Discourse analysis: Conversational analysis of the internal conversation in Oracle Corporation Malaysia

Marwa[1], Zarina[2]

Abstract

This study highlights the internal conversation which takes place in Oracle Corporation Malaysia. Through the study, it will be shown how conversational analysis is used to analyze the transcription of a telephone conversation between Oracle staffs. The analysis of the transcriptions will apply a few basic concepts of conversational analysis; turn-taking organization, and the adjacency pair. The objective of the study is to find out how the internal conversations takes place by focusing on the conversation itself, that is, the conversational structures spontaneously produced by people during talk ranging from turn-taking strategies, how topics are introduced, conversation closings and so on. By looking in detail at such talk, we can gain a detailed understanding of how the staffs see themselves in relation to the company that influence their daily lives.

Keywords: *conversational analysis, turn-taking, adjacency pairs*

INTRODUCTION

Oracle Corporation Company is one of biggest software providers in the world. It is a multinational company with its HQ based in Silicon Valley USA. The company has a total of 50,000 multinational employees deployed all over the world. Oracle Malaysia was incorporated in 1988 and it is based in Menara Citibank, Ampang, Malaysia. It has 188 employees with multiple ethnicities. Oracle Corporation Malaysia is highly influenced by the American working culture where hierarchy order in the office is almost non-existent.

American working culture is characterised by open and informal dialogue between employees and management. Teamwork plays an important role in many workplaces, and mutual respect is a key term. Culture is especially influenced by the

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[1] Lecture in Program study English Languange Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University Lancang Kuning Pekanbaru, email : marwalux_25@yahoo.com
[2] Study Centre Languange and Linguistik, University Kebangsaan Malaysia

organization's founder, executives, and other managerial staff because of their role in decision making and strategic direction.

Manners between colleagues are informal and relaxed, and a sense of humour plays an important role in everyday life. Social life at work is concentrated around the lunch break. Daily interaction, meetings, greeting in Oracle Corporation are conducted informally. Even the office setting is an open concept of seating arrangement where managers and their staff sit in a similar cubicle, contributes towards this informal surrounding. Therefore, based on this unique scenario, we would like to see and analyze the informal pattern and style of the conversation within the company. We attempt to find out whether the informal environment has affected the employee ways of communicating with each other, especially those from different levels.

This study is accompanied with a transcription taken from telephone conversation between Hairani, a senior executive and Janet, a senior manager of Oracle Support Department. It presents conversation analysis, which involves the detailed examination of interaction as it develops moment-to-moment between the participants in context. In this study, we attempt to seek how conversation analysis which uses highly detailed and revealing transcriptions of recorded voice data allow deeper analyses of how people interact. Therefore, we can see the relationship between staffs understanding of the company environment where they are working and how talk is influenced by institutional relation in specific contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Conversational analysis is the most active branch of ethnomethodology, a field of study begun by Harold Garfinkel with the publication of his *studies in ethnomethodology,* in 1967. Because ethnomethodology holds that "mutual understanding is… a methodical achievement employing the resources provided" (Zimmerman & Boden, 1991:10) to the interactants by their cognitive and perceptual faculties, conversation analytic studies place more emphasis on the form taken by interaction, rather than content in itself.

Forrester (2001:2) describes that conversation analysis had emerged during the 1960's and 1970's within sociology and particularly from a small group of sociologists who were dissatisfied with what they saw as the excessive quantitative formalism in their discipline. These researchers were influenced in significant ways by a small group of social scientists who had developed an approach which they coined 'ethnomethodology'. This methodological outlook was very skeptical about the fact that when social scientists turn to a particular problem or group of people and start studying them, they bring certain pre-conceived ideas about what they are looking at to the analysis which influences their classification and coding procedures.

Conversational analysis is known as the study of "talk-in-interaction" which focuses on what people actually say and do. Conversation involves much more than just talking about this and that. It involves us in doing things, in getting others to do things, in eliciting information, in refusals, apologies, promises, and threats, and in a whole list of other activities (Wardhaugh, 1985). In this case, we can say that conversation analysis is not just examining what people are talking but also what they are doing.

According to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1970) conversation analysis is a micro-analytical approach to the study of naturally occurring interaction. As a discipline, its origins are in sociology and are usually traced to a paper on the organization of turn-taking in conversation. Conversation analysis shows in micro-detail how naturally occurring interaction is sequentially ordered and collaboratively produced and understood by participants, moment-to-moment, in what has been described as the "intrinsic orderliness of interactional phenomena" (Psathas, 1995, p.8). Conversation analysis looks at how interaction is something people jointly accomplish 'locally' (i.e., there and then).

Moreover, Forrester (2002: 2-3) illustrates that "conversation analysis, or as it is sometimes known, the study of 'talk-in-interaction' takes to heart the ethnomethodological focus on what people actually say and do. The analysis centers on a process of first identifying elements and structures in naturally occurring conversation and then through a detailed procedure of micro- analysis, identifying participant-oriented evidence for the models, concepts and ideas that people use". In one point of view, we

can obviously see that conversation analysis is concerned with uncovering the implicit ideas and understandings people possess and use in their own everyday interactions. Actually, we often forget the obvious point that we cannot ever really know about someone else if we quit thinking about how much we really know about other people. So, if we wanted to say that we really know another person then we would have to be them somehow, it is impossible. However, although we cannot have access to somebody else's thoughts, feelings and intentions, we can gain knowledge of a shared 'intersubjective' world as an ordinary, practical accomplishment. We have all learned to act as if we share the same world, i.e., during everyday communication we operate under the shared assumption that there are no interactionally relevant differences between our experiences and for all intents and purposes they are more or less the same.

Conversation analysts notice that people design their behavior always with an awareness of its accountability. As we interact with each other, we orient to whatever rules and conventions of conversation operating at the time. And we choose to follow or ignore such conventions with an awareness of the likely and immediate consequences. In other words, we are always accountable for our actions, verbal and otherwise. If somebody asks you a question, and you deliberately do not answer them, then this will be seen as somehow flouting the rules or conventions covering questions and answers. The person asking the question will look for reasons why you didn't answer (e.g., are they are being rude, did they not hear me, and are they not paying attention and so on).

In relation to the conversation among business workers in a multinational company; Oracle Corporation, the writers would like to analyze the natural interaction between the Oracle staffs and look at how the interactions are sequentially ordered, produced, and understood by participants.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Turn Taking

According to CA, the turn-taking system consists of two components: the turn constructional component and the turn allocation component. The turn constructional component describes basic units out of which turns are fashioned. These basic units are known as turn constructional units or TCUs. Unit types include: lexical, clausal, phrasal, and sentential. These are grammatically and pragmatically complete units, meaning that in a particular context they accomplish recognizable social actions while the turn allocation component describes how turns are allocated among participants in a conversation. The three ordered options are: Current Speaker selects Next Speaker; Next Speaker Self-selects as Next; or Current Speaker Continues.

All interactions involve the use of some kind of turn-taking organization (Sacks, Chegloff and Jefferson 1974), and many kinds of institutional interaction use the same turn-taking organization as ordinary conversation. Some, however, involve very specific and systematic transformations in conversational turn-taking procedures. These special turn-taking systems can be very important in studying institutional interaction because they have the potential to alter the parties' opportunities for action, and to recalibrate the interpretation of almost every aspect of the activities that they structure. For example, the opportunities to initiate actions, what the actions can be intended to mean, and how they will be interpreted can all be significantly shaped by the turn-taking rules for interaction is a 'formal' classroom (McHoul 1978). In conversation, very little of what we say, the actions we perform or the order in which we do things is determined in advance (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). In this sense, conversations are unpredictable. In some forms of interaction - debates, ceremonies, and many kinds of meetings - the topics, contributions and order of speakership is organized from the outset in an explicit and predictable way. This kind of organization involves special turn-taking procedures that can be described as special turn-taking systems.

Let us analyze the transcript of a conversation between a manager and its staff and let us see how the turn taking procedures were initiated and what govern the structure and its transformation.

Sample transcript (line 1-11)

1	Janet	hai Hairani
		(1.0)
2	Hairani	hai Jan!
		(1.0)
3	Janet	you check the e-mail? Pause
		(2.0)
4	Hairani	o:k
		(1.0)
5	Janet	((coughs/clears throat)) pause
		(2.0)
6	Hairani	jan?
		(1.0)
7	Janet	aahh..this one from Akhbar, it is the latestlah…he wants to know with regards to latest renewal support that you sent….
8	Hairani	emmm .. which- [one overlapped
9	Janet	[which]………argh…this is the one that is err you sent this we:ek…. short pause… he wanted..err..the first year license information.
10	Hairani	<u>oh</u> …short pause ok!
11	Janet	aaahh….he wants you to sent it to him.

This extract starts off by normal greeting between Janet and Hairani.In between Line 1 and 2, there was no pause to indicate that Janet and Hairani have known each other. The familiarity is stress by the exclamation tone at Line 2, when Hairani recognised Janet's voice. In Line 3, Janet however reiterates her authoritiveness by going straight to the issues. In this extract Janet asks Hairani a question and according to normal conversational conventions, when you are asked a question you reply. Now, the 2 seconds gap between lines 5 and 6 is significant because it is longer than usual because normally people reply immediately, that is in less than a second. The longer pause in Line 5 is because the turn taking accountability is not fully resumed by Hairani. Instead of answering 'yes' or 'no' to Janet's question in Line 3, Hairani anwered 'o_k'. That is probably the reason for a longer pause between turns at Line 5 as Janet is expecting Hairani to answer differently or to add on to her seemingly short answer.

Hairani then displays a specific orientation to this normative convention or 'rule' by asking Janet indirectly by repeating her name in line 6 to indicate that she had answered Janet's question and signaling that it is Janet's turn to explain in Line 6. Janet then got the message to resume her turn by understanding that Hairani needs more

clarification in Line 7. She said 'aahh' as a sign that Hairani needs more clarification on the subject. Then in Line 8 and 9 Janet interrupts during Hairani's turn at talk by talking even though there are no indications that that Hairani wants to stop talking. This interruption however do not seen problematic for Hairani as Janet having the intuition of what Hairani is thinking in Line 8, interrupt to clarify the situation.

In Line 10, Hairani resumed her turn at talk by a rising intonation tone of 'oh' and exclamation of 'ok!' Then, in Line 11 by saying 'aahh' with a specific rising intonation at the end of the utterance (this is indicated by the upward arrow). Line 1-11 indicate the basic turn taking rule that when people are having a conversation and somebody asks a question, then a reply is expected. If you don't get a reply or a satisfactory answer then we might assume something is wrong or not understood.

Sample of transcript (line 28-35)

27	Hairani	mmm..>British American Tobacco<..because err..i pause I ve seen few (tone down) pause b-ut then <takde dia punye feela-h>
28	Janet	untuk <u>Siebel</u>? Takde sort pause takde support <u>value</u>? (2.0)
29	Hairani	pause err.nanti kejap k..nanti I check again pause aaa >British American Toba-cco<
30	Janet	malaysia you <u>know</u> (high tone)!m.a.l.a.y.s.i.a ahh..pause..hmm maybe from herelah pause not to sure (tone down) but the inquiries comes from TPM..pause (1.0)
31	Hairani	>british american tobacco< ..emmm pause..tpm enterprise pause o-k.emm but how to know it is siebals license?..err..it has S infront of it right?
32	Janet	yes!adeke? (2.0)

In Line 27 to Line 32, we will notice that code switching is apparent in this conversation. In Line 27 Hairani said 'takde dia punye fieldlah' which means that the information that she was looking for was not listed in her system. Internally there seems to be a pattern of word and abbreviation that is only known to the internal Oracle

employee such as in Line 28, Janet directly asked Hairani 'untuk Siebal?' even though the word 'Siebel' was not mentioned in the preceeding line. There is a certain order of words that carry different meaning that what it sounds like for example 'takde dia punye fieldlah' and 'Siebel'. For someone who is outside the support department Line 27-28 doesn't make any sense. And also notice that in the turn taking sequence in Line 28-31, both Hairani and Janet code switch between English and Malay languages. This shows a very informal ways of communicating between a manager and her staff. Also there are reasons for code switching in this conversation. Notice in Line 28, Janet is getting impatient with the lack of information that she received from Hairani. There was a stress syllable in Line 29 when she pronounces the word 'Siebel' and 'value'. In Line 29, there is a 2 second pause to indicate that Hairani can sense Janet's agitation and she proceed by saying 'nanti kejap k..nanti I check again'. Here Hairani sensing that Janet's is getting impatient, resort to calm her down by speaking in their 1st language that is Malay language. Why does code switch is obvious in Line 28-31? The choice of language shows the speaker's role. Hairani uses English language to communicate formally with her manager Janet, but when the situation gets a little bit complicated, she opt to code switch in their own language to signal that she is conversing as a friend, not as a subordinate. Again this indicates the informal relationship established in Oracle Corporation Malaysia. There is no ranking or hierarchical in term of communication in this company.

The following analysis still uses the sample of transcript line 11-12. The focus is more on the orthographic elements used in conversation analysis. The orthography of CA is textual devices which were developed so as to best represent speech between characters. It of course has the particular meaning as shown in the transcription. Here, we can see how the turn-taking goes on by looking at the orthographic elements in the transcription.

Sample of transcript (line 11-12)

11   Janet   aaahh….he wants you to send it to him.

12   Hairani   ok…dia nak bile? Err…short pause <u>this</u> is the one you sent this morning right? this is the one <u>you</u> forward to me kan!

(2.0)

Then, let us pay attention to the underlined words made by Hairani from the extract above. It indicates that when a speaker places particular emphasis on a word or sound they use, this is normally indicated by underlining. In line 12, Hairani when she takes turn to responds to Janet, she emphasizes 'this' and 'you' which are marking out that it is not just simply normal response, but she particularly wants to make sure that Janet herself did the activity of sending the information.

Sample of transcript (line 27-30)

27	Hairani	mmm..>British American Tobacco<..because err..i pause I ve seen few (tone down) pause b-ut then <takde dia punye feela-h>
28	Janet	untuk Siebal? Takde sort pause takde support value? (1.0)
29	Hairani	pause err.nanti kejap k..nanti I check again pause aaa >British American Toba-cco<
30	Janet	malaysia you know (high tone)!m.a.l.a.y.s.i.a ahh..pause..hmm maybe from herelah pause not to sure (tone down) but the inquiries comes from TPM. pause (1.0)

The same thing also occurs as we look at the line 28 when Hairani insists that the customer does not have his field for Siebel when Janet demands her to find it out. Then, we see Janet initiates her question in Malay (code-switching) "untuk Siebal?", and then she still seeks the information about the customer by modifying her words in twice negation "takde" spoken in Malay (code-switching) following to emphasize on the world 'value'. It seems that Janet is so sure the wanted field actually exists.

Hairani then takes her turn as a response to Janet with "mmm". Here, we can see how Hairani initiates her turn. This can be understood that talk is actually a highly organized system of interaction that displays many structural properties which participants themselves orient towards in the 'doing' of a conversation even a unit composed of a sentence, a word, a phrase or even a gesture or sound (such as 'ehm' or 'mmm') can be used to initiate turn-taking. In the excerpt we also see the orthographic sign **>words<** which indicates to when people say something that is significantly faster

than the speech around it, then this is shown by putting the side-facing arrows at either end of the word or phrase. We see an example of this in line 28 when Hairani talks quicker on the words >British American Toba-cco< when attempting to explain or response what Janet wants. Janet then follows the response by emphasizing 'know' after highlighting the word 'Malaysia' to replace the word 'British…' the word 'Malaysia' then slowly repeated. It seems that she becomes impatient and reiterates the word.

Now, let us see the notion of upper-case letters - The use of upper-case letters indicates that the speaker is using an increased volume when saying the part of the speech highlighted in the transcription.

Sample of transcript (line 37-41)

37	Janet	that's oklah..err..i sigh!put this aside maybe work on it next week.
38	Hairani	jan, I do see some of Syed..err pause PTL what is PTL?.
		(ptl239087) .mm [it is easy}
39		[hahaha] ptl..WHAT!..really funny these people (1.0)
40	Hairani	pause.there are LOTS of ptl pause…aaahh..i think this is new product from the oracle company that they bought pause maybe two or three years.
41	Janet	pause maybe..maybe (tone down) (1.0)

We can see that in line 39, when Hairani is mentioning about PTL till she increases the volume of her voice on word 'WHAT' then it is followed by the word 'LOTS'. This kind of notion displayed by Hairani as she is surprising about the fact that there are lots people bought new products of Oracle. But then, the statement made by Hairani is slightly responded with a pause as Janet takes her turn before uttering "maybe". Also, we still focus on the line 38, 39, and 40 when Hairani takes longer words in her turn. So here, we can assume that actually turn order and turn size are not fixed and the length of conversation is not specified in advance. The distribution of turns between Janet and Hairani is not significantly specified in advance, so that we notice that there is no formal context between them. This kind of conversational situation will be so far different from very formal contexts such as a courtroom.

The Concept of Adjacency Pairs

The concept of adjacency pairs basically explains the procedures or the mechanisms which highlights the sequential nature of conversation. The essential point about adjacency pairs is that it is an aspect of conversation which comes in two parts, and these two parts are sequentially organized.

Miller in her article Conversation Analysis and The Book of Jonah: Conversation (read on April 12, 2007) furthermore clarifies that the first part of an adjacency pair produces the expectation of a relevant and acceptable rejoinder in the second part. For example, a question by one speaker in the first part prompts an answer by the second speaker in the second part. The pragmatic function or purposive intention of the speaker in the first part (e.g., to elicit information by way of a question) then, constrains the kind of pragmatic function of the second part (in this case, to supply the information requested), provided that the second speaker wishes to be cooperative. Second parts differ, however, in the degree to which the second part is socially preferred or dispreferred. The cultural ranking of second parts as preferred or dispreferred is known as preference organization.

Below we analyze some parts of conversations which show how adjacency pairs play roles in the conversation.

Sample of transcript (line 1-4)

1	Janet	: hai Hairani	[greeting]
2	Hairani	: hai Jan!	[greeting]
3	Janet	: you check the e-mail? Pause	[request]
4	Hairani	: o:k	[compliance]

Here we can note the first Adjacency pairs in the form of greeting exchange in lines 1-2 (hi/hi). Janet, the boss use the informal kind of greeting "Hi" and it is replied by Hairani by using the same kind of greeting. The greeting then is followed by a request. Janet request Hairani to check the E-mail (line 3) and Hairani is in compliance with Janet request by saying "o:k" (line 4) and do checking the E-mail. If we pay attention to the

extract above, at a glance we can interpret what Janet has spoken in line 3 as a question. However, Hairani's answer gives us clue that it actually was a request for her.

Sample of transcript (line 6-9)

6 Hairani   : Jan?

7 Janet   : aahh..this one from Akhbar, it is the latestlah…he wants to know
                   with regards to latest renewal support that you sent….

8 Hairani   : emmm .. which- [one overlapped
9 Janet   [w
               : hich]………argh…this is the one that is err
               you sent this we:ek…. short pause… he wanted..err..the first year
               license information=

In line (6) Hairani's question "Jan?" acted as a summons. It basically functions to signal Janet that she was still on line and waiting for further verification. Janet said "aahh" (line 7) which acted as an answer and signaled that she is still reading the e-mail and then asks Hairani to check Akbar's Email. To this, we can understand that the two parts to this adjacency pair are complete and follow the conventional form. This is then followed by a request from Janet (line 7) which also acts as a first pair part of an adjacency pair. However, the second pair part did not show the preferred response since the speaker did not give direct answer. In this case, she produced another question as an answer of Janet's question.

Sample of transcript (line 15-21)

15 Janet   :so basically whats is just the first years informat-ion pause dia nak
                   tau which err..short pause..which system short pause which
                   application holder..short pause err..that is one thing .pause second
                   they also through one it expires 29 May 2008..err…can you
                   coterminate to to 29 Nov 2007?

16 Hairani   :29 Nov 2007 (slowly repeating)….

17 Janet   :aaah…pause..coterminate..as <u>well..</u>lah

18 Hairani   :>29 Nov 2007<

19 Janet   :<u>aahh </u>that means for this year only pause because all the pause.err

		Maybank contract are all coterminated
20	Hairani	:yeah but the- [information is-
21	Janet	: [yeah…to 07 for November] Overlapped

In line 15, Janet asked Hairani to coterminate the system as well as the application holder to Akbar to 29 November. However, Hairani did not answer it. She even repeated the date "29 November" twice before giving the preferred answer "yeah" in line 20. In adjacency pairs, it could be categorized as "dispreferred" response. Dispreferred responses are often delayed. From the extract we see Hairani delays giving the preferred answer as "yes" or "can". She gives the answer after she repeated the words twice. We guess it is because she wants to make sure about the exact date before answering Janet.

Sample of transcript (line 23-28)

23	Janet	pause cannot check internal system from here..emm pause is there Siebel licenses short pause you check British American Tobacco/
24	Hairani	emm..why?pause
25	Janet	pause got Siebal licenses ahh? Because they are making inquiries on Siebel ((cough)) pause
26	Hairani	ok..one second aaah..long pause.(possibly checking data in computer) I am looking at it pause
27	Janet	aahhh pause
28	Hairani	mmm..>British American Tobacco<..because err..i pause I ve seen few (tone down) pause b-ut then <takde dia punye fee la-h>

Having looked at the conversation between Janet and Hairani (Question and answer), we find that it was often overlapping. We see in line 23, Janet's statement and then followed by the request to check whether British American Tobacco has Siebel Licenses was not followed by Hairani with compliance. Hairani seems to focus first to the problem in which Janet could not check the internal system. She even asked a question "why?" We then see that in Line 25 Janet did not answer her question but repeated her previous request. It signaled Hairani that she wanted to elicit information about the license. However, in line 26, Hairani still did not give preferred response. She responded by saying "ok" but asked for more time to look at the information in her system. Janet just muttered "aahhh" while waiting for the answer. From the extract we

know that Janet actually expected to get the information fast but Hairani gave dispreferred responses. In other word, Hairani delayed the time to response the question by asking question to Janet and taking a longer time to answer Janet's question.

Sample of transcript (line 32-36)

32	Hairani	>British American Tobacco< ..emmm pause..tpm enterprise pause o-k.emm but how to know it is Siebals license?..err..it has S infront of it right?
33	Janet	yes!adeke?
34	Hairani	pause..emm..not the one I er not under british american tobacco malaysia..((clear throat)) ehem..i don't see any f, z and – (also janet interrupt)
35	Janet	ok then pause it is under <u>what? (sounds agitated)</u>
36	Hairani	pause still tak ade..(tone down)

Line 32 showed us Hairani's effort to fulfill Janet's request to check whether British American Tobacco has Siebel's license. In this part, Hairani replied Janet's request by asking question to make sure whether she spelled it correctly. It means that Hairani delay answering the request by putting on the question. Hairani's question then was answered directly by Janet. She delivered preferred response in which Hairani got the direct answers. Janet's answer showed that the first speaker changed her role to cooperate by giving preferred response or by answering the question directly.

Sample of transcript (line 47-50)

47	Janet	pause.hmm do check on the report again ahh…I need to verify those reports (not sure what when)
48	Hairani	oklah..i check lagi pas nie..
49	Janet	Yep, please..thanks dear
50	Hairani	ok..

The extract was the last part of the conversation. Here in line (48) Janet delivered her statement which indicated that she would like to close the conversation. Hairani then note attentively and gave preferred answered by saying "ok lah. I check lagi pas nie". It

means that Hairani takes up the 'offer' of the move towards a close. Then typical forms of closing adjacency pairs complete the interchange. In line (49) the speaker initiates a final (terminal) first pair part following the pre-closing offering 'Yep' and continue then by saying "thanks dear", another sign to close conversation. Hairani again responded it by saying "ok" which indicated in some way that they are now finishing their conversation.

CONCLUSIONS AND ADVICE

After we have outlined two analytic strategies (turn-taking and adjacency pair) that can guide us to a basic analysis of a transcript, we need to consider how we can establish upon our knowledge of the structures in conversation as the basis for interpreting our data. Of course, there are numerous projects which will be focusing simply on describing and elucidating the sophisticated ways in which people manage to talk to each other, the structures of conversation themselves.

However, conversation analysis can help us highlight or answer many questions we might have about social relations and social interaction, or whatever might be the focus of the research question. Let us take up the transcription, and consider how a particular interpretation of the data could be developed, one focused less on conversational structure and more on what we can infer from the way interact with one another.

The extract comes from a study on how the internal conversation goes on within a multinational company; Oracle Corporation Malaysia. The extract comes from a telephone conversation between a Sales Manager, Janet Thor and a Contract Specialist Hairani Ahmad. Janet Thor is a 48 years old female Chinese from a Baba Peranakan descendent while Hairani Ahmad is a 38 years old Female Malay who handle all Janet's Thor contract detail. She reports directly to Janet Thor. She called Hairani to inquire on contract information required by her customer.

There are many interesting features in this internal conversation, but here, the aim is simply to give something of the interpretative flavor of conversation analysis. We can begin by noting the informal relationship between Hairani and Janet. Let us take a closer

look at the sequence of turn taking in their conversation. Through our transcript analysis, we found that there are many overlapping and longer pause between turns. These indicate that both Hairani and Janet because in a formal conversation, a turn taking will likely be simultaneously. The overlapping conversation indicates to us that both participants are comfortable with each other; therefore they do not take into account their position level. This behavior probably stem from their informal office culture. But we must not misunderstand this as a lack of respect between the staffs and their management. This is actually the result of the informal atmosphere nurtured in this company; in this case Oracle Malaysia is very much influenced by the American working culture where everyone is regarded as equally. No idea is a bad idea. The longer pause between turns also shows us that both participants take their time in answering or resuming their conversation also due to the informal setting. The longer pause between turn means that both participant do not feel subjected to answer promptly. In this case, Hairani does not feel intimidated by Janet, her senior manager and regarded her as a colleague not as a subordinate. In this transcript we also find that Hairani takes longer words in her turn as responding to Janet. In this case we can assume that actually turn order and turn size are not fixed and the length of conversation is not specified in advance. The distribution of turns between Janet and Hairani is not significantly specified in advance, so that we notice that there is no formal context between them.

In term of adjacency pair we see that its sequence is normal like any other conversation however there are certain pairing that have dispreferred answer. Dispreferred responses are often delayed and in this transcription, Hairani often delays her response to Janet. Again, this action can be assumed as influences from their working environment.

Lastly there are elements of code switching found in the transcription. Both Hairani and Janet use English and Malay interchangeably throughout their conversation. As what we have analyzed the conversation between both participant, we find that Hairani did code switching when she realized that Janet was getting impatient waiting for her answers. This is because when they speak in Malay (Janet is a Baba Peranakan

descendent therefore she speaks Malay very fluently) they share the same familiarity in term of their culture hence it might help to ease the tension.

Appendix
The Transcript

This is a conversation between a Sales Manager, Janet Thor and a Contract Specialist Hairani Ahmad. Janet Thor is a 48 years old female Chinese from a Baba Peranakan descendent while Hairani Ahmad is a 38 years old Female Malay who handle all Janet's Thor contract detail. She reports directly to Janet Thor. She called Hairani to inquire on contract information required by her customer. This conversation was taped by Hairani using a speaker phone on Friday 17th March 2007 at 10.35 am in a multinational software company Oracle Corporation Malaysia in Menara Citibank, Kuala Lumpur. Janet Thor however who was on the other line was onsite Shell Malaysia in Cyberjaya.

1	Janet	hai Hairani
		(1.0)
2	Hairani	hai Jan!
		(1.0)
3	Janet	you check the e-mail? Pause
		(2.0)
4	Hairani	o:k
		(1.0)
5	Janet	((coughs/clears throat)) pause
		(2.0)
6	Hairani	jan?
		(1.0)
7	Janet	aahh..this one from Akhbar, it is the latestlah…he wants to know with regards to latest renewal support that you sent….
8	Hairani	emmm .. which- [one overlapped
9	Janet	[which]………argh…this is the one that is err you sent this we:ek…. short pause… he wanted..err..the first year license information.
10	Hairani	<u>oh</u> …short pause ok!
11	Janet	aaahh….he wants you to send it to him.
12	Hairani	ok…dia nak bile? Err…short pause <u>this</u> is the one you sent this morning right? this is the one <u>you</u> forward to me kan!
		(2.0)
13	Janet	pause …argh..n:o…this one he just..err.just sent it off..err..dia dah

		hantarLAH earlier…..so it is a reminder…
		(1.0)
14	Hairani	pause..probably he sent it yesterday…pause..i was on leave…I think..pause..its ok..i will reply to him
15	Janet	so basically whats is just the first year informat-ion pause dia nak tau which err..short pause..which system short pause which application holder..short pause err..that is one thing .pause second they also through one it expires 29 May 2008..err…can you coterminate to to 29 Nov 2007?
16	Hairani	29 Nov 2007 (slowly repeating)….
17	Janet	aaah…pause..coterminate..as well..lah
18	Hairani	>29 Nov 2007<
19	Janet	aahh that means for this year only pause because all the pause.err Maybank contract are all coterminated
20	Hairani	yeah but the- [information is-
21	Janet	[yeah…to 07 for November] Overlapped pause..ok I nak tanye..er.for BAT ahh
22	Hairani	hmmm. (1.0)
23	Janet	pause cannot check internal system from here..emm pause is there Siebel licenses short pause you check British American Tobacco
24	Hairani	emm..why?pause
		(1.0)
25	Janet	pause got Siebal licenses ahh? Because they are making inquiries on Siebel ((cough)) pause
26	Hairani	ok..one second aaah..long pause.(possibly checking data in computer) I am looking at it pause
		(1.0)
27	Janet	aahhh pause
		(1.0)
28	Hairani	mmm..>British American Tobacco<..because err..i pause I ve seen few (tone down) pause b-ut then <takde dia punye feela-h>
29	Janet	untuk Siebal? Takde sort pause takde support value?
		(1.0)
30	Hairani	pause err.nanti kejap k..nanti I check again pause aaa >British American Toba-cco<

31	Janet	malaysia you <u>know (high tone)</u>!m.a.l.a.y.s.i.a ahh..pause..hmm maybe from herelah pause not to sure (tone down) but the inquiries comes from TPM..pause
		(1.0)
32	Hairani	>british american tobacco< ..emmm pause..tpm enterprise pause o-k.emm but how to know it is siebals license?..err..it has S infront of it right?
33	Janet	yes!adeke?
		(1.0)
34	Hairani	pause..emm..not the one I er not under british american tobacco malaysia..((clear throat)) ehem..i don't see any f, z and – (also janet interrupt)
35	Janet	ok then pause it is under <u>what? (sounds agitated)</u>
		(1.0)
36	Hairani	pause still tak ade..(tone down)
		(1.0)
37	Janet	pause.they send an inquiries to Jackie forward to boss pause and boss forward to Mahesh and err mahesh forward to hiss boss in singapore..sigh!..emm pause
38	Hairani	pause..because err.if that it.err we can see it in our reporting but this not in reporting..emm I- (interrupt)
39	Janet	emm pause..
		(1.0)
40	Hairani	emm….(searching through her system)pause
		(3.0)
41	Janet	that's oklah..err..i sigh!put this aside maybe work on it next week..
42	Hairani	jan, I do see some of Syed..err pause PTL what is PTL?.
		(ptl239087) .mm [it is easy}
43		[hahaha] ptl..WHAT!..really funny these people
		(1.0)
44	Hairani	pause.there are LOTS of ptl pause…aaahh..i think this is new product from the oracle company that they bought pause maybe two or three years..
45	Janet	pause maybe..maybe (tone down)
		(1.0)
46	Hairani	well.pause..
		(2.0)
47	Janet	pause.hmm do check on the report again ahh…I need to verify those reports (not sure what when)
48	Hairani	oklah..i check lagi pas nie..

49   Janet   Yep, please..thanks dear

50   Hairani   ok..

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