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Through Languages, Education, and
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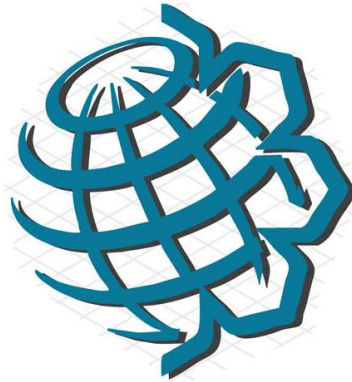
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SUSTAINING GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS
THROUGH
LANGUAGES, EDUCATION, AND TOURISM

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(ENGLISH LANGUAGE)**

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LANGUAGE, GESTURES AND MOVEMENT AS EVASION STRATEGIES USED BY DATO' SERI NAJIB IN NEWS INTERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

News interview is regarded as a form of institutional talk where the interaction process between the participants differs from an ordinary conversation in which the course of interaction in news interviews is an exchange of question-and-answer (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). This paper aims to explore evasion practices used by Dato' Seri Najib Razak in an exclusive interview episode '101 East' broadcasted live by Al Jazeera Channel on 26th October 2018. The data was collected from the online YouTube videos in which the participants in the 101 East were between the host interviewer, Mary Jolley, and the guest interviewee, Dato' Seri Najib Razak. Using conversation analysis approach, this study analyzed how the interviewee evaded from answering controversial questions in the interview. The findings suggest that language, gestures and movement were used by the interviewee as evasion strategies to avoid from answering questions and to terminate topics in the interview. The organization of gestures and movement used by the interviewee as evasion strategies in this study were forewarning, interruption, final thanks and body movement.

Keywords: Evasion strategies; Conversation analysis; News interview; Language; Gestures

1. INTRODUCTION

News interview is a mediated platform for journalist and politicians to deliver information to the public. The course of interaction is different from ordinary conversation in which the setting is formal and institutionalized, and the audience does not participate in the interaction (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

Using conversation analysis (CA) approach, the aim of this paper is to explore the use of language and nonverbal conducts in evasion practices used by the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Najib, in an exclusive interview episode '101 East'. The interview session, hosted by Mary Ann Jolley, was broadcasted live by Al Jazeera Channel on 26th October 2018. As far as the news interview is concerned, the participants' turn in talking was predetermined before the talk and the context is mainly focusing on political issues discussed in the domain of question-and-answer sequences (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Cuberas, 2014).

However, problems in question-and-answer exchanges may occur in the political news interviews, as the nature of the talk is often challenging and confrontational (Mullany, 2002). This is especially true when the topic discussed is tense and the questions raised by the interviewer have high possibility to be challenging to the interviewee to answer. Due to adversarial and challenging questions, the interviewee may feel uncomfortable to respond and may refuse to answer. The actions of refusal are known as evasion strategies (Artiyono, 2014; Clayman, 2001; Kantara, 2012; Nina, 2012; Nur Zahra, 2016).

Previous studies on evasion were on American politicians and British politicians (e.g. Clayman, 2001; Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Jagtiani, 2012; Rasiah, 2010; Vukovic, 2013). However, only a few researchers have shown their interest to conduct evasion strategies among Malaysian politicians. For example, Nur Zahra (2016) did a comparative study between a Malaysian politician and American politician on evasion practices. However, there is a lack of research done on the use of language, gestures and movement in evasion practices. Hence, it would be insightful to see how communication resources such as language, gestures and body movement are utilized by the Malaysian politician to evade from answering adversarial questions in news interview.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

News interview is regarded as an institutional talk in which the organization of the social interaction is in form of questions-and-answer (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). Unlike ordinary conversation, news interview has a different turn-taking system, opening and closing, as well as its content (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Heritage, 1984). The fundamental arrangement of news interview is the interviewee is invited before the interview goes on air and it is prearranged for the benefits of the media. Hence, the interaction process is between an interviewer and an interviewee.

The interviewer is recognized as a professional journalist in broadcast talk and communication, while the interviewee is someone who is an expert or public figures such as politician, doctors, analysts or any certified specialist in related to the topic to be discussed in the news interview.

2.1 Evasion in News Interviews

In previous studies, the term 'evasion' in news interviews is used to describe responses that do not answer the questions asked by an interviewer (Dillon, 1990; Wilson, 1990; Harris, 1991). In addition, such responses could also be regarded as 'resist', 'sidestep', 'agenda shift', 'non-replies', and 'equivocation' (Nur Zahra, 2016). Furthermore, Nur Zahra (2016) found in political news interviews, evasion practices appear frequently if the overhearing audiences are not presented during the interview session. Moreover, evasion is likely to occur in a challenging interview session and adversarial in nature. The interviewee is expected to answer the question raised by the interviewer and evasion may occur if the questions are confrontational (Nur Zahra, 2016).

In Clayman's (2001) study, it has been concluded that most American politicians used different evasion strategies when resisting from answering interview questions. Clayman found that politicians resisted or evaded questions in broadcast news interviews by making an attempt to shift away from the agenda of the questions. Alternatively, interviewee may make a request for permission such as using the phrase "just one comment" or "a very quick point" as minimizing the divergence and justifying the shift (Clayman, 2001).

In a similar study done by Nur Zahra (2016), she compared the evasion practices occurred in a total of six political news interviews sessions which were three sessions carried out with Malaysian politicians and another three sessions with American politicians. Among evasion strategies that were found are changing the topic without initiative from the interviewer, the use of hedges or discourse markers such as "well" or anyway" or "you know". Besides that, overlapping utterance was used as an attempt of taking the floor without waiting for the interviewer to finish his/her turn and an interviewee may completely refuse to answer with a direct 'no' (Nur Zahra, 2016).

Clayman and Heritage (2000) stated that problems in the interview happened when the interviewer practices adversarial questioning. Adversarial questions are questions that put the interviewee in an uncomfortable position to continue the session. However, this study explores on how the interviewee evaded the adversarial questions. According to Nur Zahra (2016), in an interview setting, there is a high possibility for evasion to occur especially when the interviewee is put into a critical situation. The researcher mentioned that the term evasion is frequently used by researchers denoting refusal in answering, mainly studies were related to politician interview (see Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Vukovic, 2013; Rasiah, 2012). In the study, Nur Zahra (2016) found the evasion strategies involved are topic shift, hedges, overlap utterance, complete refusal.

2.2 What is Conversation analysis

Conversation has been used as a resource in various grounds of study. The conversation in Conversation Analysis (CA) examines how speaker and hearer accomplish coordinated actions and maintain orderly and meaningful communication in social activities through their verbal and nonverbal conduct (Nguyen & Kasper, 2009; Sacks, H., 1992; Sacks et al., 1974).

Haapaniemi (2011) stated that the goal of CA studies is to study on the orderliness and the organization of social actions that happen in everyday social interactions. It aims to find the structure and rules that constitute the interaction's organization which differs from one case to another. CA provides a close examination on studying a conversation which looks at the details of the interaction that includes the talk itself, the time (pause and stop), sound (tone and pitch), non-verbal cues (gestures and movement) and some other features that happen throughout the talk (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004; Heritage, 1984; Mondada, 2011; Sacks et al., 1992; Schegloff, 2000).

3. METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from Al Jazeera exclusive episode of 101 East broadcasted live by Al Jazeera Channel on 26th October 2018 in which Mary Jolley (M) was the host interviewer and the former Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Najib Razak (N), was the guest interviewee. The length of the recorded video data is 22:07 minutes long. The video data was then transcribed and analyzed using the CA approach. The researcher adopted the Clayman's (2001) and Nur Zahra's (2016) conceptual framework of evasion to explore the evasion practices and strategies used by the guest interviewee, Dato' Seri Najib Razak.

An issue questioned in the interview was concerning the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) issue and the related matter has triggered a national and international interest (see Shahrul Nazmi & Mohd Helmi, 2016). The inquiries raised in the news interview by Mary Jolley had triggered confrontational and challenging questions as an attempt to get information which resulted evasive responses by Dato' Seri Najib Razak. In this study, the use of conversation analysis approach is relevant in analyzing how the interviewee utilized the use of gestures and body movement, combined with verbal language as the strategies to evade from answering controversial questions and terminating topics discussed in the interview.

4. RESULTS

Based on the video data of the news interview session, there were few complications occurred related to questioning and answering which resulted conflicts between the interviewer and interviewee. Thus, the next paragraph will discuss on the language for topic

shifting, overlapping utterance and making complete refusal as well as the use of gestures and body movement as evasion strategies.

a. Topic shift, overlapping utterance, complete refusal, gestures and body movement

Nur Zahra (2016) stated that topic shift refers to a situation when one is changing the topic of current discussion to another topic. Topic shift as an evasion strategy means that the interviewee shifts the topic themselves without the initiative from the interviewer. This action is considered evasion because it is against the nature of the conversation in an interview setting where the person who could change the topic is only the interviewer.

Excerpt 1: topic shift

01 M: what would you say to people who say they don't believe that
02 that you're actually you're covering it up=
03 N: =no I mean I mean in all honesty that that's the truth I mean I
04 mean I cannot I mean there's nothing I can do if people don't
05 believe it but that's the honest truth because er: my track
06 record as prime minister er I can stand by it because this country
07 has develop by leaps and bounds during my tenure
08 M: just going back to when the [police raided]
09 N: [can- can-] we er: supposed
10 to talk about the economy ()
11 M: we are going to ↑ but there's just a couple more

In Excerpt 1, line 9 and 10, it could be seen that N tried to request for a topic shift rather than answering M's question. It was notable that the interviewee could not propose a new topic as the interviewer led him back to the previous topic (line 11). Thus, this was an attempt to evade by using topic shift strategy.

Excerpt 2: Topic shift + complete refusal + overlap utterance + body movement

01 N: well I am not partly to er the decision
02 but as far as I'm concerned I totally totally
03 innocent of the [person's name]case absolutely
04 M: em: the the one am de be [spend-
05 N: [can we go the economy



06 M: a:: well [()
 07 N: [we have spent so much time in this otherwise I'm going
 08 to walk [out
 ((N moved forward, slightly stood up while fixing his coat))



09 M: [okay just one [thing
 10 N: [no more no more please
 ((N lifted his hand and stood up while buttoning his coat))
 11 M: many people say:

In Excerpt 2, line 5, N suggested for a topic shift to talk about economy instead of the current topic in which he slightly moved his body posture to the side (image 1 and image 2). However, M hesitated N's request (line 6) and M's utterance was overlapped with N's in line 7. At the beginning of the overlap utterances, N moved his body position again (image 4 and image 5) as he made a refusal to proceed with the topic discussed (line 7). Following this, N then warned that he would leave the interview session, as he pointed his right hand outwards (image 6 and image 7) and slightly raising his body up from his seat (image 8) and buttoned his coat at the same time (image 9).



12 N: no more () ok () That's it
 13 ((N stood up and fixed his collar))

Then, in line 9, M made an attempt to initiate a new topic following the interviewee's request. However, in line 10, as N gazed on M (image 9) and made a complete refusal to discuss the current topic as he uttered 'no more' (line 12). Following this, N stood up straight (image 10) and fixed his collar (image 11) as showing readiness to take leave.

Excerpt 3: Topic termination attempt + complete refusal + body movement

14 N: no more
 15 M: okay [li-
 16 N: [listen, I'm done
 17 M: [okay
 18 N: [if you wanted to talk about economy, I'll sit down
 19 M: well we can talk about-
 20 N: COME ON YOU ARE NOT BEING FAIR TO ME. No if you want to ask
 21 about economy, [what I did ()
 22 M: [I mean you are- you are- facing serious charges in
 23 this country [and people-
 24 N: [look I've done- I've done my part



25 M: [no no okay]
 26 N: [no no] I'm not going to stand anymore, if you want
 27 to ask by economy, I'll talk to you
 ((N walked away from the seat))



28 M: okay well we'll ask about () let's talk () given what's happened to
 29 you let's let's talk about your legacy as prime minister
 ((N walked back towards the seat))
 30 N: okay let's talk about legacy I'm fine ((N sat down))

In excerpt 3, N continued to display a complete refusal to discuss the current topic (line 14) and he warned that he would only return to his seat if the topic of discussion was changed to economy (line 18). However, M persistently led N back to the previous topic (line 19). Following this, N raised his voice in line 10 as he remained standing (image 12) and then overlapped his utterances which occurred in line 21 to line 26. During the overlap, N turned his body and walked away from his seat (image 13 and image 14). In line 30, M finally agreed to change the topic and initiated to talk about N's legacy. When the new topic was suggested in line 28-line 29, N put his hand on his chin (image 15) as if 'doing thinking' and then he displayed an agreement to continue the interview as he walked towards his seat and sat down (image 16 and image 17).

Excerpt 4: Topic termination + complete refusal + body movement

01 M: how do you feel about the fact that that one am de be scandals has
 02 has stained that legacy to a certain extend
 03 N: I regret you know and er I wish there was no one am de be issue whatsoever
 04 M: [person's name]=
 05 N: = thank you
 06 ((N stood up))



07 M: = no no can I just ask you about [person's name] [because it is important
 08 N: [no no its enough no no
 09 its enough enough=
 10 M: =no no it is why you think=
 11 N: =you coming back to [person's name]
 12 (0.3)
 13 M: no no [just you () but but
 14 N: [that's enough that's enough
 15 M: mister Najib () [it is important because people are asking
 16 N: [no- no-
 |
 34 M: when was the last time you communicate
 35 N: that's enough
 ((N walked out from the studio))



36 A: thank you
 37 N: thank you
 38 M: thank you mister Najib

Although in the previous excerpt, M had agreed to change the topic to discuss about N's legacy, in excerpt 4, M made an attempt to shift the topic back to the 1MDB subject. As M mentioned 'person's name' (line 4), N immediately stood up and said "thank you" (line 5, image 18). N then turned his body around and walked away (image 19). In line 7, M repeated her request to discuss about 'person's name'. However, N interrupted her turn as he took the floor and displayed a complete refusal by saying "no no its enough no no it's enough enough" (line 8 – line 9). Furthermore, in line 14 and line 35, N made another refusal when he uttered "that's enough" and an attempt to terminate the topic with "thank you" (line 36) was uttered by A and repeated by N as he walked away said "thank you" (line 37, image 20 and image 21).

Based on excerpt 2, 3 and 4, it is noticeable that the attempts to close the session were done by the interviewee which violates the rules of turn-taking system in an interview setting that the closing should be made only by the interviewer (Heritage, 1998). This paper noticed four evasion strategies used by the interviewee that include the use of language, gestures and movement to evade adversarial questioning and to terminate confrontational topics. The evasion strategies were forewarning, interruption, final thanks and body movement. All four techniques are discussed below:

Firstly, forewarning. The interviewee warned to leave the studio if the interviewee refused to follow his request to change the topic (excerpt 2 and excerpt 3). According to Cuberas (2014), the interviewee could not leave the interview setting unless the interviewer agreed and the session was finished. However, the rules of an interview were violated as the interviewee felt uncomfortable with the questioning. This could be due to the interviewee felt unsecured and was placed in a worrying situation (Warren, Mullen & Ogloff, 2012).

Secondly, interruption technique. The interviewee employed interruption when the interviewer did not finish her turn in which could be seen in the overlapped utterances occurred in the excerpts discussed above. The interruption was considered as a violation because the interviewee was expected to listen to the interviewer's question and respond to it accordingly. Apparently, the interviewee kept on interrupting by displaying a complete refusal 'no' as evading the interviewer's question.

Next, the final thanks. The interviewee terminated the interview session on his own by saying "thank you" (excerpt 4, line 5 and line 36). The action contradicted with what

Heritage (2009) mentioned in his paper that a conversation in an interview shall not be terminated by any other participants besides the interviewer. According to Artiyono (2014), prefacing the final thanks was a strategy marking that the time for the session is over. Furthermore, the final thanks were given by the interviewer after summarizing the interview session (Artiyono, 2014). However, this study found that the guest interviewee consciously ended the session when he took over the interviewer's right by giving the final thanks and walked away from his seat (line 6, image 20 and image 21).

Last but not least, the body movement. There were several times when the interviewee utilized the use of gestures and movement with the combination of his utterances when evading the questions. The gestures and movement were:

- i. Moving forward while fixing coat as to show readiness to stand up.
- ii. Hand gestures and pointing towards the door as to show 'I am going to leave'.
- iii. Standing up while fixing the collar as to show readiness to leave.
- iii. Walking away to show refusal and terminating the topic as well as closing the session.

5. CONCLUSION

In political news interviews, as the nature of the questioning can be challenging and adversarial, evasions practices do occur. As discussed previously, the evasion strategies found in this study were aligned which the evasion strategies discussed in previous studies such as the combination of topic shift, hedges, overlap utterances and complete refusal (Clayman & Heritage, 20012; Nur Zahra, 2016).

In this paper, evasion strategies are not limited to only the use of language. It is salient that the organization of gestures and movement were also used by the interviewee as evasion strategies such as forewarning, interruption, final thanks and body movement. Furthermore, this study plays a vital role in understanding the use of language, gestures and movement as answer and evasion to questioning. As a Malaysian society, we should be aware of the evasion strategies used by politicians as the practices are ways to face-keeping from answering challenging and confrontational questions that could deteriorate political reputation. Moreover, the knowledge from this study could be benefited for research in social interaction, political communication and institutional talk.

Transcript Conventions

(.)	pause
[]	overlap marker
,	failing intonation
:	lengthening
==	latched turns
UPPER CASE	loud voice

<u>word</u>	stressed syllable / word
()	unclear word
((word))	notes on gestures and movement
[text]	anonymity

Notes

A:	Unidentified
N:	Dato' Seri Najib Razak
M:	Mary Jolley

Data Source

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxMKTyila2o>

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