A CONVERSATION ANALYSIS OF REPAIR ORGANIZATION IN DR. ZAKIR NAIK QUESTION AND ANSWER BASED CONVERSATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

Conversational repair plays a vital role for human beings to keep a conversation going. Conversational repair prevents a continuous conversation from being interrupted and helps to minimize the potential for misunderstanding. It is important to identify how conversational repair is organized in a question and answer session. This study explored how intersubjectivity is maintained between Dr. Zakir Naik and his audience in comparative religion question and answer sessions. Intersubjectivity can be defined as the mutual understanding gained by both the speaker and the audience in a conversation during a question and answer session. Eight different audience members who participated in the question and answer sessions of Dr. Zakir Naik were taken from the YouTube channel. In those conversations, the videos were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher to investigate the repair organization. Using the conversation analysis (CA) method, this study explored how conversational repairs are organized to achieve mutual understanding between the speaker and the audience. The study found that self-initiated self-repair is the most common type of conversational repair used by the speaker and audience, followed by other-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, and other-initiated other-repair. The study also found that the approach to intersubjectivity, self-knowledge, paralinguistic, 'particular value' and rejoinder contribute to the achievement of mutual understanding between Dr. Zakir and his audience during question and answer sessions. In addition, the study found that Dr. Zakir used the term 'brother' and 'sister' when referring to his audience to show brotherhood in Islam, friendliness, relationship, respect and cultural influence in his conversations. Finally, the findings revealed that Dr. Zakir Naik used English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) (i.e. Bible, Quran, chapter, verse, Allah, Alhamdulillah) in the selected comparative religious dialog videos to address a multi-religious community.

KEYWORDS: Conversational repairs, Intersubjectivity, brother, sister, ESP, LSP, conversation analysis.

ملخص

تلعب الإصلاحات الحوارية دورًا هامًا في ضمان استمراريّة المحادثة. تبعد الإصلاحات الحوارية الإزعاجات عن الحوارات وتساعد في التقليل من احتمال الوقوع في سوء التفاهم. إن معرفة كيفية تنظيم الإصلاحات الحوارية مهمة خاصة في جلسة السؤال والجواب. واكتشف البحث الحالي طرق إبقاء التذاوت بين الدكتور ذاكر نايك والمستمعين في أثناء السؤال والجواب حول مقارنة الأديان. تعرف التذاوت بالتفاهم بين المتكلم والجمهور في الحوار في جلسة السؤال والجواب. تم تنزيل الفيديوهات لثمانية مستمعين مختلفين قد شاركوا في جلسة السؤال والجواب مع الدكتور ذاكر نايك من قناة يوتيوب. وحوَّل الباحث حوارات منطوقة في تلك الفيديوهات إلى حوارات مكتوبة وحللها رغبة في اكتشاف كيفية إدارة الإصلاحات الحوارية لتحقيق التفاهم المتبادل بين المتكلم والجمهور. توصّل البحث إلى أنّ أشهر نوع من الإصلاحات الحوارية يستخدمه المتكلم والمستمعون هو الإصلاحات الذاتية مقارنة بأنواع أخرى. ووجد البحث أيضا أن مدخل التفاهم نحو الموضوع، ومعرفة الذات، والاستجابات الصوتية، والقيمة الخاصة، والردود السريعة كلها تساهم في تحقيق التفاهم المتبادل بين الدكتور ذاكر نايك ومستمعيه في أثناء جلسة السؤال والجواب. وإضافة إلى ذلك، وجد البحث أن استخدام "أخ" و"أخت" عندما يوجه الدكتور ذاكر نايك مستمعيه يبرز الأخوة الإسلامية، والصداقة، والاحترام والتأثيرات الثقافية في حواراته. قصارى القول، اكتشفت النتائج أن الدكتور ذاكر نايك يستخدم اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة واللغة لأغراض خاصة (الإنجيل، القرآن، السورة، الآية، الله، الحمد لله) في فيديوهات الحوارات المختارة حول مقارنة الأديان في التوجيه نحو المجتمعات متعدّدة الأديان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإصلاحات الحوارية، والتذاوت، الأخ، الأخت، اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة، واللغة لأغراض خاصة، وتحليل الحوارات

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English for Specific Purposes.

……………………………………
Nur Nabilah Binti Abdullah
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English for Specific Purposes.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Muhammad Izzat Bin Mohd Ghazali

Signature ....   Date ....

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter introduces the importance of the study, brief review on earlier research, problem statement, research goals and objectives, research questions, and the current study's important contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

1.2 INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE STUDY

The success of any question and answer session is dependent on how speakers interact with the audience. Speaker-audience interaction during question and answer sessions is a form of conversation as they communicate with the purpose of clarifying and attaining information on a certain subject matter. Gorijan and Habibi (2015) describe conversations as interactive as two or more individuals will take turns to speak and listen to one another. Conversation or interaction through speech is the most basic mode of human communication. As humans generally communicate using speech and text, elements of verbal communication such as tone, verbal fillers and sounds are integral in conversations to enhance understanding. Nevertheless, visual and non-verbal cues like body postures, hand signals, eye contact and silence cannot be overlooked as they are also significant in ensuring that messages in the conversation are effectively communicated. Hence, understanding conversation and its origins ought to generate deeper comprehension of the language used and understand the messages sent generally.

CA's main objectives are to explain how systems of talk can be combined to produce an account of mechanics of talk (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). The system of talk used in conversation is as follows:

1. When the audience construct their talk, they would generally address themselves to preceding talk followed by immediately preceding talk (Sacks, 1992) with the intention of ensuring that their talk would be context-shape

2. When performing current actions, the audience would normally project (empirically) and require (normatively) that some 'next action' (or one of a range of possible 'next actions') should be done by a subsequent participant (Schegloff, 1972) in order to create (or maintain or renew) a context for the next participant's talk.

3. By producing their next actions, audience show an understanding of a prior action and do so at a multiplicity of levels - for instance, by showing an 'acceptance', someone can show an understanding that the prior turn was completed, that it was addressed to them, that it was an action of a particular type (e.g., an invitation), and so on. These understandings are (tacitly) confirmed or can become the objects of repair at any third turn in an on-going sequence (Schegloff, 1992). Through this process, the people in the conversation achieve mutual understandings created through a sequential 'architecture of intersubjectivity' (Heritage, 1984).

Many researchers started to realize the importance of conversation analysis and many latest researches were conducted with the purpose of identifying conversation

analysis' main objectives Sidnell (2013) describes Conversation analysis (CA) as "an approach within the social sciences that aims to describe, analyze and understand talk as a basic and constitutive features of human social life by using audio and video recordings of talk and social interaction."

Furthermore, Gardner (2004) explains such an account will then provide a focus not only on how speakers' utterances are constructed prosodically, grammatically, and lexically - turn design - but also on how speakers overwhelmingly cooperate in an orderly taking of turns, and how these turns are sequenced into sets of action, as adjacent pairs and more extended sequences.

There are some unconscious rules participants need to consider when interacting in a conversation, and many people use those rules without realizing. It is important to know these rules because if the conversation rules are not observed, the conversation will be stopped or interrupted. The need to investigate conversation's neglected rules has led to the introduction of CA where linguists begin to study how humans use talk for specific functions and purposes (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Maynard, 2013, p. 2). CA's focus is not on human language, but on how humans interact with one another. As CA allows conversations to be dissected and patterns of actions such as turn-taking and organization to be scrutinized (Levinson & Torreira, 2015), the conversation's contents or dialogues can be examined and the findings will provide details needed to understand the intricacies of oral interaction (Yu, 2013). Numerous studies have been carried out on conversation analysis, for example in analyzing turn-taking, adjacency pairs, preference organization, sequence organization, and conversation repair (Moore, 2018).

Conversation Analysis was developed by sociologists Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) in the late 1960s and early 1970s to analyze how social actions are produced in daily situations. CA was previously used to examine telephone calls made to a suicide prevention centre (Bloch & Leydon, 2019) and currently, it is used in other social sciences' disciplines such as communication, political science, anthropology and business.

Burke (1993) mentioned that many of the written research conducted to guide people in becoming a 'good conversationalist'. In order to have a lively conversation, the scholars have set some rules on how a conversation should be done. These scholars explained the correct way of using language at its best. Culture is one of the main factors that shapes human communication and simultaneously changes and influences conversation styles (Burke, 1993).

Conversation analysis (CA) is used to examine the study of spoken language. In other discourse approaches, the focus is likely given to the speaker. Meanwhile in CA, the talking process can be seen as an interrelated process, where the speaker and the listener are given equal status in the conversation. Speakers shape their contributions narrowly to the listeners during the talk, while listeners shape the speakers' design based on listeners' responses that they produced.

Unit of talk is constructed from previous talk, and participants respond to the conversation based on their understanding of the previous talk. For instance, if the first utterance is a greeting, the listener is expected to reply with a greeting as well. It is in this

way that the talk is seen as co-constructed by listeners and speakers. The example is as follows:

A: Hello.

B: Hi.

(Sacks, 1973, p.295-296)

Human conversation can be considered as the oldest form of communication. Prior to the conversation development, many linguists found the excitement and interest in studying and analyzing human conversation as human conversation has evolved from time to time due to technology. As mentioned by Liddicoat (2007, p.5), conversation analysis is one of the ways to analyze conversations by focusing on the organization and orderliness of human social communication. Correcting someone's mistakes during a conversation is not different from any other studies of conversation. Therefore, with the intention of examining repair phenomena in a conversation, many linguists use conversation analysis as the approach to investigate repair in human interactions.

In order to get more information on repair phenomena, many studies have been done to analyze this phenomenon. For instance, Levinson (1983, p.340) explained that repair phenomenon is used to correct misheard, misunderstood and non-heard words in human conversation. He further explained this matter by adding a few more aspects to be emphasized on repair phenomena such as organization of repair, repair completion patterns and the reason for implementing repair in a conversation.

The speaker and interlocutor can produce and complete a repair between them in the repair phenomenon. All actions should at least be done by one of them, or else, the

conversation will be ended. Besides that, the action of producing a repair cannot be done if the people involved in the conversation overlap their roles in producing and completing the repair. The type of repair used in a conversation is determined by individuals who produce and complete the repair. Levinson (1983: 340) also mentioned four fundamental organization of repairs which are self-initiated self-repair, other-initiated self-repair, other-initiated other-repair, and self-initiated other-repair.

In addition, further recent research mentioned "repair organization" as an organized set of practices through which participants are able to address and potentially resolve such troubles in the course of interaction. Repair is a self-righting mechanism usable wherever troubles of speaking, hearing, and understanding are encountered but also usable elsewhere too and for other purposes than simply fixing problems (Sidnell, 2010).

Sidnell (2010) also mentioned that conversation repair is organized as follows:

1. Repair is organized by a distinction between repair initiation and repair execution (or simply initiation and repair proper).
2. Repair is organized by position, where position is calibrated relative to the source of trouble for instance on the same turn, transition space between turns, or next turn.
3. Repair is organized by a distinction between self for instance: the one who produced the trouble source and other.

On the other hand, it is also interesting to look at how organization of repair influences the intersubjectivity understanding between speaker and audience. In other

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words, how organization of conversational repairs are used to create common understanding among participants of a conversation. There are researches that have been conducted on analyzing how the organization of conversational repairs roles produce common understanding among the participants in a conversation (such as Firth and Wagner, 1997; Hosoda, 2000; and Robinson, 2014). For example, Firth and Wagner (1997) analyzed the use of organization of conversational repairs initiated common understanding among the second language speakers (L2). The research findings show the necessity of conversational repairs as a source for second language speakers to build different linguistics competences and statuses. In addition, Hosoda (2000), whose research investigated how intersubjectivity understandings were achieved among non-native and native speakers in Japan. The results of these researches show the significance of interlocutors "mutual orientation" to each other's verbal and non-verbal action in the constructing of other-repair and responses to the repair, particularly in native speaker and non-native speaker conversation. Furthermore, Robinson (2014) examined whether participants rely exclusively on next turn talk in order to manage intersubjectivity. The results showed that participants manage intersubjectivity not only on a turn-by-turn basis, but on an action-by-action basis according to conduct produced by reference to invisible but relevant repair-opportunity spaces that are provided by conversation's generic organization of repair.

It is vital for speakers and audience to achieve mutual understanding or maintaining intersubjectivity, especially in comparative religion question and answer sessions. Mutual understanding can be seen in a successful conversation and can be defined as assumptions and knowledge of the world (Müller, 2003; Scollon, 2012). Since

mutual understanding can be observed, the study believes that there are some patterns of conversational repairs' organization in a conversation that can be analyzed to identify how mutual understanding can be achieved between the speaker and audience.

Choice of words in a language is vital in order to make sure that the messages and its meanings not only for daily conversation purposes but also to the introduction of religion and religion concepts. By using proper use of words, the communities' ideology and beliefs can be conveyed to the next generation and from place to place. (Mukherjee, 2013)

During Medieval Arabic in Jerusalem, the Muslims has developed phono-semantic matching in order to reject Christianity in Jerusalam. The Christians uses the word *kanisat alqiyama* (the Church of Resurrection) in Jerusalam but the Muslims uses the word *alqumama* (rubbish) instead of *alqiyama* (resurrection) to *kanisat alqumama* (the Church of Rubbish) to show their dissatisfaction to Christianity. The Muslims are not the only group to use the method of choice of words to show their dissatisfaction. Some Jewish groups would replace the Arabic word *rasul* (the messenger of Allah: Muhammad) with the Hebrew negative word *pasul* (disqualified or faulty).

Debates on comparative religion have grown in today's world. The rising prominence of Comparative religion has introduced many experts in this field. One of them is Dr. Zakir Naik who has organized many talks and dialogues to deliver the beauty of Islam and clarify any confusions regarding Islam, not only to Muslims but also to non-Muslims. In a question and answer session, interaction occurs between the speaker and audience, for example when the audience starts to ask the speaker questions. This

phenomenon can be used as a platform to observe human conversation, especially when most people speak spontaneously and are impetuous in delivering their messages.

In the field of comparative religion, most of the question and answer sessions are recorded and the videos are uploaded for public viewing. One of the latest Dr. Zakir Naik's question and answer sessions on comparative religion was held in Dubai in 2017. Therefore, this research would like to investigate two aspects of conversational repairs from the videos; 1) the language used in relation to conversation repair between the speaker and audience; 2) understand the question and answer session between the speaker and audience.

As an exploratory study, the researcher uses qualitative data to examine research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems, but merely explores the research topic with varying levels of depth. It has been noted that "exploratory research is the initial research, which forms the basis of more conclusive research. It can even help in determining the research design, sampling methodology and data collection method" (Singh, 2007). In addition, there is no specific study found regarding this research topic. The use of exploratory research is suitable for this topic as mentioned by Brown (2006) where exploratory research "tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done".

The video analyzed contains eight different questions and this research would also like to examine the organization of conversation repair used by both speaker and audience during the question and answer sessions. The question and answer sessions are used for this research because they provide real life conversation. Thus, it is important to

investigate the organization of conversation repair used by speaker and audience in a comparative religion question and answer session and the language used by speakers in a comparative religion question and answer session.

Next, in comparative religion, the speaker and audience may have different religious backgrounds. It is important for the speaker and the enquirers to have a common understanding of the topic discussed. Even though English language is used in the question and answer sessions, there are still some misunderstandings identified in the conversation of both parties. Besides that, it is difficult to find any research conducted on identifying how a comparative religion preacher organizes repair to achieve a mutual understanding with the audience. The closest research on achieving mutual understanding using repairs and using CA to gather data is done by Hosoda (2000) who investigated how mutual understanding can be achieved using repairs among non-native Japanese speakers and native speakers of Japanese in casual conversation.

Conversational repair occurs when people become involved in a conversation, unconsciously initiate mistakes during the conversation and repair their mistakes while still being actively involved in the conversation. Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) refer to repair as corrections done to correct or to replace "error" or "mistake". Meanwhile, Chaika (1982) says that the person who is being talked to usually will correct the mistake when the speaker misused the style of conversation. Meanwhile, according to Liddicoat (2007), repair, which is relevant to all levels of talk, is a mechanism of conversation. It refers to the processes available to speakers through which they can deal with problems which arise in their talk. Repair is a broader concept than simply the

correction of errors in talk by replacing an incorrect form with a correct one, although such corrections are a part of repair. In fact, many cases of repair seem to involve situations in which there is no error made by the speaker at all (Jefferson, 1987).

The major interest of this thesis is to study one of the basic elements in conversation analysis which is conversational repair. The numbers of studies conducted regarding repair in conversation analysis are still needed to be further done especially in context of comparative religion. This research will focus on basic organization of repair in three different question and answer sessions between Dr. Zakir Naik and his audience. The video, which consists of eight different question-answer based conversations related to comparative religion was selected from YouTube. Apart from that, this research also aims to analyze how mutual understanding can be achieved by using conversational repairs between the speaker and audience in eight different question-answer based conversations.

Dr. Zakir Abdul Karim Naik or more known as Dr. Zakir Naik, has been using YouTube as a channel to evangelize and conduct question and answer sessions with people world over who are interested to know more of other religions. Based on the statistics by 'trackalytics' (www.trackalytics.com), a population of 440998 has subscribed to Dr. Zakir Naik's Channel. His videos, which focus on various topics related to comparative religion, have recorded a high number of views (29958850 viewers).

1.3 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Many do not know about the true way of Islam. For some people, Islam is a religion of hate and violent due to the propaganda portrayed by international media where the media accuses Islam and its followers for the bloodshed and terrorism occurred around the world (Corbin, 2017; Anderson & Sandberg, 2018). Islamophobia has become the mainstream media discourse "where images of Muslims as murderous fanatics abound in movies, videos and computer games" (Noor, 2007. p. 267). It is the Muslims' duty to spread the beauty of Islam (Da'wah) to non-Muslims by encouraging them to follow Allah's commandments. Allah *Subhanahuwata'ala* says in the Holy Quran: "Let there arise from among you a nation of people inviting all that is good: enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Such are they who attain the true success" (3:104). Da'wah is a practice that all Muslims should do to attract others of different religious beliefs to know the truth, practice what is right and prohibit what is wrong so that the world will be in peace and harmony.

Comparative religion started hundreds of years ago even though it only can be seen by the layman in the last few decades due to the advancement of technology. There are four major world religions in this world; Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. These major religions are against one another intellectually to prove that their religions are the religions of truth. To make their religions known, Muslims, Christians, Jew and Hindus use religious dialogues or debates as one of the ways to not only to seek the truth, but also to know other religions.

Faith and life are constructed by an individual's reasoning, motivation and engagement and methodology. One of the famous contemporary comparative religion speakers presently is Mumbai-born medical doctor-turned-preacher Dr. Zakir Abdul Karim Naik. Dr. Zakir is inspired by his teacher, Sheikh Ahmed Deedat, who can also be considered as one of the most influential comparative religion speakers. Dr. Zakir has spent time studying Islam, Christianity, Hindu and other religions. He uses many forms of inter–faith study and dialogues from a Muslim perspective to deliver da'wah. Dr. Zakir is famous for his appearance in which he usually wears a suit and tie during his dialogues and public debates. As he used English in his dialogues and debates, this has enabled him to reach out to a larger international multi-religious audience.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Conversation Analysis has been a growing topic in today's world. It started half a century ago and has been growing significantly. As the language learning process started mainly from conversations, the importance of conversation as one of the ways to learn a language cannot be denied. According to Clarks (1996), face to face conversation is the cradle of language." A conversation is not only about conveying messages, but it is also important to ensure that there is enough information in the messages. With the intention of ensuring that a conversation runs smoothly; it is important to know one of the basic principles in conversation analysis, which is conversation repair.

There are many researches on conversation generally, such as how gender affects conversation (JLeman, Ahmed & Ozarow, 2003) and how age influences the conversation (Hannah & Murachver 1999). Nevertheless, there are not many research analyzing