

# REPAIR UTTERANCES USED BY BART AND HOMER IN THE SIMPSON

**Veronika Listi Ferdini Damopolii**

*English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts*

*Universitas Negeri Manado*

*Tondano, Indonesia*

*Email: [veronikadamopolii@unima.ac.id](mailto:veronikadamopolii@unima.ac.id)*

**Abstract** : The research explores Repair Utterances Used suggested by McManis, et al (1988). The goals of the of the analysis are to know the repairs used by the speaker and to find out speaker meaning or intention meaning by using those repairs. The research uses a qualitative descriptive method to describe the data. The data analyzed by using pragmatic approach to ease the writer identify the speaker meaning. The speaker uses repairs: Uh, Umm, Ehm, Uh-uh, and Uh. The speakers use those repair to show sometimes there are speech errors or unclear utterances made by the speaker and after that the speaker immediately realizes it and will correct his mistake, but it is also possible if the listener asks for correction or clarification by asking the speaker. However, the use of repair in conversation has a purpose and the reasons why they do repairs to their interlocutor in conversation, such as because to emphasize speaker previous explanation, to clarify something because the speaker doesn't understand what is talking about, to say something wrong and repair it, to ask clarification of unclear statement, and to clarify less specific explanation.

**Keywords** : *Repair Utterance, Bart and Homer, The Simpson*

## INTRODUCTION

As one way of communications, conversation is used by people to interact in their social life. Every day, the writer finds conversations in films, talk shows, reality shows, books, and novels. In these conversations, the writer finds speech indicating doubt, error in mentioning of words, a state in which one speaker and another speak simultaneously, and a state in which the speaker uses the form of casual pronunciation in the conversation. Conversations take place spontaneously in place and hence there are many utterances that indicate hesitations and other things that cause the conversation to stop (McManis, et al., 1987: 221). McManis, et al. says that expressions that show doubt and what causes the conversation to stop is an example of the characteristics of a conversation. In this research, the author only discusses one characteristic of the

conversation is hesitation noise. McManis, et al. says that the features of conversation including *repair* that are not a form of error but rather a term to describe the characteristics contained in the structure of conversation. He says: "*Sometimes when a speech error or something that is problematical or unclear is said, the speaker will notice the problem and make a correction... at other times another participant in the conversation may ask for a correction or clarification, for example by asking a question...*"

From the above statement, it can be understood that speech is a proof of linguistic code, then the verbal understanding includes how to decipher the contents of the code. The meaning of the linguistic code is used to give an interpretation of the meaning of speech utterance. The meaning of speech has a very broad interpretation. According to

McManis, et al (1987: 197), meaning in speech involves a broader interpretation of semantic interpretation. Therefore, the characteristic of repair in conversations used by speakers has meaning. Therefore, writer is interested to analyze repair and interpretation repair used speakers. The data is a movie because the film provides a good view of audio and visuals so as to facilitate the author to see the circumstances around. This is in line with the opinion of Verhaar (1970: 14) that the level of expression and the level of the situation and both become the determinant of the level of meaning. Lubis (1991: 18) in Verhaar states about the types of language theories are based on:

1. Expression
2. The meaning of speech
3. Situation

The use of repair is very influential on the attainment of meaning intended by speakers. To understand the characteristics of the conversation and the meanings contained therein, it can be analyzed by looking at the situation and context, as a guide that supports interpretations.

Context is an important factor used to interpret the meaning intended by speakers. Therefore, the author uses pragmatic analysis where through pragmatic, the meaning of speakers interpreted by seeing also context. Repair as one of the characteristics of a conversation is part of the structure of the conversation. One of the features of conversation is repair discussed by McManis, et al. in the Language File (1987: 221). In addition, other linguists also gave an explanation of repair, such as Richards (1982) in his book *On Conversation*, Yule (1996: 71) who discussed the structure of conversation and preference structure, and Lerner (2004) in his book *Conversation analysis*.

Based on the explanation above, the author is interested to discuss the r used by the speakers repair and the speaker meaning conveyed. Therefore, the entitle of the research is "*Repair Used Homer and Bart in the film The Simpsons.*"

The usefulness of this research is to increase the experience, insight and knowledge of the author on the part of the structure of the conversation that is repair and its speaker meaning. In addition, the writer can apply the theories that have been obtained during the lecture about the structure of conversation that shows the ways or forms of communication that are often found in interaction with others.

The main theory used by the author in this study is *repair* (one the characteristics of conversation) proposed by McManis. et al (1987) in the Language Files. One feature of this conversation is *repair*. The use of *repair* shows certain ways that speakers speak in conversation. How to interpret the *repair* in the conversation can be understood by looking at the situation and context. Pragmatics discusses the meaning contained in speech by looking at situations and contexts. Pragmatics and context are very important to interpret the speaker meaning. Pragmatics will be used as a tool for analyzing the speaker's intent in his engagement in the conversation.

Pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to the said situations. In this case, pragmatics serve as a guide for researching what the speakers speak, examining the meaning of the context, and studying the words that are few but wide or numerous (Yule, 1998: 3). Yule (1988: 71) also says that knowledge of structures in the conversation is necessary because the structure of the conversation is an important aspect of pragmatics. In addition the author also uses other linguistic theories that support the writing of journals, the theory proposed by

Coulthard (1977), Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman (1978), Richard (1982), Levinson, et al. (1983), Richard and Schmidt (1983), Wardhaugh (1986), Tarigan (1990), Searle (1992), Lubis (1994), Mey (1998), Cutting (2002), and Lerner (2004).

### **Classification of Actions**

In his book, *On conversation*, Richard (1982: 5) writes the classification of speech acts according to Searle (1976). The classification of speech acts are classified according to what the speaker means.

#### **Representatives**

This speech acts have the function of telling people about things, such as asserting (claiming), saying (stating), and reporting (reporting).

#### **Commissives**

This speech acts to say that speakers will do something, like promises and threats.

#### **Directives**

This speech acts to make the speakers do something, such as suggestions, requests, and commands.

#### **Expressive**

This speech acts to function to express feelings and attitudes about the state of the relationship, such as apologies (apologies), regrets (regrets), and thanks (thanks).

#### **Declarations (Declarative)**

This speech acts to provide a change in a relationship state, for example when we resign, by saying "I resign." When firing someone, by saying "You're fired," or when marrying someone by saying "I do."

#### **Prediction**

As a basis for viewing the function of conversational features used by speakers and speakers, presupposition can be used.

Lubis (1991: 63) suggests that according to Stalnaker the Presupposition is what is taken by the speakers to be the common of the participants in the conversation. The assumption is something the speaker makes as the basis of the conversation. According to Lubis himself, pragmatic responsiveness is determined by context (based on situation, speaker, location, etc.).

Yule (1996) suggests that A presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. He also added Speakers, not sentences, have presupposition. From the explanation, it can be understood that presupposition is the thing that the preacher assumes before to say an utterance.

Tarigan (1986: 40), provides a definition of presupposition or presupposition according to Finocchiaro (1982: 9): "... *there are still other factors contributing to the smoothness of conversations or acts of speech, among other things, " real-world experiences" used by people in conversations involving them-or at least what they learn-if full understanding of their meaning is accomplished," which can be termed with presupposition or ('forecasts, conjectures) which are a major basis for a study of how interactions are between semantics."*

#### **Repair**

Every individual involved in the conversation will give different utterances or reactions because of the different factors that lie behind them likewise the characteristics of the conversations that speakers use in a conversation. McManis, et al (1987: 221) suggests ten conversational features, but the author just discuss one of them, that is *repair*.

#### **Repair**

The definition of *repair* can be understood from the statement below:

*“Sometimes when a speech error or something that is problematical or unclear is said, the speaker will notice the problem and make a correction... at other times another participant in the conversation may ask for a correction or clarification, for example by asking a question...”* (1987:221).

So it is understandable that sometimes there are speech errors or unclear utterances made by the speaker and after that the speaker immediately realizes it and will correct his mistake, but it is also possible if the listener asks for correction or clarification by asking the speaker. Example:

(1) *So are we all set then?... I mean for Tuesday.*

(2) *“John who?”* atau *“It was what.”*

## RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology used in this research is descriptive method. Nazir in Whitney (2005: 54) says that the descriptive method is fact-finding with the right interpretation. Nazir himself added that the purpose of descriptive research method is to create a description, picture or painting systematically, factually and accurately about the facts, traits and relationships between phenomena investigated.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The author will analyze all data that represent the characteristics of conversations categorized in Repair. This is because in the three episodes of The Simpsons, the data are found which are categorized into *Repair*.

### Data 1

*Lisa : Hey, everybody. Here comes my brother, Bart the bully-killer.*

*All students : Yeah.*

*Lisa : You’re our hero, Bart!*

*Bart : Look, Lisa, I would just as soon not make a big deal out of this. **You know that I’m not sayin(g) it. I mean I’ m not a hero.** I’m just saying that—I fear for my safety.*

(Bart The General)

The physical context of the conversation includes the place where the conversation takes place, namely in Lisa's class. The participants of the conversation were Bart and Lisa. The participant behavior shown in this conversation is shown by Bart who comes to Lisa and her classmates and wants to convey his incompetence against Nelson, the most feared bad boy in their school. The epistemic context that Bart points to is that he doesn't want to get involved in a bigger problem. The social context of this conversation shows the relationship between brother, sister, and friends.

*You know that I'm not sayin(g) it. I mean I'm not a hero* what Bart said shows that Bart told Lisa and his friends that he never said anything and then Bart corrected or clarified his speech by explaining something that is that he is not a hero.

*You know that I'm not sayin(g) it. I mean I'm not a hero* what Bart said is a representative speech act that serves to state, in this case, stating that he is not someone that Lisa and her friends consider, namely a hero.

Presupposition of utterance *You know that I'm not sayin(g) it. I mean I'm not a hero* indicates that Bart said something that was unclear so that Bart immediately corrected or added an explanation after saying *You know that I'm not sayin(g) it* so

that the addressee understands the meaning of his utterance.

*You know that I'm not sayin(g) it. I mean I'm not a hero* what Bart said is a characteristic of a conversation that is categorized as Repair, where at first Bart gave an explanation that Lisa and her friends might not know, so Bart added an explanation after delivering the explanation earlier.

The repair is contained in the utterance *You know that I'm not sayin(g) it. I mean I'm not a hero* means that Bart wants to emphasize Bart's previous explanation so that the speaker can understand it.

## Data 2

*Homer : What did you do this time, you little hoodlum? Oops—get outta the way!*

*Bart : I didn't do it.*

*Homer : What?*

*Bart : Nobody saw me defacing school property. There's no way they can prove anything.*

*Marge : No, Bart. This note isn't about you.*

*Bart : It isn't? There must be some mistakes—. Hey, you right. This note's about Lisa.*

(Moaning Lisa)

The physical context of the conversation includes the place where the conversation takes place, namely in the Simpson family's home. The participants of the conversation were Homer, Marge, and Bart. The participant's behavior shown in this conversation is shown by Homer, who is angry that Marge told him that his son had received a warning letter. Bart felt that his recent mischief had never been noticed by the principal. Therefore, Bart denied it by saying not to do that. Homer asked what that meant. The social

context of this conversation shows the relationship between father and son.

The repair *What?* What Homer says shows that Homer doesn't know what Bart means by saying *I didn't do it*. Bart also did not provide an explanation of what he said so that Homer told Bart the meaning of what Bart did not do.

*What?* What Homer says is a directive speech act that functions to make the addressee do something. In this case Homer asks for an explanation of Bart's previous utterance.

Presupposition of the meaning of the utterance *What?* indicates that Homer felt Bart's remarks about not doing something were less clear. Homer asked for this explanation from Bart and from Bart's next answer, it was only then that Bart's words were known.

The word *What?* What Bart said was a characteristic of a conversation that was categorized as Repair, where Homer felt Bart was not clear in revealing something so Homer asked Bart to explain what he said.

The repair contained in the utterance *What?* means that Homer doesn't understand what Bart is talking about.

## Data 3

*Bart : So give her back those cupcakes before I knock your block off.*

*Lisa : Don't Bart! He's friend of Nelson Mug!*

*Bart : Nelson Muntz.*

*Lisa : Yes, Nelson Muntz.*

(Bart The General)

The physical context of the conversation includes the place where the conversation takes place, namely in Lisa and Bart's schoolyard. The participant of the conversation was a bad boy who took Lisa, Bart, and Lisa's cake. The behavior of participants in this conversation is

shown by Bart who is angry at the bad boy's behavior towards his brother. The social context of this conversation shows the relationship between siblings where they are at that time against their naughty friends.

When Bart is about to fight the bad boy, Lisa tries to tell him that the boy is a friend of the feared gang leader at their school, *Nelson Muntz*. Lisa tries to tell her that she is a friend of *Nelson Muntz* but Lisa mispronounces the boy's last name. Bart then corrected Lisa's mistake and Lisa agreed with Bart's correction. The improvements made by Bart in changing the name of *Nelson Mug* to *Nelson Muntz*, are representative speech acts that function to confirm his statement. The presupposition of the meaning of the utterance indicated that Bart realized that Lisa had mispronounced the name of the child at their school. So Bart corrected the child's name.

The repair of the name from *Nelson Mug* to *Nelson Muntz* by Bart is a characteristic of a conversation that is categorized as Repair, where Bart realizes his partner's mistake in saying something and then corrects his partner's speech error himself. The repair done by Bart in correcting the person's name means that his partner said something wrong, in this case the person's name.

#### **Data 4**

*Homer : So, how was it?*

*Bart : Os-os.*

*Homer : **What is that?***

*Bart : That's backwards for so-so.*

(Bart The Genius)

The physical context of the conversation includes the place where the conversation takes place, namely in the Simpson family's home. The participants of the conversation are Homer and Bart. The behavior of participants in this

conversation is shown by Homer asking about Bart's first day at his new school. Bart answered with strange and unfamiliar words. The social context of this conversation shows the relationship between father and son.

Homer said *What is that?* because he did not understand the answer that Bart put forward, therefore Homer asked Bart again to get an explanation. After that, Bart explained the meaning of os-os.

Saying *What is that?* is what Homer used as a directive speech act that functions to ask the addressee to explain the meaning of the previous utterance.

Presumption of meaning *What is that?* indicates that Homer as a speaker realizes that his interlocutor does not provide an explanation of the word os-os, therefore Homer asks for that explanation.

Therefore the utterance *What is that?* what Bart put forward is called the characteristic of conversation which is categorized as Repair. Repair is used by the speaker because the speaker does not understand the meaning of the interlocutor's speech so he asks for an explanation with the aim of understanding the intent of the interlocutor.

The meaning of the utterance *What is that?* indicates that Homer does not understand what the other person is saying and asks for further clarification or explanation.

#### **Data 5**

*Homer : So what's the problem, son?*

*Bart : I had a run-in with a bully.*

*Marge : A bully?*

*Homer : Come on, Marge. I don't bug when you're helping Lisa.*

*Marge : Well, Bart, I hope you're going straight to the principal about this.*

**Bart** : *See my face—I mean I could do that.*

(Bart The General)

The physical context of the conversation includes the place where the conversation takes place, namely in the Simpson family's home. The conversation participants were Homer, Marge and Bart. The behavior of the participants in this conversation is shown by Homer asking Bart about his problem. A depressed looking Bart explains his problem with the bad boy at school, Marge proposes to tell the kid who is bothering Bart to the principal. The social context of this conversation shows the relationship between father, mother and son.

Bart's utterance is *See my face—I mean I could do that*. This shows that Bart gave an explanation for the utterance of *See my face*. Judging from the context, Bart looked depressed at the time. So he said *See my face* and then gave an additional explanation by saying *I mean I could do that* as the meaning of the previous explanation.

The utterance *See my face—I mean I could do that* used by Bart is a representative speech act that functions to say that he will do what his mother suggests. This is because Bart's position has been squeezed and he feels depressed.

The presupposition of the meaning of *See my face—I mean I could do that* indicates that Bart is aware of the meaning of his utterance, that is, *See my face* is not clear and he provides additional explanations so that listeners understand what he means.

Therefore, the utterance *See my face—I mean I could do that* put forward by Bart is called a conversation characteristic which is categorized as Repair. This repair is used by Bart because he realizes his

speech may not be clear to his listeners so he gives a more specific explanation.

The meaning of the utterance *See my face—I mean I could do that* shows that Bart gave a less specific explanation so he clarified it again.

## CONCLUSION

Repair Utterances are used spontaneously and unplanned speakers in conversations, even teachers and broadcasters who speak eloquently. The sounds have many uses in the conversation but most of these sounds indicate to show sometimes there are speech errors or unclear utterances made by the speaker and after that the speaker immediately realizes it and will correct his mistake, but it is also possible if the listener asks for correction or clarification by asking the speaker. Based on the author research, there are 5 intended speakers meaning when using *repair*.

The speakers, Homer and Bart Simpson, used repair to emphasize speaker previous explanation, to clarify something because the speaker doesn't understand what is talking about, to say something wrong and repair it, to ask clarification of unclear statement, and to clarify less specific explanation.

## REFERENCES

- Chaer, Abdul dan Leonie Agustina. 2004. *Sociolinguistics*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Coulthard, Malcolm. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman Group.
- Cummings, Louise. 2005. *Pragmatics: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press Ltd.
- Cutting, Joan. 2002. *Pragmatics and Discourse*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Fromkin, Victoria and Robert Rodman. 1978. *An Introduction to Language*. England:
- Rinehart and Winston. Leech, Geoffrey  
Leech. 1993. *The Principles of Pragmatics*. Longman Group Limited.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lerner, Gene H. 2004. *Conversation Analysis*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Lubis, A. Hamid Hasan Lubis. 1991. *Analisis Wacana Pragmatik*. Bandung: Penerbit Angkasa.
- McManis, Carolin, Deborah Stollenwerk, and Zhang Zheng-Sheng. 1988. *Language Files*. Ohio: Advocate Publishing Group.
- Mey, Jacob L. 1998. *Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*. United Kingdom: Elsevier.
- Richards, Jack C. 1982. *On Conversation*. Singapore: Seameo Regional Language Centre.
- Richard, Jack C and Richard W. Schmidt. *Language and Communication*. London and New York: Longman.
- Searle, John R *et al.* 1992. *(On) Searle On Conversation*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Tarigan, Henry Guntur. 1986. *Pengajaran Pragmatik*. Bandung: Penerbit Angkasa.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. 1986. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Yule, George. 1996. *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.