

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Conversation analysis (CA) is a study of talk-in-interaction that has purpose to see how speakers accomplish things in interaction (Liddicoat, 2022:4). CA comes from an assumption that everyday talk is not random; it is seen as sensible and meaningful (Liddicoat, 2022:5). However, according to Schegloff as cited in Liddicoat (2022:11), CA tends to be reluctant to adopt analysis of macro-level phenomena, such as power, unless there is evident displayed explicitly within the talk being analyzed. This is because initially, CA analysts work by examining a particular text to conclude a talk, not by invoking macro-level phenomena to explain micro-level features in interaction.

Despite CA's position regarding macro-level phenomena, specifically power, there is a growing trend which applied the same tools to institutional contexts (Liddicoat, 2022:5), where there is an emphasis on power discussion. This is not to say that the previous view regarding macro-level phenomena becomes wrong or neglected. Rather, CA itself has reached such extent of development where it can be used to analyze macro-level phenomena. Interestingly, although CA has been applied to real-life conversations in various contexts, its use in analyzing macro-level phenomena, especially power dynamics, has not been fully explored in literary works.

The movie *Forrest Gump* (1994) is an interesting literary work that captures power dynamics through the conversation of the characters Forrest Gump

and Lieutenant Dan, in both informal and institutional contexts. Interestingly, the display of the power dynamics between the two characters can also be seen in both the explicit talk and beyond the contexts of situated encounters.

Forrest Gump (1994) captures a unique life journey of the main character namely Forrest Gump. Narrated from a first point-of-view narration, this comedy-drama movie is unique due to the intelligence condition of the main character that is below average, with his IQ is stated to be 75 in the movie. Some research on his character shows how the mental retardation he has influences his language characteristics. A study from Widodo (2023), for example, stated that Forrest Gump has signs of language disorder and autistic response features that can be seen through his utterances. The study argues that Forrest Gump experiences several types of expressive language disorders, including an over-reliance on stock phrases (repeatedly using specific phrases likely influenced by others, without fully understanding their meaning), limited vocabulary, overuse of non-specific words (due to his lack of understanding of more precise terms), and word-finding difficulties. Interestingly, at a certain point in his life, Forrest Gump forms a relationship with Lieutenant Dan, a character with a distinctly different background rooted in military experiences. Their relationship is technically hierarchical, with Forrest Gump in the position of subordinate. Starting from their initial meeting in the Vietnam War contexts, their relationship continues and develops through the movie, unfolding how Forrest Gump with his uniqueness communicates with someone he should be able to respect in a strict military manner.

Using CA, this study aims to reveal how power relations can be revealed through exploring talk patterns in the context of the movie *Forrest Gump (1994)*. By using the three basic machinery of talk, namely turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair mechanism, the power dynamic between Forrest Gump and Lieutenant Dan can be unfolded. It is interesting to see how Forrest Gump with his uniqueness communicates with Lieutenant Dan in both military and non-military context, and how Lieutenant Dan communicates with Forrest Gump in return, especially after a lot of sequence of events unfolded. This study is significant as the analysis of power dynamics using CA in the context of literary works has not been totally explored.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the problem regarding how the use of CA in macro-social phenomena in literary works has not been totally explored, two research questions are formulated. The research questions can be seen in the following list:

1. How do turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair mechanism analysis reveal power dynamics between characters Forrest Gump and Lieutenant Dan?
2. What is the relationship between the talk patterns and the power dynamics between Forrest Gump and Lieutenant Dan?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance to the research question, two objectives of the study are written down. The objectives of the study are written in the following list:

1. To describe the power dynamics between the characters Forrest Gump and Lieutenant Dan after using the analysis of turn-taking, sequence organization, and repair mechanism
2. To describe the relationship between the talk patterns and the power dynamics between Forrest Gump and Lieutenant Dan

1.4 Previous Studies

The previous studies will be divided into 2 sections: the first one is studies that discuss the Forrest Gump movie as the object of the research, and the second one is studies that discuss conversation analysis in different literary works.

The first five studies specifically discuss the Forrest Gump movie in various fields. The studies that were chosen are from Winick (2013), Rui (2014), Muhammad & Manulang (2017), Widodo (2023), and Rutsyamsun & Sakinah (2023). The similarity of these five previous studies is that they are all examining the character of Forest Gump himself among many characters in the movie. Studies from Winick (2013) and Rutsyamsun & Sakinah (2023) show that the Forrest Gump movie is a depiction of real life by pointing out how this movie used familiar catchphrases and how this movie conveys social criticism. Winick (2013) argued that the Forrest Gump movie contains catchphrases that reflect proverb tradition, such as “life is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you’re going to get”. Furthermore, Rutsyamsun & Sakinah (2023) pointed out that this movie depicts social criticism by using semiotic theory. For example, it can be seen in a scene where Forrest’s mother tries to say that he is no different from

anybody else. The author suggested that this commonly happens in a real-life household where they have a child that was born special.

Studies from Rui (2014), Muhammad & Manulang (2017), and Widodo (2023), however, pointed out that the mental retardation influences Forrest Gump's language characteristics. Rui (2014) argued that, after examining the character of Forrest Gump, it can be concluded that "his characters decide his language characteristics and his language characteristics reflect his characters in return." Muhammad & Manulang (2017) used speech act theory to indicate Forrest Gump's mental retardation. The result shows how Forrest Gump tends to represent the world as he believes, meaning that he tends to speak whatever he perceives as the truth to anyone, without considering whether the person he talks to does not like that "truth". Similarly, Widodo (2023) stated that Forrest Gump has signs of language disorder and autistic response features that can be seen through his utterances. Thus, it is safe to conclude that Forrest Gump indicates a real mental-retarded person-- besides the clear statement in the movie about his IQ-- making his character a representation of how a mental-retarded person could act in real life.

The next ten studies, however, are specifically researching conversation analysis in various movies. The studies are from Elbytra (2014), Maziyah (2014), Rohmawati (2017), Mudra (2018), Karmila & Lisdawati (2020), Hirsch (2020), IS (2020), Pardede, Herman, & Silalahi (2021), Aisyah (2021), and Gupita & Rustipa (2021). These previous studies can be categorized by whether or not the studies relate conversation analysis to the broader macro-level order.

The studies from Karmila & Lisdawati (2020) and Pardede, Herman, & Silalahi (2021) focus solely on collecting types of turn-taking and adjacency pairs that happened in the movies they analyzed without implicating the broader context. However, these studies are lack of depth. CA itself is used by speakers to reach their interactional goals (Holmes, 2013), and this cannot be seen in these studies. Maziyah (2014), Aisyah (2021), and Gupita & Rustipa (2021) used turn-taking theory to imply how the characters they chose managed conversation in the chosen movies. These studies focus solely on concluding the talk pattern or interactional goals from the dialogues they chose.

The remaining five studies talk about how conversation analysis can be applied in a movie and relate the result to the bigger picture. The study from IS (2020) analyzed the main characters in *The Parent Trap* movie. This study implies that teachers should learn CA theory, especially about how CA can be used in dealing with different types of students. The study from Mudra (2018) examines adjacency pairs and how they can be correlated with habits and cultures. Moreover, the study from Elbytra (2014) used Gender and Language theory to accompany CA theory resulting in how the male and the female characters represent their stereotypical use of gender language. The study from Rohmawati (2017), however, uses assumptions on how a transgender character used preference organization in his responses. The result shows that there are no significant differences in using preference organization within the timeline from pre-surgery to post-surgery. Lastly, the study from Hirsch (2020) shows that CA can be used to analyze power dynamics, with a huge emphasize on swear words.

The result shows that swear words can indicate an attempt to gain power, social bonding, and so on. Thus, from these five studies, it can be concluded that it is possible to make a bigger correlation between CA and broader context—in this thesis, power dynamic—as long as there is evidence displayed in the dialogues itself.

Based on the studies above, the power analysis using CA theory in the movie *Forrest Gump* (1994) has not been conducted yet. The novelty of this study is also lied on how power dynamics in the context of the movie *Forrest Gump* (1994) can be seen not only within the talk, but also beyond the contexts of situated encounters.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study will examine the talk characteristics and its power implications between two characters, namely Forrest Gump and Lieutenant Dan, through the lens of Liddicoat (2022)'s theory and Ekström & Stevanovic (2023)'s theory. This study will focus on utilizing three basic machinery of talk, namely turn-taking, Sequence organization, and repair mechanism. The analysis will focus solely on the spoken aspect of the talk and not include facial expressions or body language. Moreover, this study will focus only in analyzing the dialogue that happens between the two characters, not including monologues.

1.6 Writing Organization

This study will be divided into four chapters that can be seen in the following lists:

Chapter I : Introduction

This chapter is divided into six sub-chapters, namely background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization.

Chapter II : Theory and Method

This chapter provides information regarding the theoretical framework and the method used in this study. The theoretical framework includes the explanation regarding CA and its three basic machinery of talk. Furthermore, the research method includes data, population and sample, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

Chapter III : Result and Discussion

This chapter provides the findings and the discussion of the research questions. Firstly, the characteristics of the three basic machinery of talk are displayed. Secondly, the power dynamics are analyzed using the characteristics that has been revealed. The analysis also comes with evidence when referring to the theories used.

Chapter IV : Conclusion

This chapter presents the correlation between the result and discussion of this study.