

A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL STUDY ON THE CONVERSATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AN INDONESIAN SPONTANEOUS DIALOGUE

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Abstract:

Spontaneous dialogue is an example of spoken text in which its potential can be observed through its conversational structure. As an attempt to interpret the language in spoken text, the paper investigates a spontaneous dialogue in Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian). The discussion focuses on its conversational structure within systemic functional framework. The structure is built up in the semantic stratum by looking at its exchange and commodity for its speech function. The exchanges are realized by Initiate/Respond moves and the commodity could be either Knowledge or Action oriented. Since a spontaneous dialogue is a contextual phenomenon in experiencing language use, the finding of conversational structure can bring further discussion on connections among individuals bearing cultural identities realized by their experiences through languages.

Keywords: conversational structure, exchange, commodity, systemic functional linguistics.

INTRODUCTION

Conversational structure for spontaneous dialogues can be constructed within the social context to catch a realization of language use as a potential (Halliday, 1978, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). To look at the potential, we should realize that any language develops with its uniqueness covering the socially contextual factors in which the language functions in its own ways. The social context interrelates with the context of culture. These contextual factors altogether, then, influence the production and interpretation of the language itself (Halliday, 1978). Hence, it is arguable that in language study, the context should be considered (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; cf. Matthiessen, 1995).

Language is realized in a text either spoken or written. A spontaneous dialogue is a spoken text in which its potential can be observed through its conversational structure. Certain rules and patterns could be there in building a good conversation. But, contextually it flows as it is. As an attempt to interpret the language in spoken text, the paper investigates an Indonesian spontaneous dialogue. The study focuses on its conversational structure in which the exchanges are realized by moves of initiating and responding. Also, the orientation of the commodity being exchanged is considered in the structure.

The analysis on the conversational structure is presented in systemic functional framework. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a model

of language study developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s. The theory views a language as a network of systems and it contains interrelated sets of options for making meaning. The theory is also concerned with the contextualized and practical uses of a language. This theory conceives of language as a resource for meaning, a network of relationships, rather than as a set of rules (Butt, et al., 1995; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

In contextual conversation, one of the meaning resources which can be described is its structure. In the present study, the conversational structure in an Indonesian spontaneous dialogue is observed by discussing the commodity which is being exchanged and the moves which are proposing the commodity.

METHOD

As the data, a spontaneous dialogue between two females (DN and VQ) of Indonesian native speakers was recorded at the Phonetic Laboratory, EFL University, Hyderabad, India. The speakers are citizens of Indonesia with the age from twenty one to thirty two years old when the recordings were conducted. They were all brought up in Indonesia.

The dialogue belongs to an argument type. The topic is about "Vacation". The first speaker (DN) initiates the topic by asking whether the second speaker (VQ) wants to spend the vacation in Indonesia, their home country, or not. In response to the question, the second speaker prefers staying in the university to going back to Indonesia. She argues that there is no point spending vacation in Indonesia. By staying in the university, she could and prepare the study materials well for the next semester.

In the data, there are 211 clauses. Those clauses are various in Mood

(Declarative, Interrogative and Imperative) and some are Moodless. The clause number is maintained to track down the structure indexical in the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a meaning resource, language is studied as a whole phenomenon consisting of a number of interrelated sets of choices in creating meaning. These choices relate the language user's intentions to the concrete forms of language. In systemic functional framework, language is viewed with many strata, which is called language stratification: *context* (of culture and situation), *semantics*, *lexicogrammar*, *phonology* and *phonetics*. Context of culture is the context of the overall linguistic system and context of situation is the context of a text. The content expanding into semantics and lexicogrammar allows the meaning and structure potential of a language in terms of the function that language serves. The expression constitutes the organization of speech sound into sound system (phonology) and the resource for speech and hearing (phonetics).

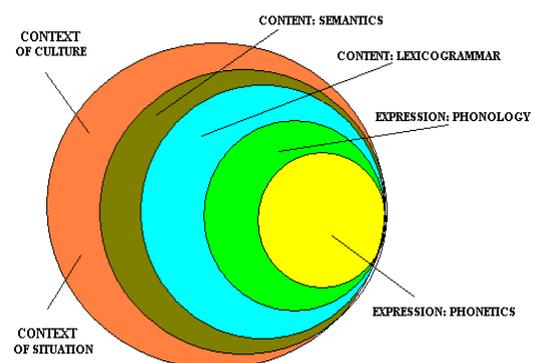


Fig. 1: Stratification (From Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 25).

The exchange structure in conversation is built in one part of the contents as its speech function; i.e.

semantics. It construes its own contexts (context of culture and context of situation).

Role in Exchange	Commodity exchanged	
	(a) goods&service	(b) information
(i) giving	'offer'	'statement'
(ii) demanding	'command'	'question'

Fig. 2: Exchange: Role and Commodity (Halliday & Mattiessen, 2004).

The commodity which is exchanged could be (a) Good&service or (b) Information and the role in the

exchange could be (i) Giving or (ii) Demanding (see Fig. 2). It brings the idea of the orientation in commodity being exchanged in a conversation. It can be Knowledge-oriented and Action-oriented.

In the potential of the exchange structure in a conversation, there are two possible orientation; i.e. Knowledge and Action. It resonates with the commodities being exchanged whether the commodities are Information or Goods&Service. In the process of exchanging, some possible moves are available. The move can be Initiate, Follow-up or Respond (Fawcett, Mije and Wissen, 1988). See Fig. 3.

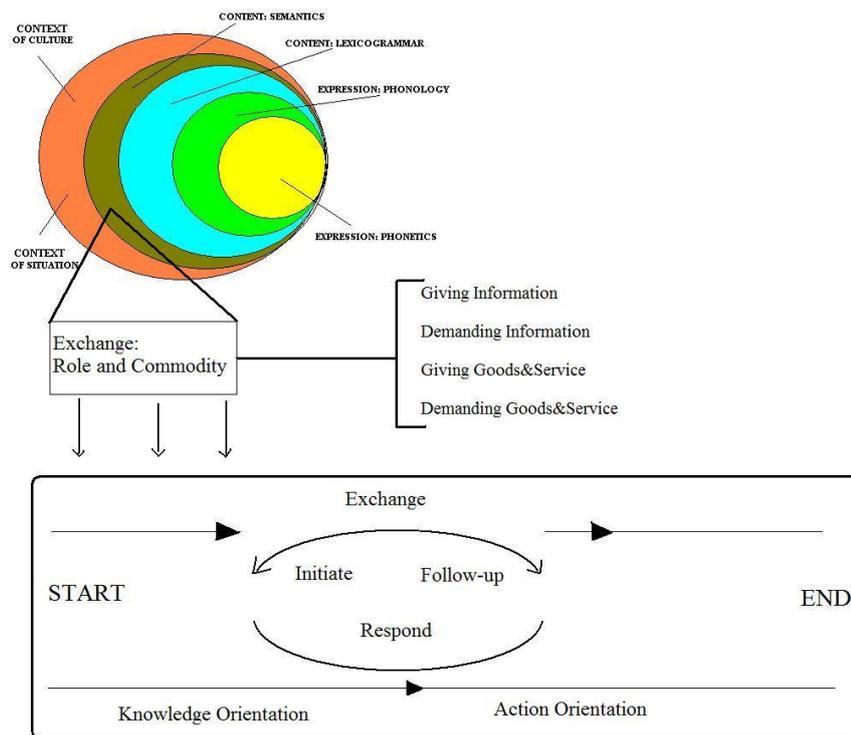


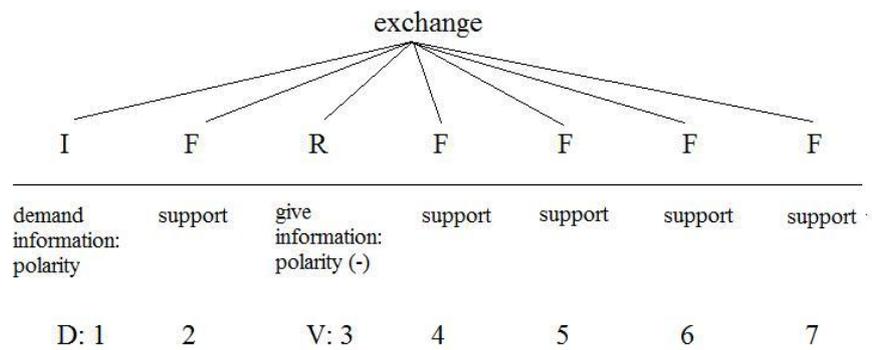
Fig. 3: Potential in Exchange Structure within Stratification Concept

In the data of a spontaneous dialogue in Bahasa Indoensia which is observed, various exchange structures are found. The two orientations are also

available with the pattern of Initiate (I) - Follow up (F) - Respond (R) - Follow up (F). When the orientation is Information, the exchange structure may have the

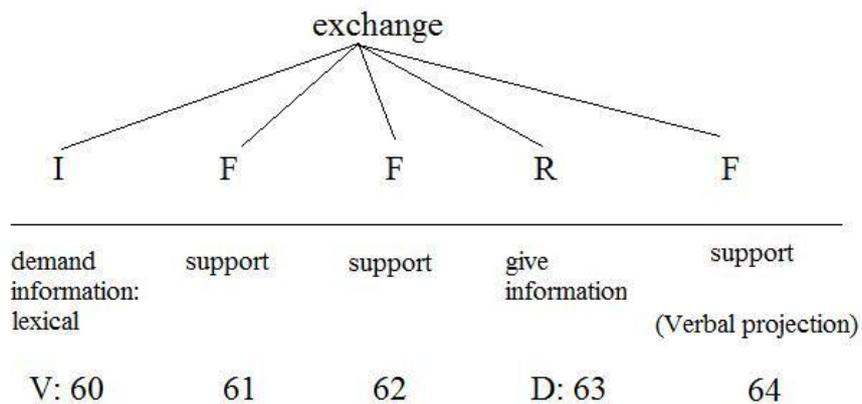
initiation of demanding information. It can be asking a polarity of the proposition or a lexical inquiry in it. This

structure is available in the data as shown in Fig. 4 and Fig. 5 respectively.



- D: 1 mbak, nanti liburan pulang engga?
- 2 aku mau pulang lo mbak
- V: 3 enggaklah
- 4 ngapain juga pulang
- 5 sayakan di sini harus belajar
- 6 lagian cuma satu bulan
- 7 waktunya mepet

Fig. 4: Exchange Structure with Information Orientation (a)

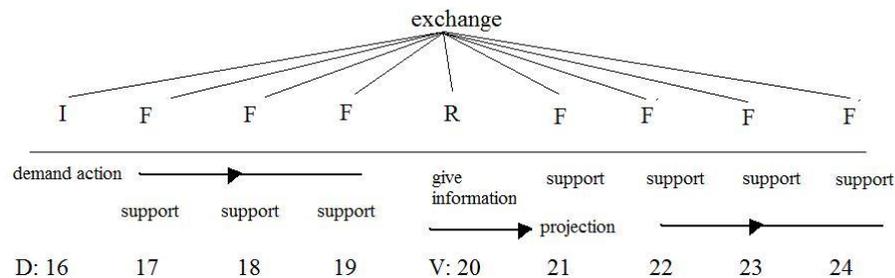


- V: 60 ... kamu di rumah ngapain toh
- 61 ngapain di rumah
- 62 ngapain ayo
- D: 63 kan aku dah bilang
- 64 aku di rumah ada acara kawinannya mas sukma

Fig. 5: Exchange Structure with Information Orientation (b)

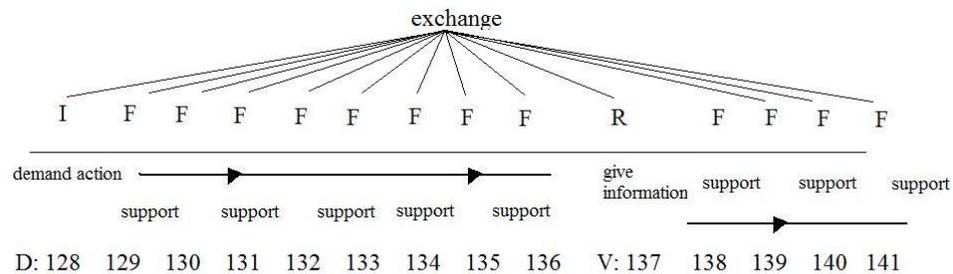
When the orientation is Action, the exchange structure may have an initiation of demanding Goods&Service: an action. In its response, the move of

giving information is found with its follow-ups as the support as shown in Fig. 6 and Fig. 7.



D: 16 mendingan kamu jengukin ayahmu toh
 17 jalan jalan
 18 ketemu mbak mbak mu
 19 ketemu sama ponakan ponakanmu
 V: 20 lo aku sih merasa yo
 21 kalau saya merasa sih
 22 pulang itu satu biaya banyak
 23 dua toh di rumah tidak ada siapa siapa
 24 cuma ayah sama kakak saya

Fig. 6: Exchange Structure with Action Orientation



D: 128 ya makanya sekarang cari coba yang lain dong mbak
 129 kan dulu sukanya tinggal di rumah
 130 sekarang lihat lihat
 131 kan di india cuma dua tahun
 132 nanti kalau pulang toh bisa cerita
 133 mumbai kayak apa
 134 goa kayak apa
 135 india india luaslah
 136 bukannya hyderabad doang
 V: 137 lalu masih di sini kan lama
 138 masih dua tahun
 139 e... hanya karena iccr toh
 140 enggak semuanya free
 141 enggak semuanya itu bebas biaya

Fig. 7: Exchange Structure with Action Orientation

In observing the orientation in exchanges, terms of Primary and Secondary for Knower in knowledge

orientation (K1 and K2 respectively) and for Actor in action orientation (A1 and A2 respectively) are introduced in

Systemic Functional Linguistics (see Ventola, 1988). In the exchange structure exemplified in Fig. 8, K1 is following K2. But in spontaneous dialogues, it may not happen steadily. K1 as the alternative

move given by the actor may also follows A2 instead of A1 (see Fig. 9 below). A follow-up move (e.g. A2f and K1f) is available for either Action or Knowledge orientation.

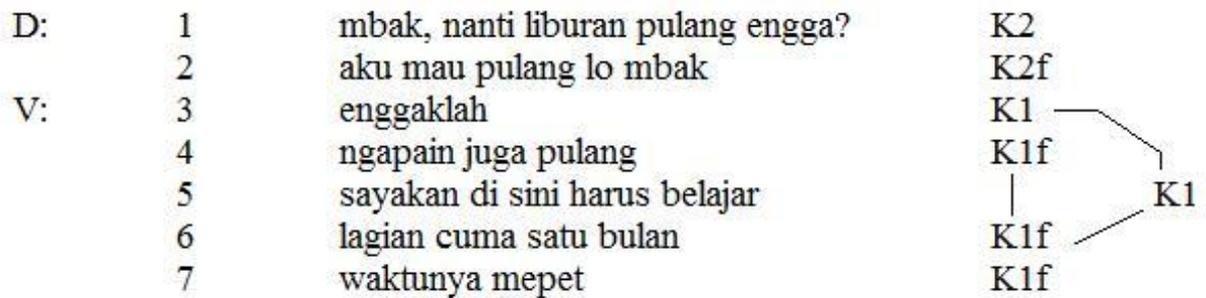


Fig. 8: Structure with Knowledge Exchange Oriented

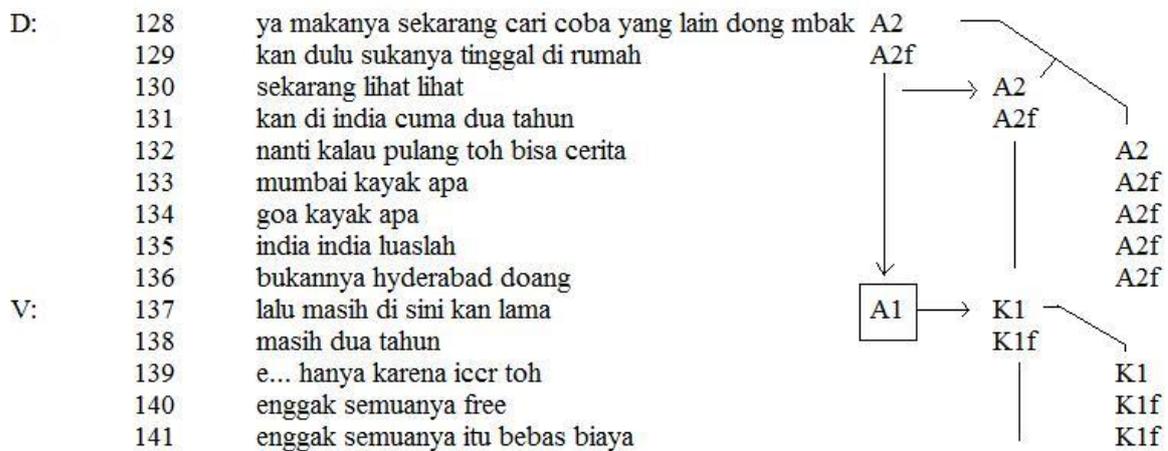


Fig. 9: Structure with Compact Exchange Oriented

In the data, Initiate and Respond spreads unevenly (see Fig. 10). From the first turn to the fourth one, Respond occurs after Initiate closely. In the fifth, Initiate is expanded to the sixth. Further, Respond comes up not only in one turn but also in more than one turn as in the seventh, eighth and ninth turns. These

successive Responds are also found from the eleventh to the fourteenth turn, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth, from the twentieth to the twenty third, from the twenty fifth to twenty sixth and from the thirtieth to the thirty second (the last turn).

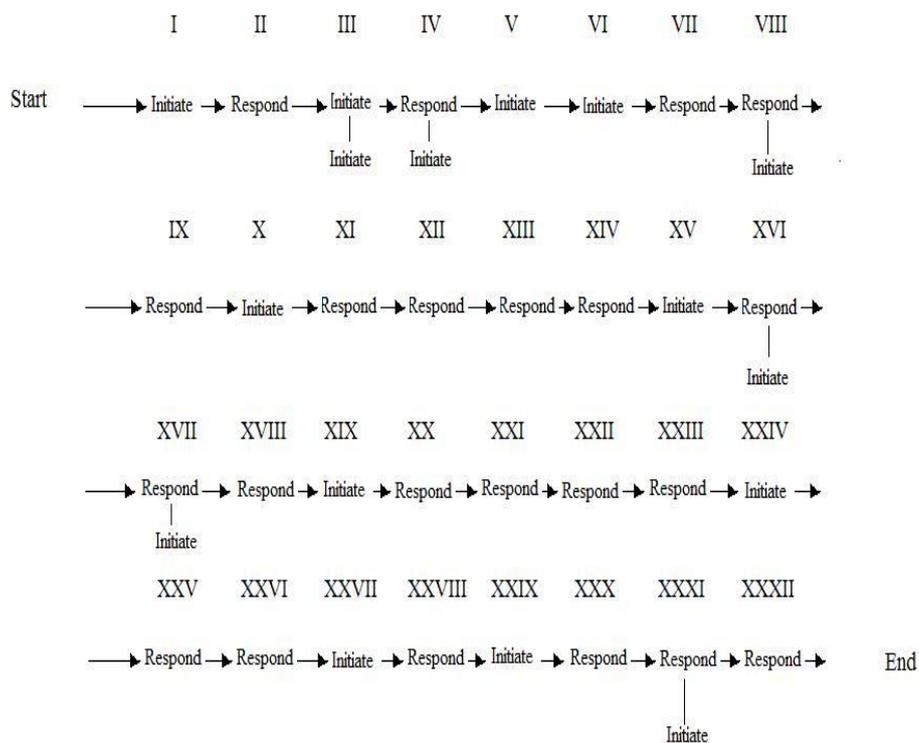


Fig. 10: Initiate-Respond Distribution in the Data (with 32 Turns)

Uniquely, in the data, one turn may have both Initiate and Respond, i.e. in Turn IV, VIII, XVI, XVII and XXXI. Even, there are two moves which are same in nature. But in the data, it occurs only for Initiates; in Turn III, there are double Initiates. Statistically, in exchange structure in the conversation, Respond is dominant in the data with 22 occurrences while Initiate is 16 (see Fig. 11).

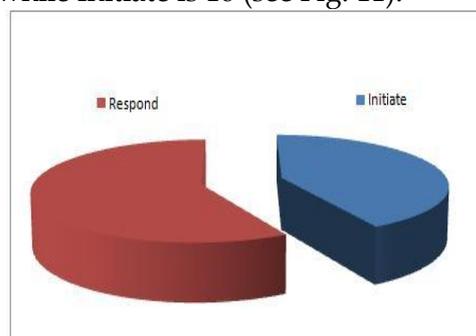


Fig. 11: Initiate-Respond Dominance

In the conversation, commodity (i.e. Information and Goods & Service)

which is being exchanged and Initiate/Respond paradigm in exchanging its commodity are structured in their own ways in a given context. These can be the meaning resource in language use. This brings up an understanding that its structural meaning within the semantic stratum plays role in its context.

Knowledge-oriented and Action-oriented exchanges in the data are quite complicated in the interaction. Secondary Actor (A2), for example, does not end with Primary One (see Fig. 9 above). But it is responded with Primary Knower (K1) instead. Also within Primary Knower, there is another Primary Knower. In this case, there is compact knowledge orientation in the conversation. Moreover, Initiate and Respond paradigms are also various in terms of their occurrences in exchanging one commodity to another commodity. It

reveals that Respond in the data is dominant in exchanging transaction.

Having the concept of stratification (see Fig. 1) in which language is stratified in content and expression strata and the stratum of context (situation and culture) covers them, the finding of conversational structure can bring further discussion on connections among individuals bearing cultural identity involved in the conversation with the ways of the language they are using. Their cultural identity is realized by their experiences through languages. Conversation is one contextual phenomenon in experiencing language use.

Levy (2009) points out that culture may be conveyed through receptive and productive means. It can be seen through the interaction in the conversation; Initiate and Respond. Initiate can be considered as one way to propose a commodity. It produces initiatives to exchange the commodity (Knowledge and Goods & Service). Respond can be seen as another way to propose a commodity by receiving the initiative move. The present data then shows that receptive nature in conversational structure is dominant in the conversation.

CONCLUSION

The conversational structure in Bahasa Indonesia with not only the knowledge and action oriented commodity but also the move paradigm (Initiate/Respond) in exchanging the commodity has been presented in systemic functional framework. In the data, it is observed that there are various exchange structures with the pattern of I - F - R - F. Further, it is found that K1 may follow A2 instead of A1, and there are follow-up moves: A2f and K1f, for both Action and Knowledge

orientations. By looking at the Initiate-Respond Dominance in the data, it is found that the conversational structure is receptive nature.

With the data of spontaneous dialogue in Bahasa Indonesia, the analysis has presented an example of the conversational structure in the language. The structure can be built up within the semantic stratum by looking at its commodity and exchange for its speech function. However, more studies on the structure and other aspects in the conversation certainly should be done to unfold other resources of meaning in the text.

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