

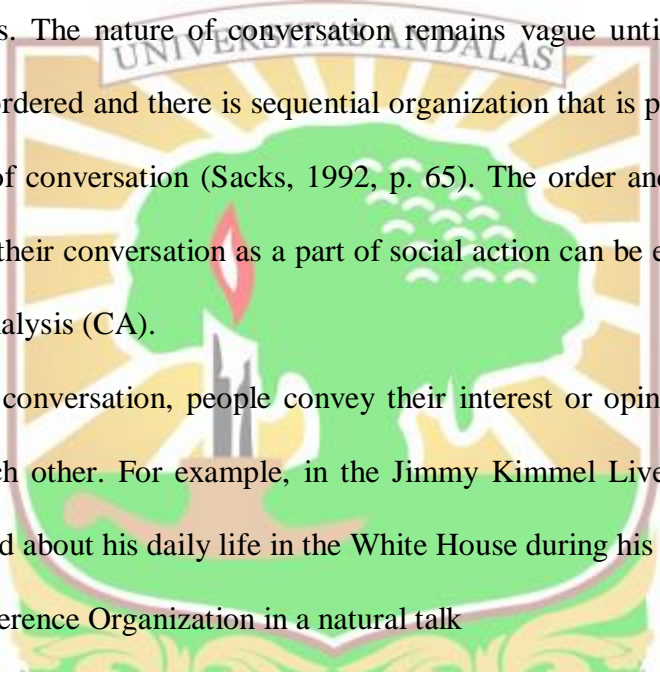
## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Research

Conversation is a daily human social interaction. It is aimed to exchange information, negotiate, maintain or even undermine social solidarity. Before conversation is brought up to the modern science, conversation is commonly perceived as a mundane activity due to the low exposure of scientific explanation about its process. The nature of conversation remains vague until it is found that conversation is ordered and there is sequential organization that is produced and used by participants of conversation (Sacks, 1992, p. 65). The order and the way human beings organize their conversation as a part of social action can be explained through Conversation Analysis (CA).

Through conversation, people convey their interest or opinion and responds on it toward each other. For example, in the Jimmy Kimmel Live (2015), Barack Obama was asked about his daily life in the White House during his presidency.

#### Extract 1 – Preference Organization in a natural talk



1 JK : So (.) When you're at home, can you like- can you run  
2 down to the kitchen in your underpants in the middle  
3 of the night if you're hungry?  
4 (0.5)  
5 BO : I mean I could, I-I don't.  
6 JK : You're allowed to go in the refrigerator on [your own?  
7 BO : [I am.

From the extract above, He was asked whether he can run down to the kitchen without his formal attire during the night. The question seems to surprise him and trigger his quite long silence (0.5) before he finally utters his response. He initially replies that he could do it, but then he adds that he does not do it. However, when he

was asked if he is allowed to go to the refrigerator on his own, he spontaneously answered “I am” even before the question was completely uttered. The productions of the answers from those two questions are significantly different. The first answer as a disagreement was not delivered straightforwardly as it is evident from his initial hesitant response. Then, the second answer as an agreement is uttered instantly without any hesitation. The great difference between the first and the second answer reflects that there are responses that are preferred and dispreferred in the conversation. In other words, there is a preference that organizes people’s responses during their daily conversation. Ironically, the scientific explanation of such day-to-day phenomenon remains vague for most people.

Naturally occurring ordinary conversation is the main object of Conversation Analysis. Such conversation can be found in a show called *Caught in Providence*. It is a show that records the process of the trials in municipal Court of Providence, Rhode Island, United States. Municipal Court apprehends cases that are related to traffic violation and misdemeanor. Unlike Supreme Court that adapts adversarial system, Municipal Court applies inquisitorial system in which a judge of the courtroom actively questions a defendant in order to bring up more facts on a violation (Department of States [DS], 2004, p. 49). In addition, a defendant’s financial condition and situation during the violation are also among a judge’s inquiries.

In this research, episode one of *Caught in Providence* show is selected as the source of data because of the authentic and unscripted footage of the trial process. Throughout the show, the footage reveals raw and unedited process of Municipal

Court between some defendants and the judge of Rhode Island's Municipal Court named Frank Caprio who has been on the jurisdiction for over 35 years. Episode one is selected purely because it contains the most cases with the least amount of gaps in between defendants in one single full episode maintaining the contiguity of the trials' process. All defendants in the episode are ordinary people who has been charged with real violation from real cases as their violation tickets are read aloud at the beginning of each trial. In addition, the video format allows of gesture and events description during the trial's process which are attached as well in the transcription of the conversations. Considering all the features of the source of the data above, episode one of *Caught in Providence* show is highly suitable for this conversational analytic research.

Conversation analysis of preference organization on municipal courtroom discourse has not been done before. This research presents an original data of interactional process in Municipal Courtroom. By conducting this research, the social solidarity that is realized through preference organization can be identified and explained thoroughly. Also, this research enables other conversational analysts to use the data as a first insight of the interactional process between some defendants and the judge in a Municipal Courtroom. This research highly contributes in conversation analysis community and is focused on expanding the horizon of conversation analysis especially in courtroom interaction.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

The way people construct their conversation as social interaction in the municipal courtroom discourse remains unexplained until now. Thus, this research's

main focus is to explain preferred and dispreferred responses in trials process and how some defendants and the judge of a municipal courtroom maintain their social solidarity through preference organization.

In this research, there are two research questions:

1. What are the preferred and dispreferred responses that are used in the trials of Municipal Court as found in *Caught in Providence* TV show?
2. How is social solidarity realized through preference organization in Municipal Court as found in *Caught in Providence* TV show?

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and explain the preferred and dispreferred responses that are used in the trials of Municipal Court as found in *Caught in Providence* show.
2. To identify and explain the way social solidarity realized through preference organization in Municipal Court as found in *Caught in Providence* show.

### **1.4. Scope of the study**

This research is aimed at using Conversation Analysis theory by Emanuel Schegloff (2007) and Preference Organization theory by John Heritage (1984) to analyze, identify, and explain preferred and dispreferred response and preference organization that shapes conversation in the trials of Municipal Court in Providence, Rhode Island, United States. The research is limited to types of preferred response, dispreferred response, and preference organization that exist and shape conversation in a municipal courtroom discourse. By using the second theory, practices of preferred and dispreferred responses in many different kinds of sequences can be

identified and it allows the researcher to explain the way social solidarity are realized through preference organizations in the municipal courtroom. The data in this research are taken from the official YouTube channel of *Caught in Providence* show.

### **1.5. Methods of the study**

This study can be categorized as qualitative research because the main data consist of utterance as sequence of conversation. As the data is going to be explained in descriptions, this study adopts descriptive method where the phenomenon of preference organization is explained in detail through the approach of Conversation Analysis.

#### **1.5.1. Source of data**

The data source of this research is taken from unedited, raw, and authentic footage of Trials in Providence Municipal Court in Providence, Rhode Island, United States. The footage is retrieved from the official YouTube channel of *Caught in Providence* show. The data of this research consist of conversation between some defendants and the judge of the courtroom named Frank Caprio who has served as Municipal Court Judge for over 35 years. During the process of the trial, the judge conducts his inquiry related with the violation such as the situation during the violation, a defendant's financial condition and the awareness of the violation through the ticket that they have been sent before coming to the municipal court. The traffic camera footage is also displayed during the trials.

In this research, the video is selected by using heterogeneous purposive sampling technique. Through this non-probability and convenient sampling technique, it allows the researcher retrieve the sample of a population with different

characteristics and traits. This technique is used due to its relevance with Conversation Analysis as an emic type of study. Furthermore, this technique allows the writer to collect sufficient data that are relevant with the focus of this study that is discovering preference organization of court conversation. Thus, the video of episode one in season one of the show that is released on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 is chosen because it contains adequate data for this qualitative analysis. Furthermore, this video consists of 13 trials of real violation cases that charge legitimate citizens in Providence Municipal Courtroom. The naturally occurring talks between the judge and the defendants in the trials become the main data source in this research. Moreover, the video is retrieved from the official YouTube channel of *Caught in Providence* show and it can be accessed from this link: <https://youtu.be/nJP3n3jb1GY>.

#### 1.5.2. Collecting the data

In collecting the data of this research, several steps are followed. Firstly, the video and its audio are downloaded through <https://www.vidpaw.com>. Then, the video and its audio are exported to ELAN software that is used to transcribe and annotate the video. Through this software, annotating conversation between participants becomes handy as it allows us to annotate it based on the participant. Silence and overlap in between conversation can also be analyzed through this software as it provides the audio wave of the video as well. While using the software, conversation analysis transcription symbols are also inserted to the annotation of the conversation. Next, the transcription is exported to Microsoft Word. Lastly, the transcription is analyzed and categorized accordingly.

### 1.5.3. Analyzing the data

Through the transcription, preferred and dispreferred response are identified and categorized accordingly. Then, the preference organizations are examined after the occurrences of the two responses are analyzed thoroughly. The analysis is also focused on social solidarity that is realized through preference organization by the participants of the conversation. By investigating the preference organization that exists in this particular discourse, the way some defendants and the judge of the municipal courtroom in preserving social solidarity can be explained and elaborated. After analyzing the data, the transcription is divided into several extracts and the extracts are categorized based on one or more particular preference organization that is found after the data is analyzed.

### 1.5.4. Presenting the Result of Analysis.

After analyzing the data, the writer presents the result of the analysis descriptively. The order of the preferred and dispreferred responses explained is based on the majority of the responses found in the video. Moreover, preferred or dispreferred responses in every extract are explained according to their characteristics feature as those responses construct the preference organization. Each extract is also assigned with conversation analysis symbols to represent several crucial aspects such as delay and overlap in utterances. In addition, the result of the analysis is presented and put into two tables. The first table shows the dominant subtypes of preferred and dispreferred responses. The second table shows the dominant types of responses in different sequences types.