE*

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## Abstract:

This research aims to help people understand about turn-taking irregularities, overlap and interruption and why it occurs. The classification of interruption is based on the definition of the interruption from Wardhaugh (1985). The writer believes that interruption and overlap are caused by certain reasons. The writer is interested in observing interruption and overlap in “Indonesia Lawyers Club” because she wanted to know which parties in this show produced more number of interruptions and overlaps, especially in an interactive dialog. There are two parties in this dialog, namely host and guests/panelist. This study was a qualitative study; the writer got the data from the transcript, which she did it manually. The writer analyzed all interruptions and overlaps from the host and guests/panelists which occurred in this show and classified the reason. The writer wanted to find out what the common reason of interruption and overlap are in this study. To decide the reason of interruption and overlap the writer looked at the context of the discussion between the host and the guest/panelists. The writer found that interruptions occurred more than overlaps. The common reason was seeking of clarification, and the other reason was confirming, completing, breaking up, and showing agreement. From all of this reason the writer conclude that interruptions and overlaps in this talk-show were not violation.

Keywords: TV Talk-show, Interruption, Overlap, Guest/Panelist, and Host, Violation

In conversation, there are some rules that guide the participants to enable the conversation to run smoothly. One of them is turn-taking rule, the rule of speaker and listener’s change. Turn taking means that the speaker gives a chance to the other speakers to give comment or response to his/her utterance and it is repeating process during the conversation (Levinson, 1983 in Tannen 1995). As a matter of fact, turn taking plays an important role during the conversation to the end.

According to Wardhaugh (1985), the most general principle governing turn-taking in a conversation is that one and only one person speaks at a time (p.148). Conversation itself can be divided into normal turn taking and irregular turn taking. In normal turn taking the conversation commonly happens smoothly. This means that the people know how to make a nice turn taking. On the other hand, irregular conversation happens because people do not make a nice turn taking, sometimes they interrupt each other to express their ideas, feeling, and opinions.

There are two types of turn-taking irregularities, that is, “overlap” and “interruption” (Coates, 1986, p. 99). In a irregular turn taking conversation, interruptions and overlaps definitely cannot be avoided. Interruption happens when the second speaker cuts the first speaker’s words without giving a chance to the first speaker to finish it.

In the research, the writer is interested in analyzing an interview, especially in a talk show, for the reason that the writer wants to know how a host can control the conversation and why the guest mostly did the interruption or overlap. Although the turn taking system in media interviews are predetermined, sometimes interruption and overlap are not avoidable.

The writer chooses a television talk show entitled “*Indonesia Lawyers Club*” on TV One as the source of the data because at first, Indonesia Lawyers Club is a live talk show hosted by one host and invited some guest/panelist as the talk show participants. The interruptions and overlaps might occur because the concept of Indonesia Lawyers Club is to discuss the current issues. Therefore, the

guest/panelist are expected to respond to the host's question by bringing out their opinions in short, brief and clear forms. The other reasons is Indonesia Lawyers Club, for this episode, had a unique issue; because this episode blended the politics, culture, entertainment, and religion. It was proved by the panelists who came from many backgrounds and had different points of view. So this could have resulted in possibilities for interruption and overlap to happen.

### **Turn taking**

There may be overlaps and brief interruptions, it is quite clear which speaker has the floor at any particular moment. When this person talks, he/she cannot always speak all the time. He or she has to give a chance to other participants to have their turn. Therefore, the roles begin between those speakers, it is called turn taking.

### **Interruption**

Most linguists agree that interruption is a violation in conversation; that is, the second speaker prevents the first speaker from finishing his/her words. Tannen (1991) gives a rather different reason because she also considers other variables such as situation, topic, and speaker's right. She states that "Interruption is not only a matter of violation in conversation but also the individual's rights". The writer concludes that interruption is a violation in the conversation and also a type of violation of another's right is called interruption when the second speakers cuts the first speaker's words and does not give a chance to other participants to finish the words.

### **Overlaps**

Overlap is an act of interruption whereby two voices are heard at the same time. So, the words from second speaker overlaps with the last or part of the first speaker. Tannen (1991) states that "Overlap is an act of interruption without leaving any pauses. This will make the second's speaker's words and the first speaker's words heard together at the same time in the conversation" (p. 78).

### **Reasons of Interruption and overlaps**

The writer uses the theories from Wardhaugh (1985) to reveal the question why people turn-taking irregularities, interruption and overlaps, in a conversation. In the opinion of Wardhaugh (1985, p. 151), sometimes participants need to interrupt to what someone is saying although it is impolite. There are seven reasons based on Wardhaugh's theory: asking for help, seeking clarification, correcting, rejecting, completing, breaking up, and disagreeing. To make the reason more specific the writer add three other reason, giving suggestion, showing agreement, and concluding.

In order to analyze the most dominant use of interruptions, overlaps, and their respective reasons in Indonesia Lawyers Club talk show, this research seeks to investigate.

- a) Which occurred the most: Interruptions or overlaps between host and guest?;
- b) What are the reasons for the one that appeared the most?

### **METHODS**

The writer used descriptive qualitative approach because the data analysis was in the form of words rather than numbers. The topics of discussion the writer was dealing with were about the reasons why interruption and overlap happened and the most frequent reason of turn-taking irregularities that occurred in the dialog in Indonesia Lawyers Club on TV One talk show.

The writer got the data from the conversation in Indonesia Lawyers Club in downloaded from Youtube. Indonesia Lawyers Club is a talk show broadcasted every once a week and it consists of host and some guest/panelist and each episode of Indonesia Lawyer Club discusses particular topic with the particular guests/panelists are familiar with. The data were the conversations in one episode Indonesia Lawyers Club with title "FPI vs Lady Gaga" on May 16th, 2012 that contained interruption and overlap, the subjects of the data were the host and 21 guests/panelists. Words or sentences that were

interrupted by both sides were given some transcription symbols (‘|’) for interruptions and (‘[ ]’) for overlaps following Jefferson (2004). The writer used the transcript of the dialog as her main source of data.

This talk show mostly talks about the controversy of Lady Gaga [an American singer who always makes controversies with her song and her performance] and Irshad Manji [a novelist who wrote a book which was believed to disfigure Islam].

At first, the writer recorded the data from the television by using the video which have been taken from Youtube channel. To transcribe the data, the writer watched and listened to the recorded conversation several times. She concentrated on the utterances the overlaps of the host especially the ones which interrupted the guest’s word and vice versa. Then, the writer transcribed the interruption and overlap words by words. The interrupted conversations were the conversations in which the host interrupted guests/panelists and they were usually indicated by the rising intonation of the cut off words or by the unfinished idea in the utterance.

In order to analyze the data, the writer did some steps. At first, in order to answer the first question, the writer analyzed each of interruptions and overlaps and put it in the dialog lines column. Then, the writer tabulated each of the interruption and overlap made by the host and/or the guests/panelists. Next, the writer determined the reasons of interruption or overlap based on the context of the conversation and based on Wardhaugh’s theory. Then, the writer calculated the frequency of each reason that occurred in the conversation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

From the episode of “Indonesia Lawyers Club” in focus, the writer found that the conversation was dominated by a high capacity of turn-taking irregularities, either interruption or overlap because there was a tendency for the host and the panelist to rely on their argument to prove their strength and to maintain their existence in the discussion.

To find the exact data the writer divided the analysis into two part interruption-reason of interruption and overlap-reason of overlap. In having conversation, people may have certain reasons that encourage them to interrupt others. In this research, the writer found that there were nine reasons on interruptions produced by the host and the panelists. The number of overlap and the number of interruption done by the host is higher than guest/panelist. From the findings, the writer found that the reasons of interruptions produced by the host were seeking clarification = 4 (14.81%), correcting = 2 (7.4%), completing = 5 (18.51%), breaking up = 7 (29.16%), disagreeing = 1 (3.7%), giving suggestion = 1 (3.7%), showing agreement = 3 (11.11%), and concluding = 4 (14.81%). The reasons produced most frequently was breaking up. The writer also found that the reasons of interruptions produced by the panelists were seeking clarification = 3 (13.04%), correcting = 3 (13.04%), completing = 2 (7.4%), showing annoyance = 5 (21.7%), disagreeing = 4 (17.39%), giving suggestion = 1 (4.34%), showing agreement = 2 (7.4%), and concluding = 3 (13.04%). The writer noticed that the common reasons of interruptions in the conversation between the hosts and the panelists were seeking clarification, completing, breaking up, and concluding; these were self-evident by seeing the frequency of the occurrences of the reasons.

### **Seeking Clarification**

One of the reasons of interruption was seeking clarification. This was produced by both the hosts and the panelists it occurred because of the time. The hosts considered that the time was not enough if they did not interrupt the conversation. Sometimes the speaker cannot deliver an obvious explanation about what he or she was trying to communicate or explain. So, the other speaker who did not get the point interrupted the speaker in order to seek clarification from the guests. The writer also found some conversation between the host and the panelists that had this reason. The interruption happened in their conversation because one of them was not patient enough to get the main point of the explanation. The host cut the conversation in order to get to the point directly.

**KI :** *Maksud anda melampaui kewenangan apa?*  
(What do you mean by beyond the authority?)

**ES :** *Tapi, jangan-jangan dituduh FPI- nya macam-macam tapi ... .*  
(But don't accused FPI but ....)

**KI :**  
*kewenangan apa?*  
beyond the authority?)

*Maksud anda melampaui*

(What do you mean by

In this example, the panelist still continued his explanation but before he finished it, the host cut the conversation by giving a question only to seek the clarification. This interruption happened after the word “*tapi* (but)” In the example, the host felt that the panelist’s explanation was too long and did not get straight to the point. That was why he cut the conversation by giving a question “*maksud anda melampaui kewenangan apa?* (What do you mean by beyond the authority?)” in order to seek clarification. The host continued to ask about the same topic as the panelist had discussed about, it showed that he also tried to help the panelist in providing the clear information.

### Completing

The reason for completing usually happens when the second speaker caught and knew the topic and after that he or she tried to help and continue the previous speaker. Even, he or she also added some new point to complete the information. Hence, interrupting to complete something is helpful for the speaker who hesitated to continue his speaking. They completed each other to deliver explanation smoothly and there were no pauses which could waste the time. The example below could explain about it.

**KI :** *Ya akibat kesan yang ditimbulkan oleh dan juga dikatakan .....*  
(Yes, due to the impression caused by and also said by)

**B :**

*Oleh pak Haris Azhar ya .*  
( by Mr. Haris Azhar)

From the example, the host actually wanted to say something that was still related to the previous topic, but the panelist’s words stopped the host’s words. In the previous conversation, they discussed about what happened when Irshad Manji came to Indonesia to talk about her book, but FPI or Islamic organization came and then dissolved the discussion. The host tried to repeat that information but the panelist interrupted her by saying “*oleh pak Haris Azhar ya.* (by Mr. Haris Azhar)” in order to complete the host’s words.

### Breaking up

Breaking up happened when the topic of the conversations was changed. In this talk show commonly the topic was changed because the hosts had to keep the time. Because of that, the hosts had to switch the topic and change by giving the panelist another question to get a lot of information about their lives. In this episode, there were 21 panelists who came different backgrounds and therefore the hosts had to provide the necessary information for their references. The writer presents the example below:

**MS :** *Tiba-tiba ada sekelompok ormas datang dan polisi tidak memberikan perlindungan terhadap kami sebagai korban, dan sebagai masyarakat, mahasiswa. Saya kebetulan mahasiswa yang sangat gandrung pada gagasan dan ide - ide segar. Konteksnya begitu dan mari kita melihat fakta di HKBP Philadepia di Bekasi disana sebenarnya kita sudah mengetahui pengadilan juga memutuskan bahwa HKBP Phildelpia itu sudah menang di pengadilan dia, pada tahun 2010 kita tahu .....*

(Suddenly there was a group of mass organization came and police did not give protection for us as victims and as society students. I was college indents on ideas and fresh ideas. That was the context and let's sees the fact in HKBP Philadephia in Bekasi; there we actually know the court also issued a verdict that HKBP Philadelphia won the case in court him in 2010, we know) ....

**KI :** *Saya minta anda diperpendek.* (I ask you to shorten your statement)

The example above shows that the host interrupted the panelist. That conversation happened before closing, the host tried to shorten that session so the show could end on time. But the panelist was still elaborating the same topic. That was why the host reminded the panelist by saying “*saya minta anda diperpendek* (I ask you to shorten your statement)”

### CONCLUSION

Interrupting with the intention of concluding something means that a speaker already understand about what the previous speaker has said and tried to conclude with his own idea, sometimes when people make such conclusions, the second speaker cannot wait for first speaker to finish his words:

**KI :** *Bukan kalau kita tidak menyatakan sesuatu dan kemudian media itu mengatakan ....*

(Not if we do not declare something and then it says the media)

**SA :**

*mana hukum-hukum yang nanti ada biro ada BIB nya ada.*

(That we are going to protest. Where there are laws that exist there are Bureau later his BIB.)

*Itu yang akan kita protes. Ada*

From this example, the panelist interrupts the host's words because he wanted to conclude the statement as quickly as possible so that the statement can become clear.

Beside interruptions, the other kind of turn-taking irregularities that happened in the conversation was overlap. The writer found that the number of overlaps in the conversations was less than that of interruptions. This condition happened because the hosts and the guests totally realized that overlapping each other could make the information unclear. The case, if someone suddenly cut the conversation was better. He or she stopped the words and listened to what he or she was talking about. Overlapping happened again because this talk show “Indonesia Lawyers Club” had limited time and there were a lot of questions which had to be raised by the hosts. In this show, the guest's role was as an informant who had to give information about them. The purpose was to maintain the time.

There were four reasons of the overlaps, which were produced by the host. Correcting had the highest reasons with = 4 (44.44%), to be followed by completing = 1 (11.11%), breaking up = 2 (22.22%), and disagreeing = 2 (22.22%).

From the findings, the writer also found seven reasons of overlaps which were produced by the guests. Completing had the highest reasons with 8 reasons (50%), to be followed seeking clarification = 2 (12.5%), correcting = 1 (6.5%), showing annoyance 1 (6.5%), breaking up = 1 (6.5%), disagreeing = 1 (6.5%), and showing agreement = 1 (6.5%).

### Correcting

In this research, overlaps with the reason for correcting produced by the hosts and the guests. These happened because the second speaker felt that the previous speaker gave incorrect reasons only happened once. To illustrate the point, the writer gives the example below:

**KI :** *Bagaimana ada laporannya kalau* (How can there be a report if )  
**SA :**  
**KI :**

{	<i>Lho nanti</i> (It is later) <i>Gak begini</i> (not like this)
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The example above happened in the conversation between the hosts and the guests. When the host said “*kalau* (if)”, the guest gave the answer with “*lho, nanti* (later)” to the host; but the host was not satisfied with the guest is answer that was why he tended to correct his own statement by saying “*nggak, begini* (no, here)” to clear the misunderstanding.

### Completing

Interrupting with the aim of completing happened in the conversation between the hosts and the guests. In the conversation between the host and the guest/panelist, the overlap happened if one of them did not find the information about one another. In order to save the time, the other host completed his statement by overlapping the conversation. In the conversation of the guests, completing reason of overlaps happened because the guests wanted to complete the information which was given by the hosts. This example below can give illustrate the point :

**KI :** *Istora senayan* (Senayan Sport Center)  
**SA :** *Istora senayan,* *itu seribu yang porno kita bubarkan satu kita nggak ada laporannya kalau ada laporan kita bubarkan*  
 (Senayan Sport Center , there are many porn which we would disperse, that one we do not have the report if there are reports we will disperse)

From the example, completing happened in the conversation between the host and the guest. When the guest tried to give information about the complete name of a concert place, the host overlapped the guest’s words by saying the first name of the place. The guest did not stop her words, he still continued by saying the first name of the place. In this conversation, the overlapped words were the same that is, the last name of place, “Istora”.

### CONCLUSION

In this research, the writer has analyzed interruption and overlap as parts of turn taking in conversational analysis. Interruption happens when the second speaker cuts another speaker’s statement or idea. Overlap happens when two or more people speak at the same time. In order to help her study, the writer follows the theories interruption and overlap by of Wardhaugh and those by Strenstorm as her main theories.

In the study, the writer found some dialog lines containing interruption and overlaps between the host and the guest in “Indonesia Lawyers Club”. In her finding, she found that the total number of dialog lines containing interruptions is greater than dialog line containing overlaps.

In Indonesia Lawyers Club held program on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012, she found that seeking clarification, completing, breaking up and concluding had the highest number of occurrences as the reasons of the host and the guest in interrupting each other. According to Wardhaugh, the behavior of trying to help the speaker communicate what he or she wants to get across is cooperative behavior.

People often called interruption and overlap as violation in conversation because it causes the conversation not to run smoothly. In this study, the writer states that the statement is not completely

true. We should know the social distance or relationship and speech style use by the participants to know whether interruption and overlap are violation or not.

From her analysis and finding, the writer concludes that interruption and overlap as found in this program- Indonesia Lawyers Club on Wednesday of 16 May 2012- are not violation of conversation. As the writer has mentioned before people thinks that if someone gets or does an interruption or overlapping in one conversation that means that the person is doing a violation. From the data and after analyzing them, the writer found that the host and guests interrupted each other in order to help or to complete some ideas. This was a kind of positive behavior, so it proves that interruption in this program is a kind of positive behavior between the host and the guest/panelist. The host and guest also do overlaps in their conversation in order to show their closeness or solidarity. Therefore, the writer concludes that interruption and overlap in casual style in the formal situation conversation, especially in Indonesia Lawyers Club program cannot be categorized as violation.

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