

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the research backgrounds, statement of problems, research objectives, research significances, conceptual frameworks, and previous studies.

#### **1.1 Research Background**

Conversation is an interactive way of communicating that involves two or more people. Susan E. Brennan (2010) also stated that a conversation occurs when two or more people speak using words or gestures to communicate with each other. Every person involved in the conversation has a different role between who is speaking and who is listening. If both roles are not applied, the conversation will become messy and the information is not conveyed clearly. Conversation is the most basic way a person needs to interact with other people (Horton, 2017). Conversation can be done by everyone because people can share information, form relationships, and solve problems. People who interact in the conversations need to pay attention to the roles of speakers and listeners so that the message of the conversation can be well received by each other.

An interview is a conversation performed by two or more people to obtain information from the interviewee. The conversation takes place in an interview between two people asking and answering each other questions (Ahuja, 2017). In an interview, both the moderator and the interviewee need to respond to each other. The roles of speaker and listener must be applied well so that the conversation does not go out of the topic. Managing communication effectively in an interview is not an easy task. Asking questions and getting answers may often be more challenging than it initially seems (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Interviews are a form of communication that requires skills in asking questions, listening, and managing the conversation well. Bettina Heinz (2003) uttered that out of most conversations, the interlocutors reach a point where one of the

speakers will "take over" and the other will focus on listening. The role of the speaker and listener changes and does not stay with just one person. Everyone has the right to speak when that person is involved in a conversation.

An interview is a structured exchange of words between two or more people to achieve certain results (Rustono, 1999). In the United States of America, there is an interview show aired on the radio and YouTube platform, called Zach Sang Show. The purpose of the Zach Sang Show is to get information from many musicians or artists from all parts of the world. One of the most viewers reached when Zach Sang invited RM of BTS (the leader of the famous boy band in South Korea) as an interviewee on Zach Sang Show. The interviewer in every interview is always conducted by Zach Sang. There is a phenomenon where the role of the speaker and the listener become ambiguous. When RM had the role of the speaker, Zach Sang gave short responses such as "*yeah*" simultaneously. That response was issued from Zach's mouth when RM was still speaking and had not given his role of the speaker to his interlocutor. If the short response is not spoken, it would not be such a serious problem. However, the brief response is often uttered by Zach and RM when one of them becomes the speaker and the information conveyed is still conveyed properly.

In the journal research compiled by Meydiana Kuswandi and Yanuarti Apsari (2019), several responses are often used by listeners when someone is speaking, namely the word "*yeah*". The word "*yeah*" is a brief response uttered by the listener and does not necessarily indicate agreement with the speaker. The "*yeah*" response may have different functions depending on the context given by the speaker to the listener. In the case of Zach's interview with RM, RM had uttered the short response "*yeah*" in response to Zach's question and vice versa. According to Grundy (2000), the signals that listeners give as a sign to the speaker are the definition of the backchannel. So, the word "*yeah*" is a backchannel response and a signal that aims to provide feedback such as showing attention to the speaker. However, Sungkaman (2007) said that backchannel is not only showing attention to the speaker, but also supporting

the idea and indicating agreement, awareness, clarification, exclamatory question or statement, reference, attempted interruption, and waiting for the utterance to be completed. The usage of backchannel can be the same type but the functions perhaps can be different.

Conversations have certain patterns that are followed and it can be seen how people design their speaking turns and respond to others through these patterns (Fairclough, 2013). Both moderators and interviewees can respond to each question and statement by showing various expressions, whether to express feelings, express other ideas, share information, or convey messages while the speaker is speaking. A more detailed explanation, when RM is speaking, Zach can respond with backchannel to show their interest in the conversation. There is a term in this conversation called the “floor”. The concept of the floor is very important for identifying backchannel responses (Iwasaki, 1997). The floor is the same term as the turn to speak. On a floor, there is a floor holder or speaker and a floor supporter or listener. The floor holder can develop the topic of conversation and the listener can respond or use a backchannel response to the conversation.

The backchannel used by the listener is a common thing because it shows that he has some respect for his interlocutor in observing every word spoken and vice versa. Yule (1996) said that backchannels can be classified into two types of responses namely vocal backchannels and non-vocal backchannels. Vocal or verbal backchannel is classified into three categories, namely non-lexical backchannel, phrasal backchannel, and substantive backchannel (Iwasaki, 1997). Every type of backchannel has its characteristic to show a signal to the speaker. Vocal backchannels include utterances such as "*mm-hm*" or "*yeah*". Meanwhile, Heinz (2003) expressed that there are eight movements used as a non-vocal or non-verbal backchannel, there are head nods, head shakes, smiles, eye contacts/gazes, shoulder shrugs, gestures, and changes of glances, and also laughter. The backchannel can also help create a more effective interaction between the speaker and the listener.

Backchannel responses are part of the human-made turn-taking system (Heinz, 2003). It is an attempt by the next speaker to wait for their turn to speak. In Conversation Analysis, turn-taking is one of the parts used to understand how conversations in interviews take place (Nordquist, 2019). One thing to know is that backchannel responses are different from turn-taking. Every conversation has turn-taking. However, backchannel responses will not interfere with turn-taking. Turn-taking is where the role of the speaker switches to the listener who will take his turn to speak so that the previous speaker finishes his conversation. Meanwhile, a backchannel is a kind of response uttered by the listener with the aim that the speaker can continue the conversation. There is also Transition Relevance Place or TRP in conversation analysis which looks at how the speaker continues or finishes the conversation and when the listener uses backchannel responses. So, backchannel will not disrupt turn-taking if the next speaker uses feedback appropriately. As said by Sungkaman (2007) backchannel responses may or may not interfere with the speaker. When the listener uses backchannel responses and the speaker reacts to the backchannel, the backchannel will interrupt the conversation because the conversation has paused. Backchannel occurrence helps maintain the flow of communication, indicates politeness and allows the listener to participate in the conversation actively.

Several researchers have discussed backchannel. The first is research by Meydiana Kuswandi and Yanuarti Apsari (2019). This research found the function of backchannel that gives a sign to respond to the speaker in a vlog video. The second is the research by Nur Wulandari (2017) who analyzed "A Conversation Analysis of Verbal Backchannel Response in Radio Program Valentine in the Morning Interview with Michael Bubl ". The result of this study is that the most used type of backchannel in the interview is short verbalization, such as "mm-hm" and "yeah". The third is research written by Khapsoh (2017) that solved the problem of the backchannel. The most common backchannel used in that study is "yeah". Backchannel behavior seems as a universal feature of human communication, but specific backchannel behavior

is language and culture-specific (Heinz, 2003). That research can help other researchers to show that there are language and cultural differences in the types and the functions of backchannel responses in every part of the world.

However, in this study, the researcher wants to know what the backchannel responses used in the interview video of Zach with RM entitled “RM Break Down His Debut Album 'Indigo’”. Zach Sang is a multimedia radio host and an essential voice for Gen Z. Zach is one of the most recognized voices in media by teens and adults everywhere. So, Zach has a great influence on his fans in speaking especially in using backchannel responses. The researcher also wanted to know what is the purpose and the function of the backchannel responses said in that interview because when the same type of backchannel is often spoken, it may have different functions depending on the context being discussed. Therefore, the researcher used verbal or vocal backchannel responses to solve both problems in this study. The researcher did not use non-verbal backchannel because the researcher focused on the issue where the backchannel responses were spoken through the voice which may be in one word that is often spoken and can have different purposes.

Based on the previous research, the researcher was interested in backchannel responses applied to Zach Sang interview videos with RM entitled “RM Break Down His Debut Album 'Indigo’”. The researcher used Iwasaki's (1997) theory in analyzing the types of verbal backchannel responses in the video interview. Then, the researcher used Sungkaman's (2007) theory to understand the backchannel function used by the moderator and interviewee in the video interview. The video was uploaded in December 2022. The interview was spontaneous and followed the flow of the topic being discussed.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Based on the above discussion, the researcher focused on the types of verbal backchannel and the function of backchannel in Zach Sang interview video with RM. Therefore, this research had the research questions below:

1. What types of verbal backchannel responses are applied in the video of Zach Sang Interview with a musician 'RM'?
2. How are the functions of verbal backchannel used in the video of Zach Sang interview with a musician 'RM'?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

Based on the research questions above, the researcher focused on verbal backchannel responses in the Zach Sang interview video with RM. Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the types of verbal backchannel responses are applied in Zach Sang interview video with a musician 'RM'.
2. To analyze the function of verbal backchannel are used in Zach Sang interview video with a musician 'RM'.

### **1.4 Research Significances**

There are two significances of the research; theoretical significance and practical significance. The explanation is as follows:

#### **1. Theoretical Significance**

The researcher hopes this research can provide knowledge about Conversation Analysis, especially verbal backchannel responses for the readers. In addition, the researcher also hopes that this research can give something new and broaden the horizons of other researchers in understanding conversation analysis.

#### **2. Practical Significance**

The researcher hopes this study can provide further insight into Conversation Analysis, especially verbal backchannel responses in pragmatic studies for future researchers, especially English Literature students who are interested in the linguistic field. In addition, this research is expected to be able to improve the shortcomings of previous research.

## 1.5 Conceptual Frameworks

This research discussed backchannel responses used in video interviews. Grundy (2000) said that there are a variety of signals that indicate if someone is listening to a speaker called a backchannel. The signal is a form of feedback that the interlocutor gives to the person speaking. So, backchannels are feedback given while someone else is talking. This research used conversation analysis to examine the phenomenon of conversation in the video of Zach Sang interview with a musician 'RM' entitled "RM Break Down His Debut Album 'Indigo'". Conversation analysis aims to understand how the division of speech in a conversation is negotiated between the parties involved (Litosseliti, 2010). This division of speech is carried out by the parties involved in the conversation to produce a form of social action. In this context, they can interact with each other and exchange roles between who is speaking and who is listening to the conversation.

Conversation analysis is related to this research because the object is a video interview in which there is a conversation between the moderator and the interviewee so that the researcher can find the types of backchannel responses. Yule (1996) identified two types of backchannels: vocal or verbal backchannel and non-vocal or non-verbal backchannel. Many authors and researchers have classified the types of backchannels. Some of them are Iwasaki (1997) who classified verbal backchannel into three categories, namely non-lexical backchannel, phrasal backchannel, and substantive backchannel. Heinz (2003) also classified non-verbal backchannel into eight movements, namely head nods, head shakes, smiles, eye contact/gaze, shoulder shrugs, gestures, changes of glances, and laughter. The researcher used verbal or vocal backchannel responses to solve the issue in this study. The researcher did not use non-verbal backchannel because the researcher focused on the problem where the backchannel responses were spoken through the voice which may be in one word that is often spoken and can have different purposes. Sungkaman (2007) broke the backchannel functions into seven categories, namely supporting the

idea and indicating agreement, awareness, clarification, exclamatory question or statement, reference, attempted interruption, and waiting for the complete utterance.

Regarding the data in this research, verbal backchannel responses are taken from conversations about music in the object of this research, namely in the video of Zach Sang interview with RM entitled "RM Break Down His Debut Album 'Indigo'". The conversation in the video was conducted by the parties involved in the video, namely Zach as the main moderator and RM as the interviewee.

## 1.6 Previous Studies

There are several previous studies that discussed the usage of backchannel and there are several studies that use YouTube objects from Zach Sang Show Channel. The first previous study that was read by the researcher was the research from Meydiana Kuswandi and Yanuarti Apsari (2019) entitled "An Analysis of Pauses, Overlaps, and Backchannels in Conversation in Vlog by Nessie Judge". The purpose of this study is to find out the types of pauses, overlaps, and backchannels as well as to find out how pauses, overlaps, and backchannels occur in the conversation between Nessie and her friend in the Vlog video. From the 10 data analyzed, the researcher found that Nessie and her friend often use pauses. The pauses found are divided into two types, namely filler pauses and unfiller pauses. Then, a backchannel is also found quite a lot in this vlog, which is in the form of vocal backchannel because the speaker often gives feedback such as "mm..." and "yeah...". The backchannel is used by the listener in this vlog to provide a sign of approval or just as a response that shows that the listener is listening to the speaker. In addition, only one data was found in the overlaps type in this study.

The second previous study was written by Nur Wulandari (2017) who analyzed "A Conversation Analysis of Verbal Backchannel Response in Radio Program Valentine in the Morning Interview with Michael Bubl ". This study



aims to investigate the verbal backchannel response delivered in the radio program *Valentine in the Morning* interview with Michael Bubl  using a conversation analysis approach. Wulandari used the theory that she found in the journal, namely Sungkaman's theory which classifies backchannel into seven types, namely repetition, short question and answer, short verbalization, lexical item, phrase, and sentence. The result of this study is that the most used type of backchannel in the interview is short verbalization. Meanwhile, the most rarely used type of backchannel in the interview is the phrase. In addition, in this study, the most frequent backchannel function found was in attempting interruption. Speakers in this study used verbal backchannel responses to show their awareness that they were still paying attention to the conversation.

The third previous was written by Khapsoh (2017) who analyzed "An Analysis of Pauses, Overlaps, and Backchannels in the Reasonable Doubt Movie by Petter Howitt". The purpose of this analysis is to find out how pauses, overlaps, and backchannels can occur in conversations in the movie "Reasonable Doubt". In this study, Khapsoh used various theories from various researchers because the theories used were also diverse. The result of this study shows that there are types of pauses, overlaps, and backchannels in the movie. More specifically, there are two types of pauses, namely filled and unfilled pauses. Then there are three types of overlaps, namely turn-terminal, turn-initial, and mid-turn. Finally, there are six backchannels found in this research, such as "yeah" and "uh-huh".

The fourth previous study was written by Inkarizki Swedianisa Amalia and Lina Purwaning Hartanti (2021) entitled "Revealing the Patterns of Sequence Organization on Blackpink Interview at Zach Sang Show". This research analyzed one video taken on YouTube entitled "Blackpink Talks 'Kill This Love', Coachella & How They Formed". This research discussed the patterns of sequence organization in the conversation both in the form of words, phrases, and sentences that were spoken. This research used conversation analysis with sequence organization theory. This research focused more on analyzing what

patterns of sequence organization were used and how the host diverted topics that became conflicts during the conversation. In the end, the results of this study produce patterns that do not have negative effects on each other.

The fifth previous study was written by Awwalia Fitrotin Izza, Januarius Mujiyanto, and Issy Yuliasri (2019) entitled "The Comparison of Conversational Structures between Zach Sang and The Radio 1 Breakfast Shows". This research compared two talk shows from Zach Sang and Radio 1 Breakfast which interviewed Sam Smith. This research used conversational structure theory, namely high involvement style and high considerateness style, also completing the analysis by paying attention to the opening, closing, turn-taking allocation, adjacency pairs, and repair. This research analyzed all the data found and discussed it with conclusions from the amount of data obtained. The results of this study reveal that the two talk shows have some differences. One of them, in Zach Sang Show, most of the two speakers have the same style, which is high considerateness style. According to the researcher in this study, Zach Sang Show was more successful in interviewing Sam Smith than The Radio 1 Breakfast Show because the most successful conversations basically occur when two speakers use similar conversational styles.

From some of the previous studies above, the researcher was interested in backchannel responses applied to the video of Zach Sang interview with RM entitled "RM Break Down His Debut Album 'Indigo'". The researcher used Iwasaki's (1997) theory in analyzing the types of verbal backchannel responses in the video interview. Then, the researcher used Sungkaman's (2007) theory to understand the backchannel function used by the moderator and interviewee in the video interview. The researcher videos from the last months in 2022, namely December. The interview was spontaneous and followed the flow of the topic being discussed.