

CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS: TURN-TAKING IN DEBONAIR PODCAST FEATURING GITA WIRJAWAN

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Abstract : This study investigates turn-taking strategies in the *Debonair Podcast* episode featuring Gita Wirjawan, hosted by Deborah Henry on August 14, 2025, with a duration of 59 minutes. Using Stenström's (1994) framework of turn-taking strategies, the research focuses on the sub-strategies of taking the turn, including starting up, taking over, interrupting, and overlapping. The findings reveal that Deborah Henry frequently employed the starting up strategy to introduce topics and guide the flow of conversation, while Gita Wirjawan often applied the taking over strategy, particularly during pauses or hesitations, to assert his role as a dominant speaker. Both participants used interruptions and overlaps, reflecting a balance between competition and cooperation in managing the conversational floor. The results demonstrate that turn-taking in this podcast was effectively managed, producing a dynamic and engaging dialogue. However, this study is limited to analyzing only the taking the turn strategy, while the holding the turn and yielding the turn strategies were not examined due to time constraints. Future research is recommended to include all three strategies for a more comprehensive understanding of turn-taking systems in podcast conversations.

Keywords: *Turn-taking, Conversation Analysis, Podcast.*

INTRODUCTION

Gita Wirjawan is an Indonesian entrepreneur, ex-investment banker, music and film producer, and podcaster. He served as the minister of the Republic of Indonesia in the Second United Indonesia Cabinet. Also, he led the Badminton Association of Indonesia from 2012 to 2016. This successful career path attracts considerable media attention. They are interested in having more insight into Wirjawan's life and his career. One of those media is the Debonair Podcast, a YouTube channel hosted by Deborah Henry, which aims to create a safe space for candid conversations about finances and to normalize money discussions. On August 14, 2025, Deborah hosted a podcast about the life and career of Gita Wirjawan. The podcast involved both the host and the guest speaker in an engaging conversation. Thus, this podcast is interesting to analyze in terms of revealing how the speaker and host use turn-taking techniques while speaking, and how their intention is conveyed through their speech.

Podcasts are a new medium for communication, featuring personal transparency and storytelling (Jacobs, 2024). The way the host leads the conversation and the speaker replies to each question builds an engaging talk. It involves them taking turns in their communication. Both speakers and the host have the same right to speak. Having control of this right means taking the turn to speak.

In any situation where the control is not fixed, the other can attempt to get it. The point at which another speaker is free to take over the turn is called turn-taking. (Brown & Yule, 1983). Turn-taking is the fundamental aspect of human communication, providing structure for conversations and ensuring that only one person speaks at a time. (Ford, 2012).

There are many possibilities in how the participants manage their floor in a conversation. They can take the turn to start speaking, hold their turn, and continue speaking, or take a pause and let the other take over the turn instead. These possibilities could be categorized into 3 major strategies: taking the turn, holding the turn, and yielding the turn. All these types are considered the turn-taking system (Stenström, 1994). Taking the turn refers to how the speakers have the same right to take their turn in to speak in the communication. Holding the turn means how the current speaker intends to maintain their turn, but they face a difficulty in controlling and planning what they want to say. Yielding the turn is when the speaker finishes his turn and allows others to respond (Sari, 2021)

The turn-taking system seems to be crucial for organizing conversation (Sacks et al., 1974). Once the turn-taking system is not correctly applied in the conversations, chaos will happen. The conversation will not go on smoothly. Some overlaps may occur during the conversation. Overlapping is when all speakers try to take their turn at the same time. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze what others mean with their pauses or words, or even body gestures, to avoid misunderstanding and embarrassment (Sari, 2021).

Many studies have discussed conversational analysis, especially in the turn-taking system. The study that was conducted by Setiajid (2020) analyzes the types of turn-taking strategies used by teachers and students in EFL classrooms. The result of the study found that each individual has an original character that builds a conversation with a unique pattern. (Ondáš & Juhár, 2018) studied a conversation analysis of turn-taking behavior, focusing on overlapping speech segments, in dyadic human-human interaction in the Slovak language. Bearis et al (2023) investigated turn-taking in Toni Talks, including mention, overlap, interruption, back channels, and others. In summary, characteristics of turn-taking, including mention, overlap, interruption, backchannel, taking the floor/initiating, and yielding the floor, were noted in this study; the act of holding the floor was noted along with the characteristics that were predominantly employed. between the seven (7) turn-taking characteristics and how this supports the subsequent Toni talks interviews. Results also clarified several key factors that drive the use of the features, similarities, and variations in the selected interviews, along with the particular consequences of the characteristics in the course of the discussions. Lee and Staggs (2021) conducted a study in defining turn-taking in the interventions of young children with autism. The results show that there is variability in how turn-taking is defined and implemented in interventions for young children with autism. Untari, Afrilesa, and Magria (

2024) have analyzed turn-taking used in Jay Shetty's Podcast. There are only two types of turn-taking that were not used. Both are post-completor and Tag questions.

Although turn-taking has been analyzed in the context of the classroom, formal interactions, and famous foreign podcasts, there is no study that has specifically analyzed the turn-taking strategies in Debonair Podcast, which focuses on deep conversations, storytelling, and personal explorations. Moreover, no prior studies have analyzed turn-taking strategies in episodes featuring high-profile Indonesian public figures, such as Gita Wirjawan, whose communication style combines professional authority, personal reflection, and intercultural experience. This combination may result in turn-taking patterns that differ considerably from those found in classroom interactions or scripted interviews. Therefore, this study is worth conducting. This study aims to explore how turn-taking strategies are represented in the Debonair Podcast featuring Gita Wirjawan, with a focus on taking the turn strategies by describing each strategy that underlies the conversation.

METHOD

This research used the descriptive qualitative method with the conversation analysis approach. The process typically involves developing categories, either inductively or deductively, and applying them to data. (Mayring, 2015). The steps are: streaming the Debonair Podcast featuring Gita Wirjawan, taking notes from the conversation, classifying the data, translating the data into English, and interpreting the data based on the theory of turn-taking strategy. Stenstromm's framework in the turn-taking strategies is used as the main analytical framework in this study. It covers three strategies: taking the turn, holding the turn, and yielding the turn. This research focused exclusively on taking the turn strategies. Focusing on this strategy allows the researcher to provide a deeper and more detailed analysis of how the host and guest construct, shift, and manage topics throughout the conversation.

The data of this study is taken from one of the YouTube podcasts named Debonair Podcast, an episode featuring Gita Wirjawan that talks about his life and career journey. The podcast was uploaded on August 14, 2025. It's fifty-nine minutes long with more than two thousand three hundred viewers. This episode was chosen due to its length of duration that engaged natural conversation with a rich variation of turn-taking strategies, which is ideal for analysis. The semi-formal interview form allows several turn-taking strategies to appear during the session naturally. The complexity of the topic and the high quality of the audio make the transcribing and analysis process easier.

To maintain the trustworthiness of this qualitative study, several strategies were applied. Credibility was ensured by repeatedly watching and listening to the podcast, and carefully checking

the transcription against the original audio–video. Transferability was maintained by providing clear descriptions of the podcast context, participants, and setting so that readers can judge the applicability of the findings to other contexts. Dependability was supported by documenting every step of the research process and using a code–recode strategy to ensure consistency in data analysis. Finally, confirmability was achieved by basing all interpretations on the actual data excerpts, keeping reflexive notes to reduce personal bias.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After streaming and taking notes of the conversation, the researcher classified the data and interpreted them based on the theory of the turn-taking strategy. The result can be shown in the table below:

Table 1: Turn-taking activities

NO	Strategy	Number of actions based on the action taker		Total Actions
		Deborah	Gita	
1	Starting up	2	-	2
2	Taking Over	1	5	6
3	Interrupting	4	3	7
4	Overlapping	3		3
Total				18

The data collected from the podcast conversation shows a total of 18 taking the turn actions distributed across four strategies: starting up, taking over, interrupting, and overlapping. The distribution reveals different interactional roles played by Deborah and Gita throughout the conversation.

Starting Up

Deborah appears as the main initiator of new turns, as indicated by her two instances of starting up, while Gita did not initiate any new turns. Starting up strategy is beginning the turn after a pause or completion of another’s turn. This suggests that Deborah frequently positioned herself as the topic introducer, guiding the conversation toward new directions. In contrast, Gita’s absence in this category shows that he participated more in responding or reacting to ongoing turns rather than starting fresh sequences. Deborah Henry, as the host of the podcast, has tried different utterances to start the conversation. Below are the examples of the starting up strategy in this podcast.

Deborah: So, like many Asian kids, you learned to play piano as a little child, and you were actually very good. So much so that you got a music scholarship to the US, I believe, right? So you flew to the US, um, on scholarship, and at somewhere along the way, you pivoted to finance, but then also your parents from I've read were not the most keen on your music career.

Gita : Not very keen at all. It was it was my mom.

Deborah: Okay

Gita : I mean it was, she was she was actually responsible for getting me to practice musically hardcore..

The host had started the conversation by saying, "So, like many Asian kids, you learned to play piano as a little child, and you were actually very good. So much so that you got a music scholarship to the US, I believe, right?" She delivered her statement about childhood and ensured it with a tag question. Moreover, she continues her statement by ensuring that what she had heard was that his parents were not most keen on his music career. This utterance indicates that Deborah wanted to ensure her statement about Gita's parents. Then, it was followed by Gita's response, which indicates his agreement with Deborah's statement. In this part, Deborah took this strategy to determine the topic she wanted him to talk about.

2.

Deborah: So, I was I was attending this music concert a few months ago, and these very gifted, musically gifted children were performing, and they were given these, uh, 15-second sort of, uh, music pieces. If you will, and they had to create this five-minute improv. And it was, I mean, for us, we were like, "wow, this is incredible talent on stage." And so you talk a little bit about improv, improvisation, the interplay of creativity with discipline and how and that application in your life, right? So someone that wanted to be a a music star, um, someone who still plays, I mean, You've collaborated with some pretty famous musicians as well. Um, but someone who still plays performs, and I think you you get great fulfillment out of that. How what are the lessons you've learned from that world, that space on creativity and just sort of that freedom, that willingness, freedom of expression, and how's that factored into all the more structured aspects of life?

Gita : You know, my my being creative in the past, musically speaking or artistically speaking, was was truly liberating experience.

In this part, Deborah started the conversation by delivering her experience when she attended the music concert. It indicates that someone can start the conversation by delivering their experience related to the topic. At the end of his turn, Deborah asked Gita what lessons he had learned from that world. It allows Gita to take over the turn and respond to his question.

Taking over

Taking over strategy occurs when the listener responds or provides comments on what the speaker has stated or asked (Silitonga et al., 2022). Taking over involves taking the floor from another participant speaking (Juliano & Afriana, 2024). Once the control is not fixed, anyone can attempt to get it. Taking over can be done by emphasizing the current speaker's statement, completing others' thoughts, answering questions, or jumping in with urgency. In terms of taking over, Gita clearly dominates, with five occurrences compared to Deborah's one. This reflects a more assertive conversational style, where Gita actively attempts to gain and hold the floor, thereby exercising greater control over the flow of interaction. Deborah's low number in this category shows her tendency to adopt a more cooperative role, allowing Gita to take the lead more frequently. The example of the takeover strategy in the podcast is shown in the dialogue below

Deborah: So that makes me think about identity and labels. We're living in a time now where on one hand we want to remove those labels and be whatever we want to be, which is freeing, but on the other hand, as you just said, we're all about the labels. It's how do I define myself? What is that identity? What is what am I putting on my social media, right? What's my stand? And I feel like those two extremes eventually meet somewhere in this sort of ugly you you kind of meet each other eventually because of what you just said. But how how how does one do you detach from identity? Do you the passports we carry, what we stand for, who we are, but also ideas,...

Gita : Well, I I I think you know in the context of call it politics, politics is better without identity. Politics is better without money. Politics is better without post-truth. Right? By not identifying, not overidentifying yourself, I think you actually free up yourself. As you free up yourself, your optionalities rise, right? As your optionalities rise, option values go up, right? And and this is, I think, a bit of a shackling effect. If you overidentify and and you put that in more ideological context, I think there's there's been a distortion to what's been called liberalism. It's it's what I call, you know, in the US they call it woke liberalism because that that tends to overidentify somebody. It's okay to identify yourself, but if you overidentify yourself as somebody, I think that takes you away from the main path of basically redistribution of welfare

In Deborah's last sentence, we can see a kind of unfixed control. She made some pauses that indicate her desire to hold the turn, but she faced difficulty deciding what she should say after. That is evident from the uncompleted word that came out of her mouth when Gita started talking. On the other hand, Gita found this pause as the end of Deborah's turn and took over the floor to speak. However, Gita succeeded in controlling the floor so that he continued his speech as the main speaker.

Interruption

Interrupting, a sub-strategy of taking the turn, is particularly common in a conversation with high-profile figures. This strategy is often employed to demonstrate dominance and fluency in conversation (Ramdhany & Ambalegin, 2025). However, it can have different outcomes; it could succeed, fail, or be cooperative. According to Stenström (1994) interrupting is used to take over the turn directly without waiting for the pause from the previous speaker.

Interrupting is almost similar to taking over, but they're different. It breaks into someone's speech, but doesn't always succeed in taking control of the floor. It focuses on the act of cutting in. Unlike interrupting, taking over shows control; in other words, taking over is a successful interruption. The interrupter not only cuts in but also continues speaking long enough to become the main speaker.

Interruptions were produced by both speakers, with Deborah contributing four and Gita three. This indicates that while Gita often asserts dominance through takeovers, Deborah resists losing the conversational floor by interrupting. Such interruptions can serve both supportive purposes, such as showing agreement, and competitive purposes, such as redirecting the talk. The presence of interruptions from both sides highlights a dynamic and sometimes contested negotiation of turns.

The following is an example of interrupting in this podcast.

Deborah: And I'm curious with with your journey, you've done you've worn you've worn many hats. You've done so many very different things. Um, how did you, what was that...

Gita : That's bad and good.

Deborah: We Yeah, we learned some good good moves, bad, not so good moves, but we learned from them.

In this part, Deborah is trying to ask something about Gita's Journey. She said, "I'm curious with with your journey, you've done you've worn you've worn many hats. You've done so many very different things. Um, how did you, what was that..." It seems she was out of control about what she had to say to complete her question. It is noticeable from the number of fillers and repetition in her

last sentence. Gita took this chance to take over the turn by saying, “That’s bad and good.” He had completed what Deborah was supposed to say in his question, and actually, he answered the question at the same time. But he didn’t have control of the floor to continue speaking, as Deborah continued her speech after that.

Overlapping

When the conversation takes on a high intensity, all speakers may try to take the floor at the same time; this situation is called overlapping. Overlaps were applied generally to pursue the topic, agree or disagree, emphasize, clarify, and open or close the interview. Although it may harm the conversation ethic, overlapping made a better flow to the conversation and made it more interesting to the audience (Amanat, 2015).

With respect to overlapping, the data shows three instances, though these involved contributions from both Deborah and Gita. Specifically, Deborah produced two overlaps, while Gita produced one. Since overlaps occur when both speakers attempt to take the floor simultaneously, the actions have been combined. This shows moments of heightened interactional intensity where both speakers are oriented toward the floor at the same time. Such overlaps suggest active involvement and mutual eagerness to contribute, though Deborah still produced slightly more overlaps than Gita.

Here is an example of overlapping occurred in the podcast.

Deborah: In in your book, you talk about uh I think you you explore the theme of uh think big, start small, right?

Gita : wow..... yeah..

Deborah: to.... To someone..

Gita : ..Basically.. I didn’t....

Deborah: ... degree

Gita :Say that

Deborah: Yeah... yes... Um how what is what does that mean for for young people entering the world? We look around a lot of people look around and they just see challenge after challenge. Systems are so entrenched. How do you do you be part of the system? Do you change the system? Do you just leave the system? Also those who are just entrepreneurial. Southeast Asia is known for having a huge startup uh market as well. Right. What would you say to those individuals?

In this section of the conversation, it is revealed that Gita was being overlapped with Deborah. He tried to clarify her statement about one of his books. He tried to say that he didn't say what Deborah had assumed about the theme of one of his books. He said, "Wow, yeah, basically I didn't say that," when Deborah was delivering his statement and building a question from that. Both Deborah and Gita tried to take the floor at the same time. However, the control belonged to Deborah, so that she could complete her question.

Overall, the data reveal contrasting conversational styles between the two speakers. Deborah emerges as a facilitator who initiates topics and sustains interaction through supportive overlaps and occasional interruptions. Gita, on the other hand, shows a more dominant role by frequently taking over turns and controlling the conversation. The interaction thus reflects a balance between cooperation and competition, with Deborah adopting a collaborative approach while Gita asserts greater authority in managing the conversational floor.

The findings of this study shows that both Deborah and Gita actively employed taking the turn strategies such as starting up, taking over, interrupting, and overlapping. These results support the view proposed by Stenström (1994) and Sacks et al. (1974) that turn-taking is a dynamic process in which speakers constantly negotiate the conversational floor.

In relation to previous studies, several similarities were found. First, the presence of overlapping and interrupting aligns with the findings of Bearis et al. (2023), who noted that overlaps, interruptions, and mentions frequently appear in podcast-style interviews. Similar to their study, this research also found that interruptions may serve both supportive and competitive functions. Second, this study agrees with Setiajid (2020), who found that each participant exhibits unique turn-taking styles. In this podcast, Deborah displayed a more facilitative style, while Gita showed a more dominant style—confirming that turn-taking behavior is shaped by the conversational roles and personalities of the speakers.

However, several differences emerged. Unlike Untari et al. (2024), who discovered that only two types of turn-taking were absent in the Jay Shetty Podcast, this episode shows that four identified strategies occurred, reflecting a more dynamic and less scripted interaction. Another difference is found when compared with studies focused on classroom settings (e.g., Setiajid, 2020), where turn-taking is usually regulated and teacher-dominated. In contrast, this podcast demonstrates a more equal distribution of rights to the floor, although Gita tended to take over more frequently. These differences may stem from the podcast's conversational nature, the host's role as a facilitator, and the guest's high-profile background, which often results in more assertive speech patterns.

Finally, compared with studies on overlapping speech (Ondáš & Juhár, 2018), this research found fewer instances of overlap. This may occur because podcast interviews typically emphasize clarity, making both speakers avoid excessive simultaneous talk to maintain understandability for listeners.

Overall, the results of this study both confirm and extend previous turn-taking research by showing how conversational roles, media format, and participant status influence the distribution of turn-taking strategies in podcast interactions.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of turn-taking strategies in the Debonair Podcast featuring Gita Wirjawan demonstrates how conversation is collaboratively constructed through different techniques of managing the floor. The findings show that both the host, Deborah Henry, and the guest, Gita Wirjawan, actively applied the four sub-strategies of taking the turn—starting up, taking over, interrupting, and overlapping—to maintain the flow of dialogue. Deborah, as the host, frequently used the starting up strategy by sharing experiences and asking guiding questions, which successfully invited Gita to respond. Gita often applied the taking-over strategy, especially when pauses or hesitations occurred, showing his initiative to lead the discussion at certain points. The interrupting strategy was also evident, though it did not always result in full control of the floor, highlighting the competitive but cooperative nature of their interaction. Meanwhile, overlapping occurred when both participants spoke simultaneously, usually to clarify, emphasize, or continue the topic, which added spontaneity and liveliness to the conversation.

Overall, the turn-taking system in this podcast was effectively managed, resulting in a dynamic and engaging dialogue. Both speakers demonstrated respect for each other's speaking rights, while also showing flexibility in navigating overlaps and interruptions. This reflects the essence of turn-taking as a cooperative process that balances control and responsiveness, ensuring that the conversation remains smooth, interactive, and meaningful for the audience.

However, this study still has some limitations. The analysis focused only on the taking the turn strategy, while the other two strategies—holding the turn and yielding the turn—were not discussed in detail due to time constraints. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore all three turn-taking strategies comprehensively to provide a deeper understanding of how turn-taking operates in podcast conversations. By broadening the scope, subsequent studies may uncover richer variations of communication patterns and reveal more nuanced dynamics between the host and the guest.

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