

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes background of the study, statement of problem, research objective, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language plays a central role in human social life, as it enables individuals to interact, negotiate meaning, and maintain social relationships. One of the most fundamental forms of language use is conversation, which requires participants to coordinate their turns in speaking and to interpret one another's intentions. Conversation Analysis (CA) emerges as an analytical approach that examines how such coordination is achieved through naturally occurring spoken interaction shaped by social context (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). From this perspective, interaction is viewed as a collaborative process in which speakers actively manage the flow of talk, and the smoothness of interaction depends largely on participants' responses, timing, and engagement (Hanafiah et al., 2021). Talk, therefore, is not merely a medium for information exchange, but a fundamental element of social life that can be systematically described and analyzed (Sidnell, 2010). During interaction, speakers continuously interpret each other's actions and gradually construct shared understanding, making conversation an ongoing, dynamic process (Seedhouse, 2005).

In institutional settings such as interviews and talk shows, conversation serves a dual function: conveying information while simultaneously entertaining a public audience. This dual purpose places particular importance on turn-taking as an interactional mechanism. Speakers must negotiate when turns are taken, maintained, or yielded to ensure that the interaction remains coherent, engaging, and accessible to viewers. Talk shows, therefore, represent a unique both interactional and institutional constraints.

Talk shows constitute a form of institutional discourse characterized by spoken interaction between a host and guests in a public media setting. According

to Tolson (2006), talk shows combine features of everyday conversation with institutional structures, creating interactions that appear informal while still being governed by specific norms and role expectations. Within this format, the host occupies a central position, holding primary responsibility for managing topic progression, directing the flow of talk, and maintaining interactional rhythm to sustain audience interest (Hutchby, 2006).

One prominent example is *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, an American entertainment program featuring interviews with public figures from various fields. In this program, Jimmy Fallon performs an active hosting role by initiating topics, posing questions, and employing light interruptions and overlaps to regulate conversational flow. Clayman and Heritage (2010) emphasize that in media interviews, such actions are not inherently competitive but function as institutional resources for guiding interaction and maintaining audience engagement. Consequently, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* provides a relevant and productive context for examining the organization of turn-taking in talk show interaction, particularly in host–guest relationships.

The object of this research is the turn-taking strategies employed by the host and the guest in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, specifically in the episode titled “” This study focuses on how James Thomas Fallon as the host and Taylor Swift as the guest manage speaking turns through strategies of taking, holding, and yielding the turn during the interaction. Following Stenström (1994), these strategies function as interactional resources through which speakers manage their participation in conversation by entering, maintaining, or yielding the speaking floor. Within the framework of Conversation Analysis, turn-taking strategies are understood as structured and goal-oriented interactional actions rather than random or spontaneous occurrences (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). These strategies are realized through various linguistic resources, including pauses, repetitions, fillers, discourse markers, interruptions, and overlaps, which enable speakers to negotiate access to the conversational floor.

In the context of talk shows as institutional talk, turn-taking strategies reflect asymmetrical participation between the host and the guest. Heritage (1985) argues that institutional interaction is characterized by unequal role distribution, in which one participant typically the host possesses greater authority to control topics and regulate the progression of talk. This asymmetry is evident in Jimmy Fallon's frequent use of taking-the-turn strategies through direct questions and topic transitions, while Taylor Swift more often employs holding-the-turn strategies through extended elaboration, repetition, and fillers to maintain the conversational floor, particularly when discussing personal experiences. Thus, turn-taking strategies in talk shows function not only to organize speaking order, but also as interactional resources for managing conversational control, constructing narratives, and sustaining audience engagement in public media discourse.

James Thomas Fallon, better known professionally as Jimmy Fallon, serves as a key figure in this institutional discourse as the primary host. As a prominent comedian, actor, and television host in the American media industry, he leads *The Tonight Show*, a globally renowned talk show celebrated for successfully integrating interactive elements, live music, and engaging games into standard interviews. Jimmy's creative approach to structuring audience engaging programs has established new benchmarks for modern broadcasting. His strategic vision in creating a warm and open interactive atmosphere, combined with his talent for building genuine rapport with guests, has significantly impacted creative innovation in television media. Furthermore, Jimmy exemplifies a communication model that prioritizes affability, rapid adaption, and active collaboration, there by forging a strong emotional connection with a global audience. Within this study, he functions as an expert moderator who adeptly balances entertainment with structured, professional discourses by actively guiding the flow of conversation.

In contrast to the host, the guest in this study, Taylor Alison Swift, is a prominent musician, songwriter, and entrepreneur whose existence is acknowledged as one of the most influential public figures in the contemporary

global music industry. Taylor is extensively recognized for her personal narrative competence in song writing an ability that not only yields international commercial success but also reflects an intellectual depth that inspires a vast audience. Her dedication to maintaining artistic autonomy and her consistent advocacy for the professional rights of musicians demonstrate an integrity and persistence that serve as a model for practitioners in the creative industries. Moreover, Taylor represents the paradigm of a communicator who utilizes strategic intelligence, authenticity in interaction, and perseverance in navigating career complexities as instruments for achieving sustainable success. In her participation in this talk show, Swift exhibits substantial communicative competence, articulately expressing profound insights into her creative process and personal life through a rhetorically structured and elegant linguistic style.

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon positions her within an interactional framework shaped by unequal social roles between host and guest (Heritage, 1985). In the episode under study, the interaction between Jimmy Fallon and Taylor Swift reveals distinctive turn-taking practices, including topic initiation and transition by the host, alongside turn-holding strategies employed by Taylor Swift through elaboration, fillers, and repetition. From a Conversation Analysis perspective, these practices are understood as structured and purpose-driven interactional actions rather than incidental behavior (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), making this interaction a relevant site for analyzing turn-taking strategies in institutional talk shows.

Previous studies have examined turn-taking strategies in various talk show contexts. First, Nopriani, Afrilesa, and Oktariza (2023), in *A Conversational Analysis of Turn-Taking Strategies Used in Brownis Talk Show*, identified the types and functions of turn-taking strategies employed by hosts and guests in a local Indonesian talk show. Using a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in the turn-taking organization theory proposed by Sacks and Schegloff (1979), the study found that participants consistently applied strategies of taking, holding, and yielding the turn to regulate conversational flow and maintain interactional

coherence. This study highlights that turn-taking functions as a pragmatic strategy rather than a purely mechanical exchange of speaking turns.

Second, Thainaphriao, Ocktarani, and Nugraheni (2022), in *Turn Taking Strategies in Loukgolf's English Room Talk Shows*, analyzed both regular and irregular turn-taking strategies, including interruptions and overlaps. Employing a classification framework by Natalia and Subekti alongside Jeffersonian transcription conventions, the researchers identified numerous instances of turn-taking strategies motivated by factors such as topic urgency and the need for clarification. Their findings demonstrate that irregularities in turn-taking also serve important interactional and pragmatic functions within talk show discourse.

Third, Fitriana and Setiawan (2022), in *The Application of Turn-Taking Strategies on THE BOYZ Podcast Highlight Episode: Conversation Analysis Reflection*, examined turn-taking strategies in a media-based interaction involving public figures. Using Conversation Analysis as the analytical framework, the study identified the use of taking, holding, and yielding the turn, as well as interactional phenomena such as interruptions and overlaps, to manage conversational flow and maintain audience engagement. The findings indicate that turn-taking strategies function as essential interactional resources in entertainment media discourse, enabling speakers to negotiate speaking rights, manage topic development, and sustain interactional coherence.

Taken together, these studies suggest that turn-taking strategies are diverse, context-dependent, and pragmatically motivated. However, existing research has largely focused on local or semi-educational talk shows and informal interview formats. Studies examining bilingual podcasts or speakers with speech disorders further expand the scope but do not address international talk shows involving global public figures and highly asymmetrical institutional roles. Therefore, this research addresses a clear gap by analyzing turn-taking strategies in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, particularly in an episode featuring Taylor Swift, to explore how taking, holding, and yielding the turn are used to

manage conversational flow, topic control, and meaning construction in global entertainment media interaction

1.2 Statement of Problem

Based on the research background discussed above, this study formulates the following research questions:

1. What are the types of turn-taking strategies used in the interaction between Jimmy Fallon and Taylor Swift on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*?
2. How are turn-taking strategies employed by Jimmy Fallon and Taylor Swift during conversation?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the research question formulated above, this study aims to:

1. Find out the types of turn-taking strategies used in the interaction between Jimmy Fallon and Taylor Swift on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.
2. Describe and explain how the turn-taking strategies are employed by Jimmy Fallon and Taylor Swift during the conversation.

1.4 Research Significance

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study extends the application of Conversation Analysis, particularly the turn-taking framework proposed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), to the context of institutional talk in contemporary talk shows. In addition, the study adopts Stenström's (1994) classification turn-taking strategies to provide a more detailed account of how speakers take, hold, and yield the conversational floor in actual interaction. By examining turn-taking strategies in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, this research highlights how speaking turns are managed, negotiated, and distributed between host and guest within an asymmetrical interactional setting (Heritage, 1985). The study contributes to a

deeper understanding of how conversational organization operates in media discourse involving global public figures.

Practically, this research can serve as a reference for students and research who are interested in spoken discourse, conversation analysis, and interactional patterns in talk shows. It provides concrete examples of how turn-taking strategies are applied in authentic media interactions, which can be useful for linguistic analysis, classroom discussion, and further research on talk show discourse. In addition, this study may help audience and aspiring media practitioners better understand how conversational flow is strategically managed to maintain interaction, narrative coherence, and audience engagement in public interviews.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

This study limits its analysis regarding the novelty of the study. The researcher focuses on the types of turn-taking strategies used and how these strategies are managed in a conversation between Jimmy Fallon and Taylor Swift on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. Thus, it is the reason why the researcher chooses the study relating to the turn-taking of their interaction which is held on The Tonight Show. To avoid misunderstanding toward some key terms existed in this research, several have to be explained in the following section:

1. Conversation Analysis (CA)

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a study approach that discusses how individuals interact, negotiate meaning, and manage the flow of talk in naturally occurring spoken interaction. It analyzes how the talk is produced and coordinated between participants. Conversation analysis uses real data transcription to examine the production of talk.

2. Turn-Taking

Turn-Taking is a process in spoken interaction where participants alternate their turns to speak. It serves as an essential conversational mechanism that ensures the flow of talk remains orderly and coherent, primarily by minimizing the occurrence of gaps (silence) and overlaps between the participants.

3. Turn-Taking Strategies

Turn-Taking Strategies are the interactional resources or techniques employed by speakers to gain, maintain, or surrender the speaking floor. Following Stenström's (1994) theory, these strategies consist of three main phases: taking the turn (starting up or taking over), holding the turn (maintaining the floor using fillers or pauses), and yielding the turn (giving the opportunity to speak to the interlocutor).

4. Talk Show

A Talk show is a specific genre of institutional television or media broadcasting where a host conducts interviews and engages in conversational dialogue with one or more guests. In the context of linguistics, it represents a semi-structured communication environment where spoken interaction is constrained by the professional roles of the participants, which ultimately and frequently results in an imbalanced distribution or dominance of conversational engagement.

5. The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon is a prominent American late-night entertainment talk program broadcast on NBC. The show features a mix of celebrity interviews, musical performances, and comedic sketches, serving as an example of a media interview format where verbal interaction is semi-structured through the roles of an institutional host and celebrity guests.