
CONVERSATION ANALYSIS OF THE DIALOGUE IN ”LOVE, SIMON” FILM

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the use of pauses and overlaps in the dialogue between characters in the film *Love, Simon* (2018). It uses Hutchby and Wooffitt’s theory of Conversation Analysis as the main framework. The goal is to explore how pauses and overlaps are used in the dialogue of *Love, Simon* (2018) film. The data consist of film dialogues containing pauses and overlaps, which were examined using qualitative method. The findings show that pauses often happen when characters feel emotionally vulnerable or try to be polite. Overlaps usually appear in emotional situations like conflict, interruption, or quick reactions. These features are not just technical parts of speech, they also show relationship dynamics and emotional depth. This research shows that small details in talk can carry deep meaning, especially in how people manage emotions, relationships, and identity through communication.

Keywords: Pauses, Overlaps, Conversation Analysis, *Love, Simon*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berfokus pada penggunaan pauses dan overlaps dalam dialog antara karakter dalam film Love, Simon (2018). Penelitian ini menggunakan teori conversation analysis dari Hutchby dan Wooffitt sebagai kerangka utama. Tujuannya adalah untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana pauses dan overlaps digunakan dalam dialog film Love, Simon (2018). Data penelitian terdiri dari dialog film yang mengandung pauses dan overlaps, yang dianalisis menggunakan metode kualitatif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pauses sering terjadi ketika karakter merasa rentan secara emosional atau berusaha bersikap sopan. overlaps biasanya muncul dalam situasi emosional seperti konflik, interupsi, atau reaksi cepat. Fitur-fitur ini bukan sekadar bagian teknis dari percakapan, tetapi juga menunjukkan dinamika hubungan dan kedalaman emosional. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa detail kecil dalam percakapan dapat memuat makna yang

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dalam, terutama dalam bagaimana orang mengelola emosi, hubungan, dan identitas melalui komunikasi.

Keywords: *Pauses, Overlaps, Conversation Analysis, Love, Simon*

A. INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans rely on communication to interact and build relationships with one another. Communication is not merely an exchange of words, but a complex process shaped by signals, symbols, and context (Putnam & Jones, 1982). Language, as the primary tool in communication, allows individuals to express thoughts, emotions, and identities. Language not only serves as a medium of understanding but also reflects nationality, educational background, and personal expression (Hornby, 2000 as cited in Jannah & Trilestari, 2020).

In the process of communication, challenges that disrupt the smoothness of interaction often arise. One important issue is pauses and overlaps in conversation (Watt et al., 2010). Although they may seem trivial, these features have significant implications. Heldner and Edlund (2010) explain that pauses and overlaps are natural phenomena in spoken interaction. A pause can indicate doubt, reflection, or emotional tension, while overlap can signify urgency, conflict, or misunderstanding. These elements are important to analyze because they reveal the complexities of human communication and the potential for miscommunication.

Conversation Analysis offers a methodological approach to examining this phenomenon. According to Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008), Conversation Analysis is a systematic study of interaction in conversation, focusing on how meaning is constructed in everyday communication. Fuertes-Olivera (2017) adds that Conversation Analysis has the uniqueness of using recordings of interactions as data, allowing researchers to observe and interpret patterns of conversation in depth. Through Conversation Analysis, researchers can uncover how pauses and overlaps function in dialogue, especially in contexts involving emotional complexity and interpersonal tensions.

This research applies conversation analysis to the film *Love, Simon* (2018), directed by Greg Berlanti and adapted from the novel *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli. The film follows the story of Simon Spier, a closeted gay teenager navigating relationships, secrets, and identity. The researcher chose this film as a data source because it conveys a strong message about humanity, self-acceptance, and empathy. These themes are reflected in the way characters communicate, particularly through pauses and overlaps.

In *Love, Simon*, pauses often occur in moments of vulnerability, especially when Simon interacts with his friends, family, or the anonymous person he chats with online. These pauses highlight his inner conflict and fear of openness. Meanwhile, overlap tends to emerge in scenes filled with emotional intensity or disagreements, depicting the tension between characters. By analyzing these features, this research aims to explore how are pauses and overlaps used in the dialogue of *Love, Simon* (2018) film.

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B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Film

Film is a creative medium that combines acting, directing, sound, and visuals to convey emotions, narratives, and meanings. Films can influence the cultural, political, and social perspectives of their viewers, and also serve as entertainment and literary expression. Klarer (2004) refers to film as a form of contemporary literature that replaces traditional writing with visual narratives. Because it contains elements of spoken and written language, film is considered a work of literature and comes in various genres such as drama, comedy, horror, and science fiction.

2. Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis is the study of verbal interaction that focuses on how meaning is constructed in everyday communication (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). Conversation Analysis uses recorded data to examine conversation patterns (Fuertes-Olivera, 2017), including features such as pauses and overlaps that shape interpersonal dynamics.

a. Pause

A pause is a moment of silence that reflects doubt, reflection, or emotional tension (Heldner & Edlund, 2010). A pause can occur due to anxiety or uncertainty, and often indicates a thinking process (Yachya, 2019).

Example:

Deron : “I’ve been thinking about going on a trip next month...”

Wawan: “Oh, where to?”

Deron : “I’m not sure yet... (pauses, speaker thinking) maybe somewhere warm, like the beach... maybe Bali.” (Greg Berlanti, 2018)

This example shows that a pause can occur when a speaker needs time to think before continuing. In this case, Deron pauses while deciding where to go, which reflects uncertainty and a moment of reflection. Pauses like this are not simply silent gaps; they can signal hesitation, emotional tension, or a careful attempt to respond. In spoken interaction, pauses contribute to the emotional tone and help reveal the speaker’s internal state, especially during moments of decision-making or sensitive topics.

b. Overlap

Overlap occurs when two speakers speak at the same time, often indicating urgency or emotional involvement (Heldner & Edlund, 2010; Schegloff, 2000). In transcripts, overlap is marked by square brackets and reflects active participation or disagreement.

Example:

Deron : “I want a [] cake.”

Wawan: [Let’s have an ice cream!] (Greg Berlanti, 2018)

This example shows that overlap occurs when one speaker begins speaking before the other has finished. It may indicate excitement, emotional involvement,

or a desire to shift the topic. In this case, Wawan interrupts Deron with a new suggestion, which reflects eagerness. Overlap is not simply a disruption; it can serve important communicative functions such as expressing emotion, managing turn-taking, or showing active engagement. Studying overlap helps reveal how speakers interact and negotiate meaning during spoken communication.

C. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative design. According to Flick and Steinke (2004), the aim of qualitative research is to describe the internal perspectives of participants as they explain their life environments. Through this approach, the research seeks to reveal processes, patterns of meaning, and structural features, thereby expanding understanding of social reality. These characteristics are often unnoticed by outsiders or by individuals immersed in their own daily routines. With detailed and thick descriptions, qualitative research not only portrays reality but also avoids superficial exoticism. Instead, it treats odd, uncommon, and unexpected elements as sources of revelation functioning as a mirror that allows the known to be seen in the unknown, and vice versa. Thus, opening space for self-recognition. Creswell (2016) emphasizes that contemporary qualitative studies must consider the interpretative nature of research questions and situate findings within the political, social, and cultural contexts of participants, researchers, and readers. Based on these considerations, the researcher chose a qualitative approach.

The data source for this study is the film *Love, Simon* (2018), which premiered at the Mardi Gras Film Festival on February 27, 2018, and was released in the United States by 20th Century Fox on March 16, 2018. The data consists of film dialogues, particularly those containing pauses and overlaps in conversation. In line with Gay and Airasian (2000) and Bogdan and Biklen (1971), the researcher serves as the main instrument and must validate the ability to conduct research effectively. Data collection involves a careful viewing of the film to understand its overall content, followed by focused attention on conversational features. These features are then compiled and analyzed to examine their role in shaping character communication.

Data analysis follows the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing verification. Data reduction involves selecting, classifying, and organizing examples of pauses and overlaps based on their communicative function. Data display refers to the systematic arrangement of core data, film dialogues structured according to relevant theories to clarify how these features influence character interaction. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the selected dialogues and verified through re-examination to ensure accuracy and consistency.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Conversation analysis is a way of studying how people talk to each other in everyday situations. As Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) explain, it is about closely examining how talk happens in real-life interactions, what they call talk-in-

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interaction. By looking at the details of these exchanges, conversation analysis helps people understand how to create and share meaning as they speak. Features like pauses and overlaps play an important role in shaping how characters express themselves and respond to one another.

In this research, the analysis focuses on how pauses and overlaps appear in emotionally complex conversations. Pauses often reflect hesitation, emotional tension, or the need to speak carefully, while overlaps tend to show spontaneous reactions, interruptions, or conflict. These features help revealing how characters manage sensitive topics, express feelings, and respond to each other in real time. Overall, both pauses and overlaps contribute to the emotional depth and realism of the dialogue.

1. Pause

Pauses indicate uncertainty or a moment of reflection, but they can also create discomfort or lead to misunderstandings (Heldner and Edlund, 2010). Pauses occur when a speaker stops speaking for a brief period of time. They are also described as silent moments during a conversation, where the speaker temporarily halts their speech (Kuswandi and Apsari, 2019). In this research, pauses are marked using the symbol "...", which represents a momentary break in speech and serves as a visual cue for hesitation, emotional tension, or cognitive processing. After understanding the role of pauses in emotionally charged conversations, the following data shows how pauses appear in selected scenes and what they reveal about the flow and tone of interaction. These pauses often reflect hesitation, emotional tension, or the speaker's effort to choose words carefully. By examining these moments, it becomes evident how pauses contribute to the natural rhythm and emotional weight of the dialogue.

Data 9

Principal : “All right, Simon, I know that I’m hard on you. I really do.
But it’s only ‘cause I really see myself in you.”
Simon : “Uh... you know, I don’t know if I’d say that.”
(Greg Berlanti, 2018)

In this scene, Simon approaches the principal to get back his phone that had been previously confiscated. The principal immediately returns it without hesitation, but he also provides an explanation, stating that he sees himself in Simon as his reason for his actions. Simon replies, 'uh... you know, I don’t know if I’d say that, starting with pause “uh...”. The pause “uh...” shows Simon’s hesitation. He feels awkward about the principal’s comment and uses the pause to buy time and respond politely without fully agreeing. It is a small pause, but it helps show Simon’s discomfort and his effort to stay respectful. This brief pause shows that Simon is trying to keep the feelings of others in mind while still expressing his disagreement. He does not reject outright but uses the pause to give time to think

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and maintain a good atmosphere (Kaushal & Mishra, 2017). This indicates that a small pause can have a significant meaning in conversation. In this data, the pause creates an awkward impression, discomfort, and reinforces the impact of Simon's disagreement.

Data 36

- Simon : “Did you know?”
Emily : “I knew you had a secret... (6 seconds) I mean, when you were little you were so carefree. But, these last few years, more and more- it's almost like I could feel you holding your breath. (... 8 seconds) I wanted to ask you about it, but I... didn't wanna pry. (...4 seconds) Maybe I made a mistake. “
Simon : “No. No, mom you... (3 seconds) you didn't make a mistake.”
Emily : “Being gay is your thing. There are parts of it you have to go through alone. I hate that. As soon as you came out, you said, “Mom, I'm still me” (... 4 seconds) I need you to hear this. You are still you, Simon. And you are still the same son who I love to tease and who your father depends on for just about everything. And you're the same brother who always compliments his sister on her food even when it sucks. (...4 seconds) But you get to exhale now, Simon. You get to be more you than you have been... (3 seconds) in a very long time. You deserve everything you want.” (Greg Berlanti, 2018)

In this data, Simon asks his mother if she has known about his sexual orientation all this time. His mother replies honestly that she had some suspicions but did not want to interfere, then said that it might be a mistake. Simon immediately reassures her. In this conversation, there are several pauses. These pauses are included in the data because they show moments of emotion and doubt. The pauses give space for Simon and his mother to think and express their feelings carefully. Most of the pauses in this scene show emotional hesitation. The characters are trying to say something important, but they need time to think and make sure they say it in a gentle and honest way. These pauses reveal that the conversation is filled with emotion. Simon and his mother are not just exchanging words, but also caring for and understanding each other. The pauses give time to breathe emotionally, showing that they are in a very personal and meaningful moment (Antonucci, 2020; Groshek, 2024). It also provides an opportunity to think so as not to say anything that could offend each other. This makes the dialogue feel more genuine and touching, as the pauses help to showcase the depth of their relationship and their sincerity.

Data 37

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Jack : Hey, Si.
Simon : yeah?
Jack : (... 14 seconds) How long have you known?
Simon : (... 3 seconds) Like, I really started to get it... when I was around... (3 seconds) thirteen?
Jack : Four years? four years of... eating dinner together. Four years of going to movies together. Four years of walking Bieber together. (... 3 seconds) I'm sorry. I shouldn't have missed it.
Simon : No. Hey, no, dad.
Jack : all those stupid jokes.
Simon : (...) Well, I know you didn't mean them.
Jack : It doesn't matter. I shouldn't have missed it. (... 4 seconds) But... in case the message got lost somewhere I just... I just want you to know that I love you. (...) and I'm really proud of you. I wouldn't change anything about you. (Greg Berlanti, 2018)

In this moment, a few days after Simon revealed his sexual orientation, he and his father have not talked much due to the awkward atmosphere. At this moment, the father tries to start a conversation with more care and honesty. After Simon responds, there is a 14 second pause before his father asks a question. This long pause is included as data because it shows the emotional tension and doubt in their relationship. The pause gives Simon's father space to gather his courage and shows that he is trying to understand and connect. Throughout the conversation, other pauses also occur as they discuss guilt, regret, and love. All these pauses reinforce the emotional meaning in the dialogue, marking the process of healing and acceptance between father and son. The pauses in this scene are not only a sign of silence but also a reflection of deep thinking and feelings (Malhotra, 2025; Mills et al., 2020). Simon's father uses the pauses to arrange his words and show that he truly cares. Simon responds in a gentle and understanding way. These pauses help illustrate that emotional communication does not always come through words but also through the space created between them. This makes the conversation feel more authentic and touching.

2. Overlap

Overlap is where multiple speakers talk simultaneously, which can further complicate interactions, resulting in confusion and misinterpretation (Heldner and Edlund, 2010). In this research, overlaps are marked using square brackets "[]", which indicate utterances that occur concurrently with another speaker's turn. This notation highlights moments of simultaneity and interruption, allowing for clearer identification of overlapping speech within the dialogue. This section examines how overlaps occur in selected scenes and what they reveal about the emotional and conversational dynamics between characters. Overlaps often reflect urgency, emotional tension, or attempts to assert presence within the exchange. They may signal spontaneous reactions, interruptions, or moments of disagreement, offering

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insight into how speakers navigate sensitive topics and respond under pressure. Through this analysis, it becomes possible to observe how overlaps shape the rhythm, intensity, and emotional realism of the dialogue.

Data 23

- Martin : Excuse me. Waffle House patrons [] pardon the interruption.
Abby : [Martin, stop. Martin!]
Martin : I would just like to say that Abby Susso here is an incredible young woman [] and deserves a goddamn superhero.
Abby : [Martin, please. Okey. Okey.] (Greg Berlanti, 2018)

In this scene, Abby is talking about her view of her father that has changed. Martin feels that Abby is a wonderful person and deserves the father figure she has always dreamed of. He wants Abby to say it herself, but Abby refuses because she is embarrassed. Martin then stands up and conveys this to all the visitors at Waffle House. As Martin speaks, Abby and Simon try to stop him, resulting in overlapping speech. This data includes overlap because Martin's speech coincides with interruptions from Abby and Simon. This overlap illustrates the awkward atmosphere and the conflict between Martin's sincere intentions and Abby's embarrassment (Benear et al., 2021; Bouncken et al., 2020). This overlap also shows that communication does not always proceed alternately and orderly (Wallace et al., 2020). Sometimes, emotions force people to speak simultaneously. In this context, the overlap becomes an important marker of relational dynamics and ongoing emotional tension.

Data 29

- Simon : Actually, I did want to talk to you guys about something.
Emily : What is it?
Simon : Uh, well
Jack : Let me guess! you got somebody pregnant. No, you're pregnant.
I knew [] it. I knew it
Simon : [Yeah, yeah, I'm pregnant.] (Greg Berlanti, 2018)

In this data, Simon is about to reveal his sexual orientation to his parents. However, before he can continue, his father interrupts jokingly and guesses that Simon is pregnant. Simon responds to the joke with an awkwardly humorous tone to keep the atmosphere light and prevent it from becoming tense. There is overlap in their speech as Simon and his father talk simultaneously. This data includes overlap because it shows spontaneous interaction and Simon's effort to maintain comfort in a conversation which in reality, very emotional and important (Cuadros et al, 2020; Konakahara, 2015). In this scene, overlapping becomes an important marker of the ongoing relational dynamics and emotional tensions. Simon uses

humor as a strategy to avoid tension, and the overlap that occurs indicates that this moment is filled with a mix of nervousness, affection, and an effort to remain warmly connected amidst the sensitive situation.

Data 34

- Martin : Oh, Simon. Hey, can we talk?
Simon : I don't have anything to say [] to you.
Martin : [No. No. No. Please. Please. I just wanted to say that I was sorry, okay? I didn't know or think that people still did shit like that and I got in a lot of shit for homecoming, and I wanted everyone to focus on something else, you know? I just didn't think it was gonna be a big thing. it-]
Simon : [I don't care if you didn't think that my coming out was gonna be a big thing, Martin! look, you don't get to decide that. I'm supposed to be the one that decides when and where, and how and who knows and how I get to say it. That supposed to be my thing! and you took that away from me. So, look, can you please just get the fuck away from me!] (Greg Berlanti, 2018)

In the moment, Martin tries to talk to Simon and apologizes after spreading secrets about Simon's sexual orientation. However, Simon is already very angry and refuses to talk. When Simon says that he has nothing to say, Martin immediately cuts in and starts explaining, resulting in overlapping speech. As Martin is explaining, there is a part of his speech that triggers Simon's anger, causing Simon to interrupt with emotion. This data includes overlap as it shows a tense interaction, where both characters speak simultaneously and interrupt each other in a conflict situation. This overlap enhances the emotional atmosphere and demonstrates how anger and guilt collide in an intense conversation. When Simon and Martin interrupt each other in this scene, it is not just a verbal exchange that is visible, but also a clash of unfinished emotions. Simon is angry because he has lost control over an important moment in his life, while Martin tries to explain himself with a pressing sense of guilt. Their overlapping speech is not merely a technical disruption, but a reflection of an uncontainable tension (Edward et al., 2025; Lievsay M, 2015). In situations like this, the overlap serves as a marker that communication is taking place under emotional pressure, where the need to be heard surpasses the rules of turn-taking. It shows that conflict in dialogue occurs not only through the content of speech but also through the way that speech collides.

E. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore how pauses and overlaps work in spoken interaction, using scenes from the film *Love, Simon* (2018) as data. The findings show that pauses and overlaps are not just technical parts of conversation, but also reflect emotional and relational dynamics between characters. Pauses often appear

in moments of vulnerability, showing hesitation, emotional tension, or politeness. Overlaps usually happen during emotionally intense situations, such as conflict or urgency, and show a strong need to speak or be heard.

These results suggest that small features in conversation, like pauses and overlaps can carry deep meaning and help understand how people manage emotions and relationships through speech. This research adds to the field of Conversation Analysis by showing how emotional and social meanings are built through everyday talk. Future studies could explore similar patterns in different cultural settings or other types of media to see how emotional expression and communication norms vary.

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