



A Conversation Analysis: The Use of Small-Talk

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out the topic and the function of small talk that was used by the students. The method of the research was qualitative descriptive. This research took place in the English Education of Graduate Program, State University of Makassar. The data collected through recording the interaction of small talk naturally by recording. The result showed that most of the topics discussed during the small talk were about the immediate situation of the talk. The topic of small talk can be either shift to the external situation such as the latest news, economics, hobbies, sports, movies or celebrities, and communicational situations. And from this research, the researcher found some topics like movies and asking for files. Besides that, the function of small talk specifically in class serves as an ice-breaking and silence-filling function.

Keywords: *Communication, Small-Talk, Ice-Breaking, Silence-Filling Function.*

INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings. They exist in a society where they interact with others. Whenever they assort, they create communication. In fact, in every social life, people use language to convey messages about their feeling, needs, emotions, and intentions. Humans as a part of society need to interact in their life. In their living, communication is needed to interact by using language. Valenzuela has defined that Communication as an act by which a person delivers or receives information about the kinds of needs, desires,

perceptions, knowledge, or affective states. Communication could be intentional or unintentional, could involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or nonlinguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes. The system of symbols can be used to describe human speech.

Communication acts to exchange some information within people or groups of people. Thus, communication is used as social interaction where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules. Intrapersonal Communication

using diaries or self-talk both secondary phenomena that attended the major acquisition of communicative competencies within social interactions is the commonly held rule in some sense ignores auto communication

In communication, the human use a language. Linguistics is known as the scientific study of language. Human language is unique because it has the properties of productivity, recursively, and displacement, and because it depends totally on social convention and learning.

There is much effectiveness in why people like to use oral communication. First, they can share information and express ideas directly. They will feel getting their freedom after exploring what their thinking is. Second, when people are sharing, others tend to be curious to give feedback. It means, by oral communication, they will give answers or responds to the feedback. Third, oral communication can increase our confidence. Based on some effectiveness above, it can be concluded that oral communication is very important in human beings' life. Nowadays, because of the importance, the discourse about oral communication gets much attention. It is believed that the use of it will be influenced by many things, such as topic, purpose, place, time, relationship, and so on.

There will be politeness and impoliteness in speaking, as a part of oral communication. To get a purpose, people need to avoid communication breakdown. To avoid this,

people need to have a small talk (chit-chat) which is part of politeness in speaking.

Human language is known as unique compared to other forms of communication, as used by non-human animals. Otherwise, language that is used by the human as open-ended and productive, meaning that it enables humans to make an infinite set of utterances from a finite set of elements and to produce new words and sentences. Language and society are intertwined that is impossible to understand one without the other.

A speech community is the communities where use some language, some norms, and some feelings toward language. A speech community is a very abstract concept; its concept should be flexible as individuals find it advantageous to change their identities quite freely. Some people used speech in different ways in their social. Each group has its linguistic behavior norms. For example, certain groups may not propose a talk for the sake of conversation, and members of that group may come into being very reserved with talkative outsiders, or they may feel overwhelmed by the demands made on them if another person insists insist on the conversation.

We should attempt to understand the different groups of people who use their language if we are to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how that language is related to the society that uses it. A society that proposes a wide variety of kinds of talk is possible to be rather different in many non-linguistic ways

from one in which speakers are expected neither to waste words nor to use words lightly.

Some kinds of way which people use talk in the world, and sometimes the absence of talk such silence, to communicate. Silent is often communicative and its proper uses must be learned like express their respect, support, disagreement, or uncertainly, etc. In many societies, people do not talk or say something except that they have something important to say. If someone has nothing to say, he does not need to speak, and there is no necessity for anyone to make small talk.

Small talk is an informal type of discourse that does not cover every topic of the intended or intended conversation or transaction. In most English-speaking countries, it is normal and necessary to make "small talk" in certain situations. A small talk is a casual form of conversation that "breaks the ice" or fills an awkward silence between people. Even though you may feel shy using your second language, it is sometimes considered rude to say nothing. Just as there are certain times when small talk is appropriate, there are also certain topics that people often discuss during these moments.

Small talk is a short conversation. According to Hunter (2011: 4-5), small talk must be a consolidation activity in which students must think carefully about what they want to say. For realizing it, students are expected to have the good speaking ability. Holmes (2014) said that small talk is a clear example of discourse which is oriented to positive face

needs (p.115), it means that it happens in every aspect of our interactions, no matter how trivial it may seem, we are giving a performance, doing face work, presenting ourselves.

Thus, this research analyzed the conversation related to the using of small talk. In previous research related to the topic of small talk was done by Etika (2018) which showed the small talk technique used in simple sentence form to learn to speak English better. The technique can help the students to understand what they said and what will they say in English. While this research analyzed the kind of topics emerging and the function of talking. Vijayan (2016) said that when these students listen to these conversations in a different situation, they can know how to interact with others and how to begin and end the conversation. Similarly, Wang et al. (2011) write about "phatic technology" as that which enables connectedness by "establishing and maintaining human relationships" (p. 46).

Yansyah and Hidayah (2015:965) conclude that this technique increases student's ability and their creativity to set their talk. Small talk is a form of linguistic politeness about unimportant things made by the people to interact. Thus, "small talk provides communicators with simple, often mundane topics to discuss until the conversation turns towards a more stimulating topic" (Wakefield 2016: 13-14). Similarly, Wakefield (2016: 104) added, "people also use small talk as a way to bridge the gap between topics of importance".

Apart from that, continues Fleming (2018), it is also associated with aimlessness, triviality, and simply, a waste of time.

Small talk is fundamental in preserving relationships not only freely situation but also in professional situations. Small talk is a part of sociolinguistic in the 1980s and early 1990s focused on the notion of gossip and celebrated its use by women to maintain their social relationships. With the result that, small talk can obviously be in these terms small talk can clearly be defined as a form of positive politeness if adjust to the Brown and Levinson (1987) model discussed above. Tannen (1991) investigated the distinction in the use of language between men and women, thus creating a different opinion between the two genders. He emphasized the significance of small talk that assumed its a gossip, as being a significant element in women's speech to establish and incorporate the relationships. On the other hand, men do not take part in small talk for the same purpose. While for women, small talk is a fundamental thing to preserve a sense of fellowship even there is nothing special to say (1991:102). Moreover, it can be said that gossip builds a fellowship when the listener responds well.

Tannen (1991) defines that small talk is important to merge the friendship of women; she does not explore the idea that small talk could be crucial to more important public contexts such as in the workplace. In this way, Small talk is still treated as a social activity, a kind of politeness that is relatively unimportant to be

said. Schneider (1988) defined small talk as a polite attitude regarded to unimportant conversation topic and referred to as 'uncontroversial'.

Schneider (1988) also defined the kinds of functions of small talk. It covers simply ice-breaking and silence-filling functions. The ice-breaking function appears by meant to interactions among strangers when the other functions identified seem to apply to either many or all constellation types. While Simply ice-breaking function becomes the first statement that starts the small talk which is next responded and continued. It can also warm people socially, oils interpersonal wheels, and gets talk started on a positive note.

The typical conversation of small talk begins with the interlocutors' immediate situation, for example, the location of the conversation or the weather. Respectively, the topics that appear can be either to the outer situation such as; economy, news, politic, sport, movies, celebrities or to the communication situation, e.g. hobbies or career. The conversation that appears is dependent on social surrounding addresses to the social or private topics. While shifting to social topics is more common in a social context, as a party situation, shifting to private topics is typical for a conversation between strangers that want to avoid silence. Further, the conversation partners, their personal relations, and social context will determine the emergence of the topic selection in small talk.

Baehaqi (2010: 45) said that there are topics included in the small talks. They could be appear greeting, weather, telling about time, describing People, expressing concern for someone, complimenting someone's clothes, leisure activities, favorite movie, favorite music, sport, an invitation at the movie, a sick classmate, sharing news and information, changing the subject, receiving visitors, waiting for an invitation, accepting an invitation party, declining an invitation to a party and ending the conversation

METHODS

This research was qualitative research using the descriptive method. According to Sukmadinata (2011), qualitative research is research that researchers will use to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, beliefs, perceptions, thoughts individually or in groups. In addition Gunawan, (2013) in Astri &Fian (2019) stated that

qualitative research is a kind of research without statistical procedures or other forms of calculation. The research was conducted at the State University of Makassar. This research took place in the English Education of Graduate Program. The data of the research were obtained from the results of observation. The observation was used to gain the data related to the use of small talk. Therefore, the researcher recorded the talking process by using a recording. The recording was used to record the students' voices in communicating using small talk. The data collected through recording the interaction of small talk naturally.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this section, the researchers describe the result of data analysis based on the problem statement which is to find out the topics and the functions of small talk.

No	Utterances	Extract	Topic	Function
1.	<p>Ne: hasbi hasbi e ada tadi anunya mem maemuna? Minta dule (<i>hasbi hasbi e did you have hers? Give me please</i>)</p> <p>I: ia saya juga hasbi (<i>So do I, Hasbi</i>) (<i>H took N's flash disk</i>)</p> <p>Ne: file nya tadi file nya mem maemuna... ini ya? jadi? Copy kan ka juga di fd ku ini na fd ku na langsung mi saja na (<i>Her file just know, mam maimuna's file... this if? if? copy to my flash dish ok, to my flash dish ok, directly ok</i>)</p>	extract 1	Asking file	Simply ice-breaking

No	Utterances	Extract	Topic	Function
	Ni : io na (tertawa) (Yes ok (while laughing))			
2.	A : baru itu e na cobami baikan itu sama itu temannya sama siapa? Gia? Siapa temannya yang natemani berkelahi? (That right, she tried to respect again to her friend, who? Gia? Who is the name of her friend that ever fights with her?) (Some second later) C: sukako kah film horror? (Do you like a horror films?) S : iya itumo adaka (Yes, just that... do you have?)	extract 2	talking about film	Silent-filling function
3.	A : pinjamka dulu pulpenta sebentar sekali (can you lend me your pen for a while?) C : tapi warna merah, tidak papa ji? (but it's red, it's ok?) A : iya sebentar ji (yes, just a while)	extract 3	Borrowing a pen	Simply ice- breaking
4	Her : ayo pergi liburan hari sabtu deh (why don't we go on vacation on Saturday?) Ci : dimana? (where?) Has : ayo mi (why not?) Her : di tanjung mo (at Tanjung, will you?) Has : sembarang dimana (wherever... it's ok) (Some second later) Ci : ayo pi makan deh, laparka (let's find some foods, I'm hungry) Her : ayo mi sekalian shalat (good idea, while taking a pray)	extract 4	talking about vacation	Silent-filling function
5	Sy : kerumahnya ki kemaren bu Aji? (did you go to Mam Ajis' house yesterday?) Her : tidak, ada kepergi jadi tidak pergika	Extract 5	Visited friends' house	Simply ice- breaking

No	Utterances	Extract	Topic	Function
	<p><i>(no, I had something to do, so I did not go)</i></p> <p>Sy : saya kira pergi ki <i>(I thought you went)</i></p>			

Discussion

Extract 1

For extract 1 talked about asking lecturers' file and the functions of small talk is ice-breaking. The conversation took place in class AB. some students mixed up with talk; they are Ne, Ic, and Ha in their leisure time after finished their lecture in the class. From the extract above, we just find one topic, which is the asking file. The data above shows that the topic of small talk is the immediate situation when the small talk takes place.

The function of small talk as Schneider (1988) said is described as the following extract. Simply ice-breaking becomes the first statement that starts the small talk which is next responded and continued. From the extract of the small talk above, the situation among the people who have the small talk becomes simply ice breaking, when Ne expresses small talk as an ice-breaking sign, and Ic continued it.

Extract 2

Extract 2 talked about the film and the function of small talk is the silence-filling function. The conversation took place in the class AC. Some students mixed up with talk; they are Ai, Sya, and Ce. They sat in the corridor on the second floor waited to come to the class.

From the extract above, we find just one topic discussed which is about the movie. The data above shows that the topic of small talk is the immediate situation when the small talk takes place. As long as this conversation takes place, the speakers just tell each other about the plot of the movie that ever they watched.

The extract above shows that the small talk breaks for some second and then continues the conversation again to fulfill the silence time based on Schneider (1988). When Ai talks; there is no conversation again for a few seconds until Ce continued the small talk. The silence-filling function appears as the interaction avoids the silence and keeps the small talk going on.

Extract 3

For extract 3 talked about borrowing a pen and the function of small talk is ice breaking. The conversation took place in class AB. Some students mixed up with talk; they are Ai and Ce when the class will take place. From the extract above, we just find one topic, which is borrowing a pen. The data above shows that the topic of small talk is the immediate situation when the small talk takes place.

The function of small talk as Schneider (1988) said is described as the following extract. Simply ice-breaking becomes the first statement

that starts the small talk which is next responded and continued. From the extract of the small talk above, the situation among the people who have the small talk becomes simply ice breaking, when Ain express small talk as an ice-breaking sign, and Ce continued it.

Extract 4

Extract 4 talked about vacation and the function of small talk is the silence-filling function. The conversation took place in the class AC. Some students mixed up with talk; they are He, Ci, and Ha. They sat in the class.

From the extract above, we find just one topic discussed which is about vacation. The data above shows that the topic of small talk is the immediate situation when the small talk takes place. As long as this conversation takes place, the speakers just tell each other about going on vacation then silent in some minutes, the topic switched to another topic.

The extract above shows that the small talk breaks for some second and then continues the conversation again to fulfill the silence time based on Schneider (1988). When Ha talks; there is no conversation again for a few seconds until Ci continued the small talk.

Extract 5

Extract 5 talked about visited friends' house and The function of small talk is ice breaking. It took place in class AB. some students mixed up with talk; they are Sy and Her when the class will take place.

From the extract above, we just find one topic, which was visited friends' house. The data

above shows that the topic of small talk is the immediate situation when the small talk takes place.

The function of small talk as Schneider (1988) said is described as the following extract. Simply ice-breaking becomes the first statement that starts the small talk which is next responded and continued. From the extract of the small talk above, the situation among the people who have the small talk becomes simply ice breaking, when Sy expressed small talk as an ice-breaking sign, and She continued it.

Most of the topics discussed are about the immediate situation of the small talk. One of the typical small talk conversations begins with the interlocutors' immediate situation shifted to the external situation or the communication situation. Successively, the topics can be either shift to the external situation. And if we see from this research, we also can find some kinds of topic. It based on Baehaqi (2010: 45) said that there are some topics included in the small talks that can appear in the conversation. And the topics that appear in that conversation such as asking something, film or movie, borrowing something, vacation, and visiting friends. Wakefield (2016) also agreed that small talk provides communicators with simple talking until the conversation comes towards a more stimulating topic

Doing small talk among the speakers can help them to know the function and develop the conversation into the topics. It is based on Vijayan (2016) who said that they are able to

know how to interact with others and how to begin and end the conversation in an indifferent situation. Similarly, Wang et al. (2011) enable that small talk possible establishing and maintaining human relationships. continues Fleming (2018), it is also associated with aimlessness, triviality, and simply, a waste of time.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Most of the topics discussed during the small talk are about the immediate situation of the talk. The topic of small talk can be either shift to the external situation such as the latest news, politics, sports, movies or celebrities, and communicational situations. And from this research, the researcher found some topics like movies, asking for files, borrowing a pen, vacation, and visited friends.

From the findings explained previously, we concluded that the function of small talk serves as an ice-breaking and silence-filling function. Many issues of small talk still can become the objects of the next researches. For the further researcher should be getting more topics and functions of small talk

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