THE INITIATING ACTS USED BY THE HOST OF TALK INDONESIA IN POLITICAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

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Abstract

The writers observed the initiating acts used by the host of Talk Indonesia in political issues and cultural issues and the comparison of initiating acts between those two issues. The data was taken from several episodes of the Talk Indonesia that have topics on political and cultural issues. In the findings, the writers found that the highest percentage of initiating acts types in political issues is Inform (37%), and the lowest percentage is Action Request (1%), whereas, the highest percentage of initiating acts types in cultural issues is Inform (39%) and the lowest percentages are Polarity Questions (1%) and Action Requests (1%). The writer also found that in general, the percentage of Statement in the political issues (54%) is lower than those in the cultural issues (73%) while the percentage of Questions in the political issues (41%) is higher than those in the cultural issues (26%). The conclusion drew that different issues trigger different initiating acts.

Keywords: initiating acts, talk show, political issue, cultural issue.

INTRODUCTION

"The major purpose of talk show is to get people to speak out and to create public awareness about current problems" (Ilie, 2001, p.217). In other words, talk show helps audience to have awareness and understanding about the current issues through the guests' opinions related to the issues.

One of the talk shows that discusses current issues in Indonesia is *Talk Indonesia*. *Talk Indonesia*, which is a talk show shown every Sunday, from 6.30 a.m. to 7.00 a.m., talks about political, cultural issues and other current issues, such as "sharia shift" or "going Gaga". However, the most discussed issues in this talk show are political and cultural issues. The guests invited are people who are experts on their field related to the issues and people who have experiences and opinion about the issues. For example, when they talked about "sharia shift", the guests came from two different religious groups to present their opinion. Another example, when they talked about 'going gaga', the guests were the activists working in music and culture area. The host of this talk show is Dalton Tanonaka, anchored news and business programs for CNN, CNBC, NHK and Metro TV in Asia.

In general, the main duty of a host is to keep the conversation running well and to determine where the conversation begins and ends (Marshall & Werndly, 2002, p.62). To finish this duty, the host should initiate through one or more acts, so that the conversation can be carried forward. According to Stenström (1994), initiating acts are "the first obligatory move in the exchange" (p.88). Stenström claims that initiating an exchange can be done by making statements, asking questions, and putting forward requests. Then, she also claims other kinds of initiate that are invites and offering, apologies, and thanking.

Since there are two main discussed issues in *Talk* Indonesia, the writers want to know whether different issues will trigger different types of initiating acts. Therefore, through this research, the writers would like to investigate about the initiating acts used by the host of *Talk Indonesia* in political and cultural issues, and the differences and/or similarities between the initiating acts used by the host of *Talk Indonesia* in political and cultural issues. Thus, the writers will use the theory of move and initiating acts of Stenström (1994), theory of talk show by Timberg (2002), and theory of language and talk show by Marshall and Werndly (2002) as the basic of this research.

Move and Initiating Acts

"Move is a verbal action which carries the conversation forward" (Stenström, 1994, p.36). It is used to start, carry and finish an exchange. A move consists of one or more acts. There are some types of moves (pp.36-37):

- Summons: calls the listener's attention
- Focus: introduces the initiate
- Initiate: opens the exchange
- Repair: holds up the exchange
- Re-open: delays the termination of the exchange
- Follow-up: terminates the exchange
- Backchannel: signals the listener's attention

To initiate a conversation, statements, questions, requests can be made. Offering and Invites, Apologies and Thanks can also be made.

Firstly, according to Stenström, statements supply information and expect to be acknowledged (p.88). Statements are also divided into informing and opining. Informing is characterized by declarative utterances that present neutral information. The expressions that mark informing are *actually, as a matter of fact, in fact, the fact is, the point is, you know,* and *you see*. Opining, conversely, presents speaker's personal opinion, feelings and attitudes. Its markers are lexical and prosodic markers, such as *I feel, I think, it seem, it's a pity that, and it's surprising that* (pp.89-91).

Secondly, "questions ask for information or confirmation and expect to be answered" and can be subclassified into identification question, polarity question, and confirming question based on the answer they are asking for (p.92). Identification questions require either specifying or open-ended information and are typically recognized by an interrogative sentence. For instance, *"Who do you have for tutorials this year?"* (p.93). The next one is Polarity Questions. Since this type of questions asks for yes/no answer, it uses inverted word-order or do-periphrasis. For instance, *"Are you available during daylight hours?"* (p.95). Lastly, confirmation questions use declarative utterance with falling tone and tag-question to ask for confirming answer. For example, *"She had a rest, didn't she?"* (p.96).

The third is requests. "Requests ask B to do something or let A do something and expect to be accepted" (p.99). There are two categories of request. They are action request and permission request. Both of them use interrogative, declarative and imperative utterances. However, action requests ask somebody to do something (i.e., *"Could you give me another recommendation?"*), while permission requests ask for go-ahead (i.e. *"Can I smoke in here?"*) (pp.100-101).

The next is Offers and Invites. "Offers and invites submit something for acceptance" (p.103). Even though they can be defined in the same way, the invitation does not have to be costly to the speaker, like in the offering. For instance:
- Offering: *"Would you like one of those?"*
- Inviting: *"You ought to come over the Cambridge sometime. Have a look round"*

Offers and invites also use interrogative, declarative and imperative utterances, like how requests are made. However, face-saving strategy is not a vital thing in making offering and invitation. (p.104).

The next one is Apologies. "Apologies ask for forgiveness" (p.105). An apology can be formulated with *excuse me, forgive me, sorry, I'm sorry, I'm terribly sorry,* and *I beg your pardon*.

The last one is Thanks. Thanks is a politeness device to express gratitude. Thanks can act both as initiate and as a response. For example: *thanks, thanks a lot, thanks awfully, thanks very much, thanks very much indeed, thank you, thank you so much, thank you very much,* and *thank you very much indeed* (p.106).

Talk Show

Talk show has its own principles that make it different from other form of TV. The first principle is talk show is anchored by a host who guides and sets the limit of the talk. The second principle is the talk show is shared and experienced as a conversation in a present tense. The third principle is the talk show is the product in broadcasting. Thus, the host is also a valuable commodity to compete with other broadcasting commodities. The fourth principle is there is give

and take between the host and the guest in the talk show even though the talk show is still highly structured and host-centered (Timberg, 2002, pp.3-5).

There are three sub-genres of talk show. The first one is the late night entertainment talk show. It is pictured as a celebrity talk show. The second one is the daytime audience-participation show. This genre puts the audience full in the studio and makes them as the participants of the talk. The third one is the early-morning news talk. Even though this genre is rare, some TV stations make modifications on it periodically (pp.6-9).

Language and Talk Show

According to Marshall and Werndly, (2002) television is presented to the audiences by figures that will carry out a variety of functions as presenters. They are the authoritative voices who introduce, manage, and direct their guests and what happens during the show. Presenters also maintain continuity or cohesion for viewers between and across programs. Presenters will determine where the conversation begins and ends (Marshall and Werndly, 2002, pp.62, 66).

In the news and current affairs program, the presenter indirectly asks the questions by making assumptions. This happens because the presenter wants to provide a balanced enquiry to the situation, for which two opposing positions have already been set up. The host regulates the talk show by ensuring that a debate takes place in which the disease outbreak can be described, analyzed and connected to wider political issues for the audience from two different perspectives. The agendas of both guests' participants are to represent the points of view of their organizations, to defend those where necessary and to compete with each other's point of view (pp.62-64).

METHODS

In this research, the writer used qualitative approach supported by quantitative data. The source of data of this study was all the utterances uttered by the hosts of *Talk Indonesia* (Dalton Tanonaka). The data of this research were the initiating acts used to initiate the conversation with the guest by the hosts of *Talk Indonesia*. This data was taken from several episodes of the talk show that have topics about political and cultural issues. The episodes were taken randomly from February 2012 to September 2012. The duration of one episode is thirty minutes. One episode has three topics to be discussed. The duration of each topic is about five to seven minutes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
1. Initiating Acts Used by the Host of *Talk Indonesia* in Political Issues

This section talks about the initiating acts the host used in political issues. The table below shows the findings.

Table 1. Summary of the Percentage of Initiating Acts Used by the Host of *Talk Indonesia* Based on the Political Issues

Types of Initiating Acts		% (Political Issues)
Statement	Inform	35
	Opine	19
Question	Identification Questions	12
	Polarity Questions	19
	Confirmation Questions	10
Request	Action Request	1
	Permission Request	4
Offering & Inviting		0
Apologizing		0
Thanking		0

Based on the table of summary above, the highest percentage of initiating acts types in political issues is Inform (37%), followed by Opine and Polarity Questions (19%), Identification Questions (12%), Confirmation Questions (10%), Permission Requests (4%) and Action Request (1%). Offering and Inviting, Apologizing, and Thanking did not exist in the data.

- **Informs**
  The Informs are statement that presents neutral information. The host of *Talk Indonesia* uses the Informs to present some neutral information, too. The example can be seen below:
  Yenny   : Eh, probably, eh, around less than twenty
  Dalton : okay, last election said thirty eight parties are qualified
  Yenny   :In the final round, in the final round will be less than twenty because it's so much harder now. It's really hard. It's really difficult

This initiating act provides information for the guest related to the topic (Party On!). This topic talks about the registration of the parties to join the election. In the previous exchange, the host asks the guest about the number that the guests thought about the parties that would be qualified. After the guest answered (*around less than twenty*), the host initiated again by saying this information (*last election said thirty eight parties are qualified*) as the data about the last election for the guest to be acknowledged because the answer of the guest (*around less than twenty*) is quite different from the fact that the host knows.

- **Opines**
  The Opines are used to express someone's personal opinion, attitude, and feelings. Here, the writer found that the host wants to express his opinion using the Opines, for instance:
  *Dalton : ... **You get ask all the time. Does your boss tell you to do this? Do you guys, purposely do this, right? I mean, publics image, whether true or not, is that we are affected by our ownership. But I don't think it's true***
  Zelda   : oh, but, but the public is very smart, Dalton. They don't just take in everything they see on TV. I mean, I agree with you. There's absolutely nothing wrong with politicians owning media, and, and you know, ...

This topic talks about the phenomenon of media mix. It happens when the political figure also owns a media company. This act shows that the host did not agree with what people think about the independency of the information and the ownership of the media (*I mean, publics image, whether true or not, is that we are affected by our ownership. But I don't think it's true*). His opinion is marked by the phrase "*I don't think*".

- **Polarity Questions**
  This kind of question asks for yes/no answer. The example of Polarity Question can be seen through the example below:

  *Dalton : ….**Paying people to attend the rally is illegal in the most places in the world, like the U.S. Uh, are you and you're partner, Joko Widodo, are paying people to attend the rallies?***
  Ahok   : No, we never pay them, but we found some people come because somebody pay them. This is an accident ...

The host asked this question to get the information whether Joko Widodo and Basuki Purnama paid people to come the rallies. The using of inverted-word order (*are you and you're partner paying*) shows that this kind of question is a polarity question. It can be seen from the excerpt that the answer from the guest (*No, we never pay them*) also shows that the question the host uttered is a polarity question since the Polarity Questions ask for yes/no answer.

- **Identification Questions**
  This kind of questions asks for an answer identifying a WH-word. The example is:

  Sara   : Wow. That's a good translation

> *Dalton* : ***What are the reasons? Why?***
> *Yenny* : *well, you know why, eh, even though now there are thirty four parties are qualified on the final round, there are two more rounds ...*

These are the questions used by the host to ask the reason why his guest made a party (*What are the reasons? Why?*). These identification questions are marked by the WH-word (*what* and *why*). The answer of these questions will be open-ended information since there are no restrictions on what kind of information and how much information can be expected. It can be seen from the guest's answer which gave inadequate information about the reasons she made her new party.

- **Confirmation Questions**

This kind of question asks for a confirming answer. It can be seen through the example below:

> *Dalton* : *Okay.* ***But metro is doing it, I mean, to people watch debate here because again this is a new thing for Indonesia, having this kind of thing, right?***
> *Zelda* : *This debate usually do any good, really*
> *Tantowi*: *I don't think so, I don't think so. I think people of Jakarta, the voters, they have something, they have decisions already…*

The host required a confirming answer from the guests toward the declarative utterance before the word "*right*". What is to be confirmed is having a debate of the governor candidate in Indonesia is a kind of a new thing and because of that, Metro TV does it for people to watch (*But metro is doing it, I mean, to people watch debate here because again this is a new thing for Indonesia, having this kind of thing*). The guest's approval (*This debate usually do any good*) and disapproval (*I don't think so, I don't think so*) showed that the question is a Confirmation Question.

- **Permission Requests**

Permission Requests ask for a go-ahead. The example is:

> *Dalton* : *...* ***But let me offer reason why I think there are so many parties. Could it be because Indonesia easily relatively new democracy that consolidation would come as the democracy progressive cause everybody is splintered, everybody has their own interest? They all come together as in America was, you know, more than two hundred, three hundred years old***

This permission request is realized by an imperative utterance. The marker is "*let me*". In this context, the host asked the permission from the guests to give a reason why he thought there were so many parties (*let me offer reason why I think there are so many parties*).

- **Action Requests**

Action Requests ask somebody to do something. It can be seen through the example below:

> *Dalton* : ***In the US basically the Republicans and the Democrats enlighten me, Yenny, on the abundance of all these parties including your new, and get me, tell me of this correct translation New Indonesian National Sovereignity Party.***
> *Yenny* : *Yes*

This example shows that the host wants the guest to tell the correct translation of her party. His request is realized by imperative utterance that starts with the verb (*tell me*). The answer from the guest actually is not the correct translation like the host asked, but the guest just said "*yes*". It means that the translation the host said was correct.

1. Initiating Acts Used by the Host of *Talk Indonesia* in Cultural Issues

This section talks about the initiating acts the host used in cultural issues. The table below shows the findings.

Table 2. Summary of the Percentage of Initiating Acts Used by the Host of *Talk Indonesia* Based on the Cultural Issues

Types of Initiating Acts		% (Cultural Issues)
Statement	Inform	39
	Opine	34
Question	Identification Questions	19
	Polarity Questions	1
	Confirmation Questions	6
Request	Action Request	1
	Permission Request	0
Offering & Inviting		0
Apologizing		0
Thanking		0

Based on the table above, the highest percentage of initiating acts types is Inform (39%) followed by Opine (34%), Identification Questions (19%), Confirmation Questions (6%) Polarity Questions (1%) and Action Requests (1%). Permission Requests, Offering and Inviting, Apologizing, and Thanking are the types of Initiating Acts that did not exist in the data.

- **Informs**

The Informs are statement that presents neutral information. The host of *Talk Indonesia* uses the Informs to present some neutral information, too. The example can be seen below:

Yenny : *Absolutely. Support system. Not just too much take help. But you've got your, your moms and your aunts and your sisters.*

Dalton : **Well, they have the states but the differences you can hire nannies or maids here at the very reasonable price and that's why more woman perhaps here can go back to work faster** *(2.1.2)*

Sara : *I, I, I think that's probably another. I never really considered that. That's a very, very good point because when I went to Russia for the APEC, for the woman and economic forum. We did discuss about…*

This is the information the host told the guests about the difference of condition in Indonesia and America that supports working moms who have just given birth (*Well, they have the states but the differences you can hire nannies or maids here at the very reasonable price and that's why more woman perhaps here can go back to work faster*). This information is initiated to be acknowledged by the guest. This is proven from the response of the guest who said, "*I never really considered that. That's a very, very good point*".

- **Opines**

Opines the host used was to express his personal opinion, like the example below:

Dalton : *… **You know, some countries that they said make English as their national priority. South Korea, for example, um, is pushing English proficiency. That's why English schools are like booming business there.** **Well, I'm, I think Indonesia has to at one point, um, push this is well, become a national priority** (2.5.3)*

Sara : *Absolutely. Especially with the globalization that's happening and Indonesia now definitely rising up …*

This example shows that the host expressed his own opinion toward the information he told previously. He told about Korea that makes English as a national priority there (*You know, some countries that they said make English as their national priority. South Korea, for example, um, is pushing English proficiency. That's why English schools are like booming business there*), so he thought that Indonesia has to be like Korea (*I think Indonesia has to at one point, um, push this is well, become a national priority*).

- **Identification Questions**

Identification Questions ask for either specific answer or open-ended answer. The writer found that the host used more Identification Questions to get open-ended answer. For example:

Dalton   : *you know, they say assaults are action of power or aggression, not so much about sex, sometimes for money but it's the feeling of they can do anything, you know what.* **Now, now, Zilvia, how do you cope with the fear factor in your daily life and how do you protect yourself?**

Zilvia   : *Um, basically I'm just be more selective in choosing the public transportation as I said…*

The host used "*how*" to get the information from the guests. However, the information that he would get was not predictable since the question word like "*how*" asks for an open-ended answer.

- **Confirmation Questions**

Confirmation questions ask for a confirming answer. The example is:

Dalton   : **I was shocking but you're busy when you had a lot of people depending on you, so you got back as physically, when you're physically able, right?**

Yenny   : *yes, yes*

This confirmation question is marked by "*right*". Thing that wants to be confirmed through this question is "*you're busy when you had a lot of people depending on you, so you got back as physically, when you're physically able*". The host wanted to confirm whether the guest went back to her work a couple of days after she gave birth because many people depended on her.

- **Polarity Questions**

Polarity Questions asks for yes/no questions. The polarity question that appears in the talk show is:

Dalton   : **you know, that's I said early that was followed by number of assaults in public transportation, the government dint crack down at that time, checking licenses, doing spot checks. Sarah would you say the fear factor in Jakarta is higher than other cities in other country in the world?**

Sara   : *I don't think so. I mean, there definitely other country, other cities in other countries where the crime is a lot, you know, higher, …..*

This polarity question is started with inverted-word order (*would you*). The host asked the guest's opinion whether Jakarta's fear factor is higher than other cities or not (*Sarah would you say the fear factor in Jakarta is higher than other cities in other country in the world?*).The answer from the guests is actually not a real yes or no since this kind of question requires such answer. However, the guest's answer "*I don't think so*" can be inferred to a direct one "*No, I don't think so*".

- **Action Requests**

Action Requests ask somebody to do something. It can be seen through the example below:

Dalton   : **You just, you just have your second child. Just look at the photo, a family photo here, and that is your two daughters, right? Together? And the smallest is the newest?**

Yenny   : *Yes*

Here, the host asked the guests to see the guest's family photo. The request he made uses an imperative sentence (*Just look at the photo, a family photo here*).

2. Differences and Similarities between the Initiating Acts Used by the Host of *Talk Indonesia* in Political and Cultural Issues

The finding presented in the table below is the basis of analyzing the differences and the similarities between the Initiating Acts used by the host of *Talk Indonesia* in political and cultural issues.

Table 3. Summary of the Percentage of Initiating Acts Used by the Host of *Talk Indonesia* Based on the Political and Cultural Issues

Types of Initiating Acts		% (Political Issues)	% (Cultural Issues)
Statement	Inform	35	39
	Opine	19	34
Questions	Identification Questions	12	19
	Polarity Questions	19	1
	Confirmation Questions	10	6
Requests	Action Requests	1	1
	Permission Requests	4	0
Offering & Inviting		0	0
Apologizing		0	0
Thanking		0	0

The writer found that there are four differences between the Initiating Acts used in the political issues and those used in cultural issues. The first one is the percentage of Statement in the political issues (54%) is lower than those in the cultural issues (73%) while the percentage of Questions in the political issues (41%) is higher than those in the cultural issues (26%). This relates to the writer's supporting theory about the news and current affairs program presenter that the presenter gives question by making assumption (Marshall and Werndly, 2002, pp.62-64). This may suggest that when people talk about political issues, they tend to give more questions to get information rather than giving statements to be acknowledged.

The second difference the writer found is the percentage of Opines in the political issues (19%) is lower than those in the cultural issues (34%). This number of percentage may mean that people tend to show his opinions and feelings when they talk about cultural issues. Since cultural issues talk about culture that contains certain values of life, people tend to show whether they agree to the issues, disagree to the issues or even express their feelings toward the issues using the Opines. On the other hand, when people talk about politics, people might not use the Opines as many as those in the political issues since politics has its own regulations and theoretical background which has no relation with feelings.

The third is the percentage of Polarity Questions in political issues (19%) is higher than those in the cultural issues (1%). This relates to the writer's supporting theory that the presenter gives question in news and current affairs program (Marshall and Werndly, 2002, pp.62-64). The last one is the permission Requests are used in the political issues (4%), but they are not used in the cultural issues (0%). It can be seen that when the host used the permission request, he wanted to specify to whom he asked the question. For example: "Zelda, let me ask you". This means the question is for Zelda only. In cultural issue, on the other hand, the questions are addressed to all guests, so there is no need for the host to use the request.

The writer also found that there are four similarities between the Initiating Acts used in the political issues and those used in cultural issues. The first similarity is the percentage of Statement in both political (54%) and cultural issues (73%) are higher than the percentage of Questions in both political (41%) and cultural issues (26%). This may happen because the hosts liked to provide his guests some information about the issue and give his opinion toward the issue. The second

similarity is the Inform is the highest percentage in both political issues (35%) and cultural issues (39%). This fact may suggest that in talking either political issues or cultural issues, people need some information as the fact or data to be discussed. The third one is the percentage of Action Requests is the lowest percentage in both the political issues (1%) and cultural issues (1%). This might mean that in this talk show the host rarely asked his guests to do something. The last one is Offering and Inviting (0%), Apologizing (0%) and Thanking (0%) are not used by the host at all. This might mean that in this kind of talk show the host did not offer something, invite, apologize and give thanks to the guests.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings prove that different issues trigger different initiating acts. The host of *Talk* Indonesia uses more questions to initiate in political issues, while he uses more statements to initiate in cultural issues.

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