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## Interruption in Interaction of Research Presentation

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### **Abstract**

*The present study highlights the communication which is concerned spoken discourse that occurs in an interaction in research presentations. The goals of this study are to explore how the interruptions in interaction are used in EFL (English a Foreign Language) students' research presentation and what sorts and intentions on it. Thus, this study scrutinizes EFL students who presented research proposals and lecturers who supervised and examined them at the postgraduate program of State University of Makassar in 2017. The number of participants in this study was 20 academicians who were taken as a sample purposively. This study was navigated by descriptive qualitative method. To collect data, the writer employed discourse analysis approach by using video recorder to probe the spoken of speaker in doing conversation. Data recording was transformed into transcript. The transcription was coded to obtain the excerpt to be interpreted to find out the sorts of interruption in interaction of research presentation. Findings exposed that interruption are delivered in a competitive and cooperative manner. The two forms of interruption, there are two sorts with several intentions, including alert that aims to remind, inform, and correct the previous speaker. In addition, there is also a met comment that aims to questioning, suggesting, and jesting.*

**Keywords:** *interaction; interrupting; research presentation.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Communication is fundamental of human interaction. In general, communication deals with spoken, written, and sign or symbol to represent ideas to be shared. It is supported by Lustig, M.W & J.Koester (2010:13) stated, "communication is a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process in which people create shared meaning". Success in communication is achieved whenever messages are conveyed and transferred clearly and understandable (Mahmud, 2017). Communication is concerned with spoken discourse which usually involves interrupting when the speaker takes a turn. Stenstrom (1994:68) states that taking the turn can be complicated because the speaker who responds to the current speaker may not have the good preparation. According to Hyland & Paltridge (2011:155), spoken discourse divided into spontaneous spoken discourse (unplanned and semi-planned) and non-spontaneous spoken discourse (scripted and semi-scripted). Most spoken discourse is 'unplanned' which is

speaker does not know exactly what he/she is going to say before say something so speaker puts his/her words together as he/she is talking. Much spoken discourse is semi-planned which is speaker has an idea about the sort of thing that he/she is going to say before say something.

Studies in terms of communication have produced many scholars in the world. One of the formal communications in academic setting is research presentation. Research presentation is a formal conversation in which a presenter conveys information to audiences. This presentation conducts by students to fulfill their study and also to improve skills in presenting their research publicly and to develop the intellectualization. At the end of presentation, it usually followed by interaction between presenter and audiences. Since this is a formal work, the conversation rule is very required to run smoothly for achieving synchronization between speaker and listener. Synchronization in communication is needed to make the speaker and the listener understand each other. To attain the synchronization and understanding, the way to interrupting should be a consideration when someone wants to deliver something. This case shows that one of the important communications in presenting material especially in research presentation is strategy of interruption.

This study reveals EFL students' research presentation. Thus, the aim of this study is to explore how the interruptions in interaction are used in research presentation and what sorts and intentions on it. Interruption is a form of communication that usually occurs as a result of spontaneous, highly interactive human interaction. Commonly, the 2002 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary defines an interruption as: (1) A breaking in upon some action, process or condition (especially speech or discourse), so as to cause it (usually temporarily) to cease; hindrance of the course or continuance of something; a breach of continuity in time; a stoppage. (2) A breach of continuity in space or serial order; a break; the formation or existence of a gap or void interval. (3) The action, or an act, of hindering or thwarting; hindrance, obstruction. Köktürk (2012: 562) defined interruption as intervention of conversational process which is marked as invalid by the current speaker. This is related with Yang (2005) that interruption can be seen as situation in which one person intends to continue speaking, but is forced by other person to stop speaking, at least temporarily, or continuity or regularity of that person's is disrupted.

Occasionally, in the conversation, the listener interrupts at the beginning or ongoing of the current speaker's talk. Interruptions often indicated with sign “//” (Hyland & Paltridge 2011:160). Interruptions are violations of turn-taking rules of conversation. Interrupted seems like a harsh word or exactly the disruption desire (Kalir & Dean, 2018). Additional

from Lycan (2011) that noise is the most impertinent of all forms of interruption. it is not only an interruption, but also a disruption of thought. Zimmerman and West cited in [Mutiara \(2006\)](#) argue that next speaker begins to speak while current speaker is speaking, at a point in current speaker's turn, in which it could not be defined as the last word. The reason that why the listener does that because he/she gets the impression that the speaker has nothing more to say or he/she thinks that he/she has get the message. There is no need for the speaker to elaborate. Besides, he/she wants to speak up at a particular point in the ongoing talk, before it is too late. This strategy is not impolite because the current speaker does not finish his/her speeches, and then somebody has taking the turn.

In general, interruption divided into two types (French & Local, 1986): competitive and cooperative. Competitive interruption occurs when a speaker attempts to take the floor by making his or her own remarks a higher priority over the main speaker's speech when the main speaker intends to continue. Cooperative interruption occurs when a speaker wants to support or reinforce the main speaker's point without disrupting the main speaker's continuation. Supportive comments are often in the form of short comments or clarifying questions. According to Stenstrom theory in 1994, interrupting strategy is divided into alert and met a comment. Alert is done by the listener to interrupt the current speaker by speaking louder than other participants in order to attract the attention. They usually use words such as: *hey, listen, look*. Usually, in doing an alert, the speaker uses high intonation in order to show that she/he interrupts other speaker. By making this kind of action, the listener forces the current speaker to stop talking although he/she has obviously more to say.

For example:

*A: "you have to listen what I said because..."*

*B: "listen, I'm not a slave."*

However, alert does not always have the intended effect. The current speaker can continue his/her talking and does not pay attention to the listener's interruption. Met comment is actually gives a comment on the talk itself, which allows the listener to come up with objections without appearing to straight forward and without offending the current speaker. In other words, it has a face-saving effect. This strategy is called as the polite one in interrupting the current speaker, like: *can I say something?, can I just tell?, Let me just...etc.*

For example:

*A: I think it's better for him to go to cinema because...*

*B: Can I say something? In my opinion...*

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study was navigated by descriptive qualitative method based on spoken discourse analysis approach. The objects of this study are EFL students as presenter and lecturers as supervisor and examiner in research proposal presentation of graduate program of State University of Makassar in 2017. The totally of participants of this study are 20 academicians took as a sample purposively. In collecting data, the writer used video recorder to record interactions among presenter and audiences (supervisor and examiner) in the students' research presentation then analyze the spoken discourse. The analysis of this study is based on the framework of discourse analysis adapted from [Wood and Kroger \(2000\)](#) which relies on data recording, data selecting, data transcribing, coding, interpreting, and reporting. Data recording was transformed into transcript. The transcription was coded to obtain the excerpt to be interpreted to find out the main sense of interruption in interaction of research presentation. Then, it was reported.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After probing the data recording, the writer transcribed the conversation by using initial *P* as a presenter and *L* as a lecturer. Some symbols for transcriptions used for conversation are as follows:

- . Final intonation contour
  - , Continuing intonation contour
  - ? Appeal intonation contour
  - Truncated /abandoned intonation unit
  - Truncated word
  - @ One pulse of laughter
  - % Glottal stop
  - .. Short pause (less than roughly 0.8 seconds)
  - ... Long pause (longer than roughly 0.8 seconds)
- <@ words @> Words are spoken while laughing; can also be written @word @word @word
- (text) Explaining what the conversation / the turn is about
- [text] Giving the literal meaning of the conversation
- (text)(text) indicating interjections
- (Mahmud, 2017 adapted from Du Bois et al, 1993, pp. 48-89)

### Excerpt 1: Informing audiences

- L* : *Ok, the advantages and disadvantages. Mau ditampung dulu, langsung dijawab?*
- P* : *Ok. Well, thank you very much for your question. Actually I've explained the all advantages or benefit of // three-step interview.*
- L* : *// yang lain sambil bersiap!*

*(others, get ready!)*

The excerpt above implies that presenter answered a question from the audience. While the presenter explains the question, the lecturer informs to the other audiences by saying, “*others, prepare!*”. It means the lecturer informs to the other audiences for giving next question.

Excerpt 2: Asserting question

*L : Ok. Thank you Sir. Well, done@. You want to.. E.. you want to investigate discourse competence, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. But, not grammatical competence. Yes, just now you said that you didn't want to investigate E.. the grammatical competence, why?*

*P : Because E.. E..// it is...*

*L ://not, not because you don't want, there should be the reason!*

The excerpt above shows that the lecturer asked question to the presenter. When presenter starts to answer the question, the lecturer asserts by saying, “*not, not because you don't want, there should be the reason!*”. It means the lecturer asserts to the presenter for giving scientific reason.

Excerpt 3: giving question

*P : Because E.. because E.. because Prof E.. I think that if speaker one as.. as.. space the speaker to or interlocutor as long as the interlocutor could understand the speaker E --*

*L : But grammar is also important?*

*P : Yes, important Prof, //but E.. based // on--*

*L : //Em //why you don't include it as the scope of your research?*

The excerpt above indicates that the lecturer was not satisfied with the presenter's answer and then asked a follow-up question by saying, “*why did you not include it in the scope of your research?*”. This means that the lecturer comments to develop the presenter's research.

Excerpt 4: giving suggestion

*L : Ok, do you have any hypothesis?*

*P : Yes Sir, I have two hypothesis, the first one is.. there is no significant difference E... //between...*

*L ://I think your question is which one is better, right?*

The excerpt above indicates that the lecturer revised the hypothesis statement of presenter's research by saying, "***I think your question is which one is better, right?***". It means that the lecturer gives constructive suggestion to the presenter.

Excerpt 5: giving addition

*L1 : Are you going to cover all of them? A? are you sure that want-- that you are able to do that? A? (a nod of the head to make sure the presenter). For me, I will make this as research. Multi-year research at DIKTI (laughs). I will submit a proposal at DIKTI. The first year is about the discourse competence, the second year is about the strategic competence, the third year is about sociolinguistic //competence.*

*L2 : //the budget is 500 million each (laughs).*

The excerpt above implies that the first lecturer ensures the presenter about the research variables to be carried out. She considered that a large and lengthy research project. Thus, another lecturer interrupted by saying, "***the budget is 500 million each***" while continuing to laugh. It means the second lecturer joked with all the participants in presentation but it could be as motivation to realize it.

Excerpt 6: giving correction

*L1 : Ya, Ok. Who are they? Another minor mistake on page is the written of 'stain'. You are not consistence. On page three, yes, sometimes use 'stain' //in capital*

*L2 : //stain' itu artinya kotoran, tai.*

*(//stain is dirt, feces)*

The excerpt above implies that the first lecturer commented on the way the presenter wrote the name of the campus which should be written in capital letters. Thus, another lecturer interrupted by saying, "***stains are dirt; feces.***" He explained the meaning of the abbreviated campus name when written in lowercase. The word became a negative meaning. This conversation indicates that there is a little joke but rather impolitely from the second lecturer to remind the writer to be more careful in writing because used negative words without followed by word 'sorry'.

There were six excerpts as the representation of conversation in research presentation which was interpreted. The conversations presented in this study are the types of discourses that are spoken in a unplanned and semi-planned. This supports the previous studies from Hyland & Paltridge (2011:155). All of the excerpts of conversation are classified based on

sorts of interruption based on Stenstrom (1994) in elaborating turn-taking in interaction. From the previous conversation, it was found that there are several types of interrupting function as follows:

### **1. Alert**

The excerpt 1 reveals the cooperative interruption that occurred from the lecturer to the presenter who was explaining the answers to the audience's questions with the intention that other audiences were prepared to add questions to support the smoothness of research examination process and create interactive communication. The type of interruption is an alert which serves to inform the listener. The excerpt 2 shows the competitive interruption that occurred from the lecturer to the presenter who is answering questions from the lecturer himself, but when the presenter is answering, the lecturer adds a question with the intention of confirming to test the ability of research so that the answers that can be given by the presenter are more scientific. The type of interruption is an alert which serves to remind things that must be presented. The excerpt 6 is a competitive interruption that occurs between lecturers and presenter. This is shown because the lecturer commented on the presenter's mistake in writing the abbreviation of the campus name which was written in lowercase. Therefore, the next lecturer corrected jokingly that what the presenter wrote had a negative meaning and should not be polite to mention. So from this case, it is concluded that interrupts also serve to joke but are a little bit impolite. Those excerpts produce various functions of each type of interruption in general according to the theory of French & Local in 1986. The same type of interruption in different conversations can produce different functions.

### **2. Met comment**

In excerpt 3 indicates the lecturer's dissatisfaction with the answers presented by the presenter. This shows that there is a competitive interruption that occurs between the lecturer and the presenter. When the presenter answers, the lecturer enlarges a question with a view to development by reminding the presenter that what has been conveyed should be included in the scope of his/her research. The type of interrupt is met comment which serves to provide constructive comments. The excerpt 4 indicates cooperative interruption that occurs to lecturers and presenters. This is shown in his comments regarding the presenter's answer that he developed. The advice given is a type of met comment in interruption with a more constructive suggestion. The excerpt 5 explains the cooperative interruption that the lecturer throws at the presenter. The lecturer only re-assures whether it is possible for the presenter to be able to carry out the research in a short time. Therefore, the lecturer interrupts by joking that she can do it as a multi-year research. Based on this case, it is concluded that interrupts

also function as supporting jest. Those excerpts about met comments have been classified based on the theory of French & Local (1986). The researcher found each type of the same interruption produces a different function.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This study reveals interactive communication based on spontaneous spoken discourse analysis, both unplanned and semi-planned, between lecturers as supervisors or examiners and students as presenters in a research presentation. This form of communication brings about interruptions between speakers and listeners. From the analysis of the study, it was found that various conversations caused interruptions. The forms of interruptions that occur are competitive and cooperative. Competitive interruption can occur at any time with the aim of the speaker taking over the previous speaker's conversation suddenly with the intention of prioritizing what was he/she said. This is different from interrupting cooperatively, where the speaker interrupts the conversation by supporting, reinforcing, clarifying, or simply clarifying the meaning without disturbing the continuation of the previous speaker. The two forms of interruption above bring about two sorts, either alerts or met comments. Based on the results of the analysis of the interruption refers to alert, several functions were found in it, including informing, reminding, and correcting. From the type of correcting expressed, it contains an impolite character. This finding can be a consideration for future researchers to study more deeply about politeness and impoliteness in interruption. It is different with the form of met comment which reveals the function of questioning, suggesting, and jesting. Jestening in this study is the new finding that shows interruption in an interaction where the interrupter says something in order to be funny.



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