

# Signaling Trouble in Parents' Speech and Initiating Repair from Them: Strategies of Malay Children

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# INTRODUCTION

Communication breakdowns are common



Reasons for breakdowns may include problems in:

- a) Misspeaking
- b) Mishearing
- c) Misunderstanding

(Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977)

- When breakdowns happen, it is a requirement for interaction to be treated to ensure success of communication process
- The operation relates to linguistic and cultural background
- The discourse of parent-child interaction of Malay background may be governed by the collectivist characteristics
- Some rules for children include to speak in good manner (Lim, 2005), to develop and maintain eye contact (Syed Hassan, 2004) and to listen to parents' words (Asbah & Nur Azah, 2013)

- Even in Quran:

And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.

(Al-Isra': 23)

# Research Aim

To identify strategies for children to signal troubles in parents' speech and initiate repair

# Research Question

What are the strategies used by children of Malay background to signal troubles in parents' speech and initiate repair from them?

# Data Source

**Information**

**Family 1: Lisa**

**Family 2: Aiman**

**Family 3: Aniq**

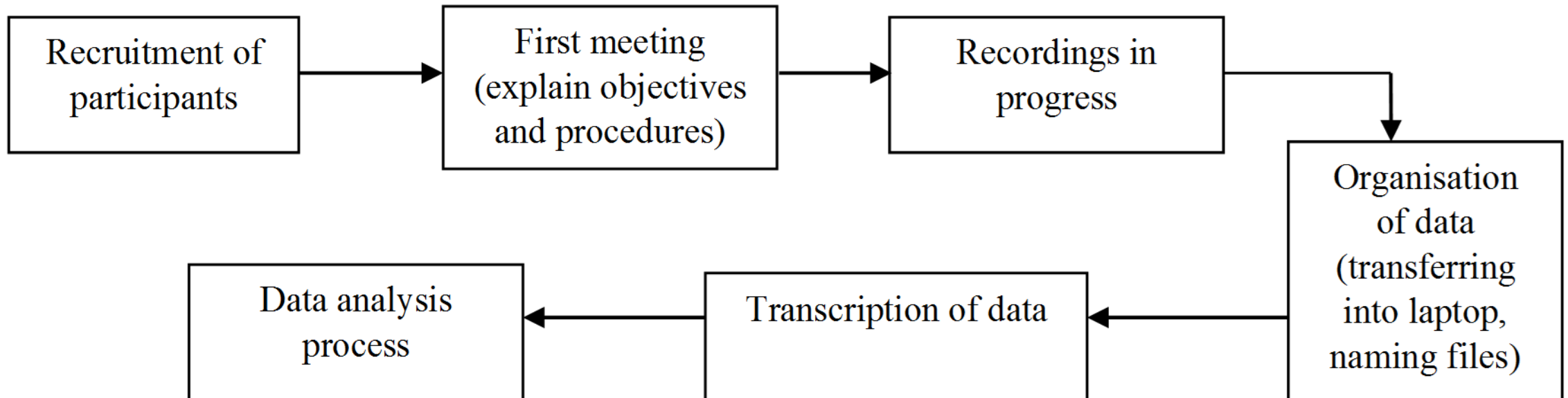
Participating  
member

Mother, Lisa and  
younger brother

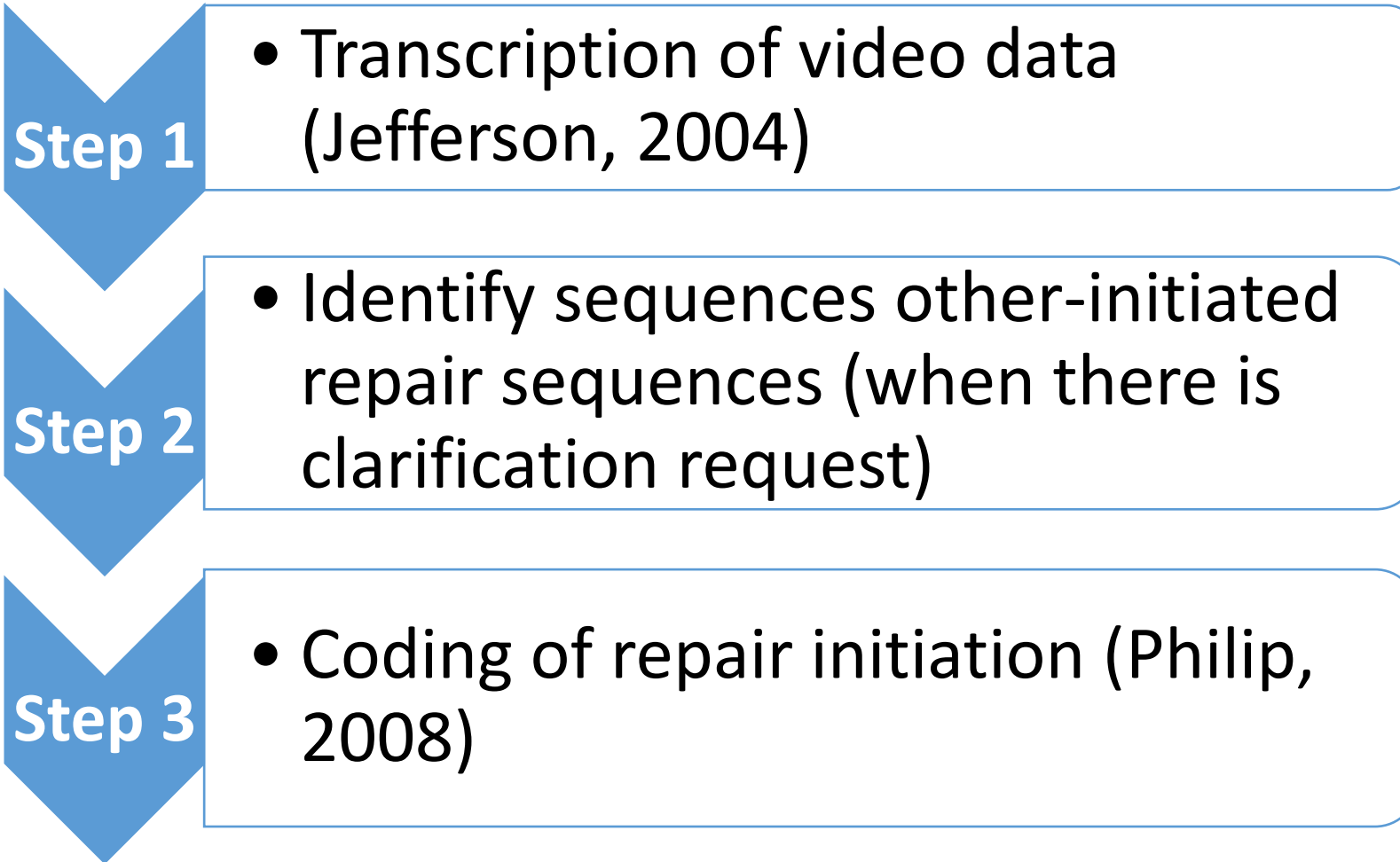
Father, mother and  
Aiman

Father, mother,  
Aniq and elder  
brother

# Data Collection Procedure



# Data Analysis





# Coding scheme (Philip, 2008)

- a) Non-specific [NS]
- b) Request for repetition [REP]
- c) Request for specific information [SPEC]
- d) Confirmation request [CR]
- e) Direct request [DR]
- f) Relevance request [RR]
- g) Cloze request [CZR]

# Result

No.	Repair Initiation Strategies	Family 1: Lisa		Family 2: Aiman		Family 3: Aniq		Total of Frequency
		Parents	Lisa	Parents	Aiman	Parents	Aniq	
1.	Specific request for specification	19	0	37	3	23	2	<b>82</b>
2.	Request for confirmation	8	1	18	3	16	2	<b>48</b>
3.	Non-specific (open-class repair initiators [Drew, 1997])	2	0	16	2	9	17	<b>46</b>
4.	Direct request	7	1	2	2	6	10	<b>28</b>
5.	Cloze request	7	0	3	0	5	0	<b>20</b>
6.	Non-verbal	2	0	1	3	0	0	<b>6</b>
7.	Specific request for repetition	2	0	1	0	1	0	<b>4</b>
8.	Relevance request	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>232</b>

# Example (1):

1 AMN ↑n[ape mu-  
why

**why (cut-off word)**

2	F	[beg bag <b>bag</b>
---	---	---------------------------

3	AMN	ha? ((Aiman gazes at father))
---	-----	-------------------------------

4 F beg ayah tak beli lagi la:  
bag TOA not buy yet EMPHASIS  
**bag, I haven't bought yet la**

5 be↓g  
bag  
**bag**

6 ((Aiman changes gaze from fruit to his father))

# Example (2):

1 M ke↑ne la kan  
*must right*  
**must (have) la right**

2 kutip duit kelas tak?  
*collect money class EMPHASIS*  
**collect class money?**

3 AQ a?

4 M kutip duit kelas tak?  
*collect money class EMPHASIS*  
**collect class money?**

# Example (3):

- 1 M ↓ye ke ikan bakar (.) bukan <semangkuk gulai>?  
*is it fish grill not a bowl curry?*  
***is it grilled fish, not a bowl of curry?***
- 2 (.)
- 3 L >gulai tu ape< ((Lisa looks at mother))  
*curry that what*  
***what (is) that curry?***
- 4 M gulai die ada kua::h  
*curry it has gravy*  
***curry has gravy***

# Example (4):

1 M tadi turun bawah buat ape?

2 (0.2) ((*Aiman and father have mutual gaze*))

3 ha? =

4 F =[ha? ((*father looks at his food*))

5 A (([*Aiman turns to mother and nods his head up*]))

6 M turun bawah buat pe?

# What do I learn?

1. The importance of eye gaze when children signal trouble
2. Limited linguistic resources by children as most strategies are non-specific
3. Certain expressions like interjection *huh?* in addition to non-verbal (*head nod*) are used to perform the speech act
4. Close relationship between parents and children

# Significance of the Study

Add to database on parent-child interaction of Malay backgrounds

Extension of coding scheme

Identify linguistic resources in Malay language that are used to initiate repair

# Limitations of the Study

Small sample size; focus on other-initiated repair only



Thank  
you

A watercolor illustration of a green leafy branch, positioned to the right of the text 'Thank you'. The leaves are small and rounded, with a light green color and some darker green shading, giving it a soft, natural appearance.