

THE INDONESIAN SPEAKERS' TURN SIGNALS IN ENGLISH CONVERSATION: A PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: One of activities that we, human beings, do in daily life is to have conversations with other members of our family or the society. In order that conversations flow smoothly, involving all the participants, turn signals take place. Turn signals are of various types and are useful to yield, take, or hold a turn. This article reports a research study on the use of turn signals in English conversations by Indonesian speakers in the pragmatic perspective. The results, which are limited to verbal turn signals, showed that Indonesian speakers used four types of turn signals: turn-claiming, turn-yielding, turn-taking, and turn-holding. Depending on the application context, these turn signals can be classified into four pragmatic modes: appropriate and effective, appropriate but ineffective, inappropriate but effective, or inappropriate and ineffective.

Key words: turn signals, English conversation, pragmatic perspective

Human beings interact to build up social relationships and to exchange ideas. The interaction is conducted in various kinds of speech events, such as seminars, debates, talk shows, interviews and, most importantly, conversations. A successful exchange in a conversation is determined by the awareness of the speaker to signal that he is finishing and that the listener begins a response (Orestrom, 1983:31). In conversations participants signal to each other that one turn has come to an end and another should begin. This implies that the speakers in the conversations should apply *turn signals appropriately and effectively* to avoid violating turn exchange conventions, the violation of which may result in unsmooth flow of exchanges (Cook, 1989:52).

According to Poyatos (1980, cited in Loveday, 1982:119) there are five types of turn signals: turn-claiming, turn-yielding, turn-taking, turn-holding, and turn-suppressing. Turn-claiming signal is a signal made by a listener to indicate that he or she wants to talk, for instance *but ...*, *I ...*, or *one minute...*. Turn-yielding signal occurs when the speaker feels he or she has gone on long enough, when his or her listeners look bored or ignorant of the subject, or when his or her listeners have claimed or briefly taken the floor. It is signaled by phrases such as *yes*, *go ahead*. Turn-taking signal occurs when a listener takes the floor after the speaker shows his or her willingness to relinquish his turn, or when his or her turn-claiming has failed and he or she just decides to take it. The expressions like *I was going to say that ...*, *yeah ...*, *well ...*, *uh ...*, and *no* are some examples of turn-taking signals. Turn-holding signal is an attempt to suppress a turn claim with, for example, something like *let me finish ...* and *wait*. Turn-suppressing signal is related to turn-holding but it can be started by any of those involved in conversations and not simply by the one who is currently occupying the floor, for example, *let him finish* and *listen*. The differences in the kinds of signals that occur during a conversation are not only fostered by the difference of cultural values and social meaning between one particular language with others, but may also be caused by individual differences among the speakers (Cook, 1982:52-53).

As stated previously, turn signals should be applied appropriately and effectively in conversations. The term *appropriate* refers to the proper application of the turn signals by the speakers to smoothen the interaction. In other words, the application of the turn signals does not bother the ongoing turn unit being constructed by the current speaker. The application of the turn signals might be *inappropriate* in the sense that it causes problematic interactional flow. In other words, it bothers the process of turn unit being constructed by the current speaker. The term *effective* refers to the success of the speaker to make use of the turn signals to gain, hold, or yield the floor to the other party. The application of the turn signals by the speaker might also be *ineffective* in the sense that the speaker fails to make use of the signals to gain, hold, or yield the floor to the other party. Thus, the turn signals can be applied in terms of four modes: appropriately and effectively, appropriately but ineffectively, inappropriately but effectively, or inappropriately and ineffectively.

This paper is a fragment of a research report of a larger research project on a pragmatic study of Indonesian speakers' application of turn-taking mechanisms in English conversations. It aims to discuss the way turn signals in *Eng-*

lish conversations are applied by Indonesian speakers in the *pragmatic perspective*.

Etymologically, the English word *conversation* is made up of a combination of two Latin roots. The first root is *con* which means 'with' or 'together' and the second one is *vers* which means 'to turn about in a given direction'. Accordingly, to engage in conversation literally means to turn about with others (Miller, 1999:2).

According to Orestrom (1983), conversation can be understood in several ways. The first way is to define the term. For example, conversation is defined as a speech event in which the participants exchange information, thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Second, conversation can be better understood by giving examples. In this case, conversation refers to talks between colleagues, friends, couples (e.g., husband and wife) or other members of the family. Finally, conversation should be described in terms of a number of factors and compared with other speech events. For example, a debate differs from an informal talk as it is led by a chairman.

Orestrom (1983:22) added that conversation has some typical characteristics as the following:

- private rather than public
- casual and spontaneous (not scripted or premeditated; planning and production are more or less simultaneous)
- not institutionalized (informal setting where turn order, length, aim, and topic are not specified in advance)
- focus on the interaction (facts are not always central)
- freedom to introduce new topics
- frequent use of 'tag questions' and 'intimacy signals (e.g., *isn't it?, you know*)
- frequent use of 'listener responses' (e.g., *mmm, yes, that's right*)

According to Orestrom, the three ways in clarifying the notion of conversation seem to be workable as it clearly shows that conversation occurs when speaker-change recurs, meaning that without speaker-change, there is no conversation.

Wierzbicka (1991:6) pointed out that the word *pragma* is a Greek word and it refers to 'activity', 'deed', or 'practice'. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics

which deals with the contexts in which people use language and the behavior of speakers and listeners. Thus, context becomes a determinant factor in language use. Analogically, the pragmatic functions of turn signals, for example, are also determined by the context in which they occur. Therefore, a similar signal may have different functions depending on the context of its occurrence. It is important to note that a conversation particle such as *mmm* is not dismissable as just a 'performance error' or 'filled pause'. It has a specific interactional function in terms of the system of taking turns at speaking in a conversation, where it can be seen to be a turn-holding device (Levinson, 1983: 51). In the reverse order, the particle such as *oh, okay, yeah, and well* are assumed to convey pragmatic functions in the face of their occurrence as turn-taking devices.

In light of the terminological explanation, this article analyzes the various types of turn signals applied by Indonesian speakers when conversing in English. It also explains whether or not the various types of turn signals were applied appropriately and effectively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a descriptive research study describing the application of the turn signals in English conversations in natural contexts. Examples of contexts reported in this article include places such as an examination room, university lecturers working places, a hotel front office, a room of a government building, and a car. As conversations which took place in a particular context could contain more than one instance of turn signals, the context may be mentioned several times to explain the occurrence of the various signals. The subjects were Indonesian speakers who were found using English in their conversations either with other Indonesians or with speakers of different cultural backgrounds. The relations of the participants involved in the conversations are either the same, for example, between a student and another student, between a lecturer and another lecturer, or different, for example, between a student and a lecturer, a guest and a receptionist.

Several techniques were used in data collection. Firstly, the researcher recorded directly the conversations between two speakers in which he also took part in the conversations. Secondly, he recorded the conversations between two or more speakers in which he once in a while involved as a speaker. Lastly, the researcher asked a research assistant to record conversations between two or more participants in which he or she was involved as a participant.

Verbal expressions uttered by the speakers were recorded in an audio recording set and they were then transcribed into orthographic symbols from which verbal signals could ultimately be identified. At the same time of the occurrence of the recordings process, field notes were taken to help the researcher better identify the existence of non-verbal signals. However, the non-verbal signals are not included in this report.

Theoretically, the analysis of the data forms an interactive, cyclical process. The researcher steadily moves among four stages: coding data, shuttling among reduction, displaying, and drawing conclusion. The coding of data leads to new ideas on what should go into a table. Entering the data requires further data reduction. As the table fills up, preliminary conclusions are drawn, but they lead to the decision to add another column to the table to test the conclusion. Thus, the data analysis is a repetitious and iterative enterprise (Miles & Huberman, 1984:22-23).

In practice, the data analysis employed several steps. The first step was to recognize and identified the verbal turn signals. Another step was to conduct a peer discussion and verification in order to have deeper insights into this study. This, in turn, became useful inputs for drawing conclusion pertaining to the provision of the verbal signals and the pragmatic functions they employed.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The verbal turn claiming signals were applied 72 times. The signals used by the speakers to claim their speaking turns were: *and* (2 times), *because yeah* (once), *but* (10 times), *but but er* (once), *hm* (8 times), *hm hm* (once), *oh* (9 times), *oh I see* (once), *oh yeah* (once), *okay* (7 times), *okay but* (once), *okay okay* (once), *or* (once), *so* (4 times), *that's right* (once), *yap* (once), *yeah* (16 times), *yeah er* (once), *yeah and* (once), *yeah whether* (once), and *yes* (2 times).

The kinds of verbal turn yielding signals used by the speakers were: *yeah* (34 times), *yes* (once), *okay* (6 times), *okay so* (once), *or* (once), and *okay come on* (once). The signals were applied 44 times during the course of the study.

The kinds of verbal turn taking signals the speakers used during the course of the study were: *ah* (2 times), *and* (6 times), *but* (14 times), *eh* (2 times), *em/mm* (12 times), *em so* (once), *er* (27 times), *hm* (2 times), *hm and* (2 times), *hm hm* (once), *hm hm okay* (once), *hm hm so* (2 times), *hm yeah* (once), *hm okay but* (once), *nah* (2 times), *oh* (21 times), *oh I see* (2 times), *oh okay* (once), *oh okay er* (once), *oh so* (2 times), *oh yeah* (3 times), *oh yeah yeah* (once), *oh I*

see okay er (once), *oh I see so* (once), *oh I see so okay* (once), *oh I see yeah* (once), *oh oh* (once), *oh yes* (once), *okay* (33 times), *okay okay* (once), *okay okay so* (once), *okay so* (once), *okay so so* (once), *okay well* (once), *or* (once), *so* (14 times), *sure* (once), *well* (2 times), *yap* (4 times), *yeah* (63 times), *yeah but* (once), *yeah* {(laughter) (once)}, *yeah I see* (once), *yeah er* (once), *yeah so* (4 times), *yeah yeah good* (once), *yeah so er* (once), *yeah yeah* (2 times), *yeah yes* (once), *yes* (24 times), *yes but* (once), and *yes okay okay* (once). It was found in the corpus of data that the total number of the occurrence of the verbal turn taking signals was 275.

The verbal turn signals used by Indonesian speakers to hold the speaking turns were: *and* occurred 69 times, *and then* (11 times), *because* (14 times), *but* (25 times), *er* (34 times), *er and* (once), *in home* (once), *okay* (5 times), *okay well* (once), *or* (5 times), *so* (24 times), *so er* (2 times), *so mm* (once), *then* (4 times), *yeah* (9 times), *yeah but* (once), *yeah so* (2 times), and *yes and then* (once). These signals were applied 210 times during the course of the study.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study showed that, in general, the turn signals in English conversations consisted of verbal turn signals such as *oh*, *okay*, *yeah*, and *well* and non-verbal ones such as *increasing volume*, *posture shift*, *nodding*, and *laughter*. The discussion in this article is limited to the verbal turn signals which are then examined from the pragmatic perspective in order to discover how the speakers applied them according to the context of occurrence. Based on the corpus of data of about four-hour length, it was found that Indonesian speakers applied four of Poyatos' (1980, cited in Loveday, 1982: 119) five types of turn signals in their English conversations, that is turn claiming (72 instances), turn yielding (44 instances), turn taking (275 instances), and turn holding (210 instances). The only type that did not occur was the turn suppressing signal. The absence is due to the resemblance of this type of signal to turn holding signal (Loveday, 1982:119). Although some of the recorded conversations involved more than two speakers, none of them were found signaling something like *let him finish* or holding the claimer's arm.

The rest of this section presents the four types of turn signals applied by Indonesian speakers in English conversations. The discussion which is accompanied by a number of conversation extracts proceeds from the application of turn-claiming, turn-yielding, turn-taking, and turn-holding signals. The turn signals

(printed in *bold italics* in the extracts) were highlighted pragmatically using the afore-mentioned pragmatic modes: appropriately and effectively, appropriately but ineffectively, inappropriately but effectively, or inappropriately and ineffectively.

Before proceeding to the extracts that illustrate the way how Indonesian speakers apply turn signals according to the afore-mentioned pragmatic modes above, it is worth further explicating that the term *appropriate*, in this article, refers to the proper application of the turn signals in which it does not bother the ongoing turn unit being constructed by the current speaker. In other words, the application of the signals do not result in violations of turn exchange rules or conventions as set by Sacks et al. (1974:704) that can be summarized that the floor is passed to the next speaker if the turn or turn-construction unit (TCU) made by the current speaker is complete and the exchange of turn from the current speaker to the next speaker is executed at transition-relevance place (TRP). It is important to clarify that violation can be distinguished between strong violation and mild violation. In case a speaker made mild violation it is considered tolerable and his or her pragmatic mode is appropriate. Forrester (2002:17) called the instance of the sort of violation as *neutral interruption* in which it was not a trouble some in terms of the smooth flow of exchange.

In line with the process the conversation taking place, the speakers normally make mistakes in the sense that violations against turns exchange rules are unavoidable. Following Anonym (1996) available on line at: <http://english.unitecology.ac.nz/resources/resources/explang/turntaking.html>, the kinds of violations the speakers may make are (a) *interruption*, where a new speaker interrupts and then gains the floor, (b) *butting in*, where a new speaker tries to gain the floor but does not succeed; (c) *silence*, where a potential next speaker does not respond and, (d) *overlaps*, where two speakers are speaking at the same time.

The turn signals that are appropriately applied may be effective or ineffective. The signals are effective if they can be made available to yield, take, or hold a speaking turn. However, not all of the appropriately applied signals are definitely effective. Some signals may be ineffective. This is due to the evidence that in real life world a participant in a conversation may be inattentive to his or her interlocutor and tend to monopolize the speaking turns. As a result, the conversations do not result in smooth exchanges of speakers due to the overlook, for example, of the other party's signals and therefore they are said to be ineffective.

On the contrary, some signals are said to be inappropriate because the processes of application of the signals are beyond the rules or conventions as have been mentioned previously. These inappropriately applied signals are effective if they are made available to yield, take, or hold a speaking turn, and are ineffective if they are not. Indeed, the pragmatic modes are much dependant of the context in which the conversations take place. According to Sternstrom, the utterances of a speaker in a conversation are not isolated phenomena but depend on the entire context for their interpretation. She further explained that “exactly what the speaker means by saying something must be interpreted not only in relation to the immediate context referring to what the previous speaker just uttered, but also in relation to the wider context which includes the speech situation, the topics, the speakers and their relationship to each other, and the knowledge they share about the world” (Sternstrom, 1994:26).

The Application of Turn-claiming Signals

Of the seventy-two instances of verbal turn-claiming signals, nineteen (19.44%) were appropriate and effective, thirty-five (48.61%) were appropriate but ineffective, eleven (15.28%) were inappropriate but effective, and twelve (16.67%) were inappropriate and ineffective. The following extracts illustrate how these turn-holding signals occurred in conversations.

- (1) B: And then er....I give er.... The what is er..... the post test er....
that 's yang apalagi sama
A: Oh similar to post test okay *so....*
B: ***But I*** yeah I use er.... Communicative test technique

Extract (1) was taken from a conversation that took place in an examination room and involved Participant A as the examiner and a Participant B as the examinee. The extract illustrates how turn-claiming signal “but”, as indication of a willingness to talk, was executed *appropriately and effectively* by Speaker B. Although the application of the signal overlapped with Speaker A’s *so*, it remained appropriate. In other words, the signal “but” was appropriately applied. If A did not prolong his turn, such an overlap of speech would not happen. Besides, the application was effective due to the fact that B successfully gained the floor.

- (2) A: But but er yeah er yeah I have er some cassettes about that but I can't believe... know our culture is always push us to er I mean to to devote our friends to our friends and this is er I can't believe about that what do you think can you...
B: **But but**
A: Can you tell me?
B: That that's the point what did you say
A: Hm hm
B: it's about the personal problem and that's the way how another people can make er one way (1.29-34)

The above extract was taken from a conversation taking place at the corridor of a campus involved participant A and B who had the same relative status and knew one to each well since they were class mates. The extract shows us how the verbal turn claiming signal "but but" was applied by the speaker to show a willingness to take turn. The application of the signal is considered appropriate due to the phenomenon that A's turn in the previous line might be interpreted as being completed as it was realized by a question indicating a nomination. However, it was ineffective since the claimer was not succeeded in gaining the floor due to the evidence that speaker A continued talking.

- (3) A: yes
B: come from er.....NU
A: NU **and**
B: **and** some of them because in.....
A: *so* NU voice it seems to me er.... can be divided
B: **divided by**
A: **In two** (laughter)*

Extract (3) was taken from a conversation that took place in a mobile car involving two participants who knew each other well. The extract illustrates the application of an inappropriate but effective turn-claiming signal. The signal "so" was applied by Speaker A. It was considered effective because the claimer was managed to stop B and then gained the floor. However, it was inappropriately applied due to the evidence that it was executed by Speaker A at the middle of B's turn construction unit (TCU), in which it is considered a violation.

- (4) A: *You know* the people the culture of people in UFO
B: No no I mean the culture of er...the people who live in
er....western in in the west people because you know they live in
western in west ...the west people that's why I want to know
whether eastern people *believe in*
A: *Oh...*
B: the western people or not I want to compare actually I just want to
er....
A: *It is Just* a kind of culture
About what people believe
B: **Yeah* culture* Yeah culture Maybe em...UFO *as..... er.....*

Extract (4) was taken from a conversation taking place in an English Department room of a university involving a lecturer (Participant A) and a student (Participant B). The student was meeting her lecturer for a consultation for her thesis writing. The above extract shows how turn-claiming signal was applied inappropriately and ineffectively. The turn signal “yeah” was inappropriately executed by Speaker B for the reason that it was executed without considering the on-going turn being made by Speaker A in the previous line. Yet, it was ineffective due to the evidence that the claimer was unsuccessful in gaining the floor.

The Application of Turn-yielding Signals

Of the forty-four instances of turn-claiming signals, most of them (40 or 90.91%) were appropriate and effective, one (2.27%) was appropriate but ineffective, another (2.27%) was inappropriate and ineffective, and two others (4.55%) were inappropriate but effective. The following extracts illustrate how these turn-yielding signals occurred in conversations.

- (5) A: You have restaurant
B: Yes we have
A: Is the restaurant 24 hours
B: Yes
A: To serve
B: Yes
A: Okay good okay thank you for your information ...and so it is not

- different between single and double bed *yeah*
B: Yes we er two twins

Extract (5) was taken from a conversation taking place in a hotel front office and involved a guest, Participant A, and a receptionist, Participant B. The turn-yielding signal “yeah” was executed appropriately and effectively by Speaker A to yield the turn to the other party. It was appropriate because the speaker executed it right after the completion of her turn unit and it was effective because Speaker B immediately took the floor after the execution of the signal.

- (6) A: So can you mention some contributions to the students of er I mean er Mandarese students in learning English?
B: (silence)
D: Or for the teacher
A: Yeah may be for the teachers
B: (silence)
C: Do you think that this research will help the teachers *okay*?
B: (silence)
C: What ways this research will help the teacher?
B: What ways er
C: Planning, measuring, or developing text books ...in what ways pronunciation will help?

Extract (6) was taken from a conversation which was recorded in an examination room. It involved a student (Participant B) who was maintaining her undergraduate thesis and her examiners (Participants A, C, and D) who alternately asked her questions. The above extract shows that Participant C executed the turn-yielding signal “okay” as indication of a willingness to pass the floor. The application of the signal was appropriate but ineffective. It was appropriate due to the evidence that it could be clearly projected as the termination of C’s turn. However, it was ineffective because the potential next speaker being nominated (Speaker B) gave no response. Silence is considered a violation occurred.

- (7) A: Then you analyze and then you relate it to the information you get from the **reality**
B: **Oh yeah* yeah*

- A: I think it's better **okay?**
B: **That's** all right
A: you can you can ask you can ask yourself of UFO
B: Hm...hm.... (4.95-100)

Extract (7) was taken from a conversation that took place in an English Department room of a university involving a lecturer (Participant A) and a student (Participant B). The student was meeting her lecturer for a consultation for her thesis writing. The verbal signal "okay" was inappropriately executed by Speaker A because it overlapped with part of the utterance of Speaker B. But, it was effective because Speaker B responded so that an exchange of speaker occurred.

- (8) B: What about you if you if you can handle **them**
A: **(laughter)** can be **very busy now**
B: **Very busy**
A: and I will be more busy now (laughter) in the future (laughter)
B: Because you are in S3 yeah
A: Yeah two **semester yeah**
B: **so you are** So you are my junior yeah
A: (laughter) yeah so since (laughter) now on I become your junior
(laughter)
B: **so it's time** for you **to help me**

Extract (8), the last extract shown in this article, was taken from a conversation which was taking place in a campus and involved two participants who had the same relative status. The conversation had a daily topic and occurred in a natural setting. The extract shows how an inappropriate and ineffective turn-yielding signal occurred in the conversation. The verbal signal "yeah" (line 7) was executed by Speaker A inappropriately because it overlapped with part of the utterance of Speaker B, in which overlap of speeches is considered a violation against turn exchange convention. It was considered ineffective due to the evidence that the response of Speaker B (line 8) did not correspond to the question of Speaker A in the preceding line.

The Application of Turn-taking Signals

All of the 275 instances of turn-taking signals were applied effectively by Indonesian speakers. However, it was found that 245 instances of the signals (89.09%) were applied appropriately and thirty instances (10.91%) were applied inappropriately. The following extracts illustrate how the appropriate-effective and the inappropriate-effective verbal turn taking signals occurred in the conversations.

- (9) B: Yes we er two twins
A: Twin okay
B: But double and single person
A: *Okay* good the highest price is the suite the Yasmin suit yeah

Extract (9) was taken from a conversation taking place in a hotel front office and it involved a guest, Participant A, and a receptionist, Participant B. The extract shows how the turn-taking signal “*okay*” (line 4) executed by the speaker to take a turn. This signal was applied *appropriately and effectively*. This is due to the evidence that the signal was applied smoothly without violation of turn exchange rules or conventions.

- (10) A: On Saturday night
B: Yeah
C: I see
A: Yeah it means we just **only**
C: **So* what* I mean er... what are there now the food court now used to be the food court place

Extract (10) was taken from a conversation that took place in a car and involved several Indonesian participants who knew each other well. The application of the turn-taking signal “*so*” by Participant C was effective but inappropriate. It was analyzed as being inappropriately applied due to the fact that it was executed by the speaker too soon and resulted in a violation against turn exchange convention. The kind of violation that occurred was overlap of speech that is between the utterance “*only*” in line 4 and the turn taking signal *so* in line 5. That is the reason why the application of the signal is called inappropriate.

The Application of Turn-holding Signals

Of the 210 instances of turn-holding signals, most of them (197 instances or 93.80%) were appropriate and effective, 12 (5.72%) were inappropriate but effective, and only one or 0.48% was inappropriate and ineffective. None of the turn-holding signals was found to be appropriate but ineffective. The following extracts illustrates how these turn-holding signals occurred in conversations.

- (11) A: Okay so how many time?
B: Er... I give the treatment er....
A: You gave treatment
B: Er....I I just give the treatment for four days
A: Four days
B: **And** each day er ... I take just take er ... fifty minutes

Extract (11) was taken from a conversation which took place in an examination room and it involved Participant A as the examiner and Participant B as the examinee. The extract illustrates how the turn-holding signal “and” was executed *appropriately and effectively* by Speaker B to hold the floor.

- (12) A: But I am afraid how much information can you get about UFO?
B: Em.... many er.... many books about that and also I can find in the website
A: Website
B: Yeah
A: You all you have to specify the people who believe the UFO for example America, **or....**
B: **Oh yeah* *er....special for**
A: **certain certain people** in America
B: Yeah **Maybe er...**

Extract (12) was taken from a conversation between a lecturer (Participant A) and a student (Participant B) which took place in an English Department room of a university. The student was meeting her lecturer to consult her thesis writing. This extract illustrates the application of an inappropriate but effective verbal turn-holding signal. The signal “or” was successfully made by Participant A to hold the floor. However, the application was analyzed as being inappropriate due to the fact that the floor was maintained by the speaker awkwardly.

- (13) A: So I am very happy about that because many people in Indonesia do not know what is Ujung Pandang
B: *Oh*
A: *They* know makassar (laughter) *so er*
B: *But* could you tell me why why er it is called ujung pandang

Extract (13) was taken from a conversation that took place at a government building between Participants A and B who were joining a test for a youth exchange program. In the extract, it can be seen that Participant A tried to hold the floor, but unsuccessful. The application of the verbal turn holding signal “so er” was inappropriate and ineffective. It was analyzed as being inappropriate because the signal was executed by Speaker A when his interlocutor (Speaker B) had projected that A’s laughter as a turn yielding. Therefore, Speaker B considered that it was his turn to talk and, indeed, took the floor. It was ineffective because Speaker A finally relinquished the floor to Speaker B. In other words, Speaker A was not successful in prolonging his turn.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has presented the results of research on Indonesian speakers’ turn signals in English conversations. Conversation is a kind of speech event which presupposes exchanges of speakers’ role as both listeners and speakers. In order to bring about smooth exchanges, the participants should apply turn signals as indication of a willingness to take, hold, or pass the floor. The results of the study suggested that Indonesian speakers used four types of signals, that is turn-claiming, turn-yielding, turn-taking, and turn-holding signals. The application of turn signals can be grouped into four pragmatic modes, that is, appropriate and effective, appropriate but ineffective, inappropriate but effective, or inappropriate and ineffective.

The study suggested that most turn signals applied by Indonesian speakers could be considered appropriate and effective, implying that they were aware of the importance of signaling one another when conversing in English. However, it is considered necessary for EFL teachers in Indonesia to always keep track on the way the learners use English in their conversations according to the rules and conventions so that they will be able not only to produce correct sentences but also to produce appropriate and socio-culturally acceptable ones.

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