Interactional dominance in legal discussions on YouTube: A conversation analysis of the Vina murder case

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Abstract

This study investigates the strategies employed by participants to assert dominance in a legal discussion featured in the YouTube video *"Janggalnya Kasus Vina Menyasar ke Mana-mana."* Adopting an ethnomethodological approach grounded in Conversation Analysis (CA), the study identifies key dominance strategies, including turn-taking control, interruptions, overlaps, topic shifting, and assertive language use. These strategies serve as critical tools for establishing dominance in high-stakes interactions such as legal debates. The analysis utilized the Jefferson Transcription System to examine how conversational control influences the progression and outcomes of legal discussions. Findings indicate that legal practitioners with institutional authority, expertise, or professional standing assert dominance through assertive language, strategic questioning, and frequent interruptions, while other participants assume less dominant roles. The study contributes to understanding how interactional dominance operates in formal legal settings, where institutional status and expertise often outweigh previously emphasized factors such as gender. These insights have practical implications for legal and communication professionals navigating power dynamics in formal discourse.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the internet has revolutionized the exchange of information. Traditional methods, such as physical mailing, have largely been replaced by instant global communication through social media platforms like Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook (Ismail et al., 2023). Among these platforms, YouTube has emerged as a dominant source for viewing, sharing, and producing video content (Saed et al., 2021; Pires et al., 2019), becoming one of the most influential tools for accessing information worldwide (Li et al., 2020).

In legal contexts, YouTube has become a platform where high-profile cases are debated in public forums, shaping not only public perception but also the legal narratives themselves. One example of this is the recent controversy surrounding the Vina murder case. Although the crime occurred in 2016, the release of the film *Vina: Sebelum 7 Hari* in 2024 reignited interest in the case. The murder of Vina and her boyfriend Rizky, originally thought to be a traffic accident, later revealed itself to be a murder case. New developments, including allegations of police misidentification, have fueled public debates about the investigation (Mulyani et al., 2024; tvOneNews, 2024).

While the murder case serves as the context, this study focuses on how conversational dominance is displayed in the legal discussions, particularly in high-stakes debates like the Catatan Demokrasi episode titled *Janggalnya Kasus Vina Menyasar ke Mana-mana*, which aired on tvOne

in 2024. In this episode, Saka Tatal, a minor at the time of the crime, and his lawyer claim wrongful arrest, leading to heated exchanges between the legal teams. Understanding how participants assert dominance, control the conversation, and potentially influence public perception is crucial for analyzing legal discourse.

Recent studies support the idea that conversational dominance in legal settings is crucial, as it directly influences how arguments are perceived and can sway outcomes. For example, Jacobi and Rozema (2018) analyze interruptions in the U.S. Supreme Court and find that interruptions are not only markers of dominance but can indicate disagreement, positioning, and politicking. Similarly, gender dynamics are recognized as critical tools used to control the flow of information in legal debates (Jacobi & Schweers, 2017; Zimmermann & West, 1996).

Research also shows that dominance in conversations can either help people work together or lead to competition, with competition often making problem-solving harder (Deutsch, 2014, as cited in Oliveira and Beuren, 2024). Competitive speakers tend to use commands, criticism, and interruptions to take control of the conversation, while cooperative speakers focus on understanding by asking gentle questions and giving soft directions (Fei, 2010).

Although there is research on conversational dominance, there is still limited understanding of how it works in legal discussions, where power dynamics are shaped by both expertise and institutional authority. While past studies have investigated dominance in more casual or academic settings, like Yuliana's (2021) work on politeness among Master's students or Fei's (2010) study of interruptions in the TV show *Friends*, there has been less focus on how dominance functions in formal or high-stakes settings like legal settings. Furthermore, insights from research on language and power in courtroom interactions further emphasize the importance of studying dominance in legal contexts. For instance, Ehrlich (2001) examines how legal questioning can reflect institutional power and gendered dynamics, while Eades (2010) explores how courtroom communication disadvantages speakers unfamiliar with legal norms. These perspectives enrich the understanding of how talk shapes authority and credibility in high-stakes legal environments, especially when extended into public and media-based discussions.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the conversational dominance strategies employed by participants in the tvOne's *Catatan Demokrasi* episode regarding the Vina murder case. By applying Conversation Analysis (CA), ethnomethodology, and Jeffersonian transcription, this research seeks to uncover how legal professionals assert control and shape the narrative during these televised discussions. The findings will not only contribute to the understanding of dominance in legal discourse but also offer practical insights into how dominance can influence legal outcomes and public opinion in such settings.

Conversation Analysis

CA emerged as part of ethnomethodology and has become a study of social behaviours involving conversation. Ten Have (1999) and Silverman (1998, as cited in Arminen, 2006) argue that everyday talk is essential for understanding social actions, focusing on the analysis of talk itself. Furthermore, both CA and ethnomethodology believe that the meaning of social phenomena is connected to the structured methods participants use in their interactions. They view language use and social actions as dependent on context with social order created by participants. By analyzing real-life conversations, CA reveals the unique nature of social interactions as they happen (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, as cited in Arminen, 2006). This approach is especially useful in settings like legal discussions, where conversation patterns expose and reinforce power dynamics (Alsahafi, 2024). This detailed study of interactions naturally connects to the idea of social action, a key part of CA.

Social action refers to the idea that every utterance in a conversation is a form of action. When people communicate, they are not merely exchanging information but also performing actions that can affect relationships. For example, saying "*Could you pass the salt?*" is not merely a request but also serves to maintain politeness (Heritage, 1984). Similarly, co-construction of meaning emphasizes that meaning in conversation is not solely created by one speaker but emerges collaboratively between participants. Each speaker contributes to the unfolding discourse, and their responses shape and reshape the meaning of what is being said. This process includes taking turns,

responding to what others say, and making hidden assumptions clear. For example, if someone tells a story, the other person might agree or ask questions, and this shapes how the story is understood and what it means to both people (Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1992). Social action and co-construction work together to show how conversations are dynamic and involve shared meaning-making. Each person's words have social effects and contribute to this collaborative process. These two concepts are essential because in conversation analysis, both social action and co-construction of meaning are key concepts that help to understand how communication functions in social contexts.

Recent studies show how CA can reveal hidden power dynamics. Alsahafi (2024) highlights how questioning, interruptions, and controlling topics are used as tools of authority in institutional settings. Similarly, Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al. (2012) found that in U.S. Supreme Court arguments, people adjust their speaking style to match others, signaling either dominance or deference and reinforcing social hierarchies. These studies highlight how CA reveals the ways language reflects and shapes power in legal and institutional contexts.

Conversational Dominance in Legal Contexts

Conversational dominance occurs when individuals assert control over an interaction, disregarding the interests of others. Stenstrom (1984, as cited in Fei, 2010) explains Paul Grice's cooperative principle, where speakers aim for clarity and understanding. However, dominant speakers often disrupt this harmony by using confrontational language, interruptions, and assertive tactics to take control (Coates, 2004, as cited in Fei, 2010). In legal contexts, dominance strategies are evident because of the competitive nature of its discourse. Participants employ dominant strategies to steer discussions, silence opposition, and frame arguments in their favor. Recent studies highlight the importance of understanding these dynamics. For instance, Alsahafi (2024) highlights how questioning, interruptions, and topic control are employed as tools of authority in institutional settings of news interviews. Similarly, Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al. (2012) examine how power differences between individuals are signaled and reinforced through language coordination in U.S. Supreme Court. These studies show that people with less power often change the way they speak to match those with higher status.

Dominance through Turn-Taking

Dominance in turn-taking emerges when speakers disrupt the established sequence to control the interaction. Sacks et al. (1974, as cited in Ghilzai, 2015) describe how current speakers can either select the next speaker or retain control by continuing their turn.

Dominance through Overlapping Speech

In conversations, participants manage cooperation by taking turns to speak. Cutting (2002, as cited in Shams et al., 2021) states that each speaker typically waits for the other to finish before starting a transition relevance place (TRP). A TRP is a point in the conversation where a change of turn is possible. If a speaker starts talking before the TRP, it is an interruption. If the speaker mistakenly thinks it is a TRP and starts talking during a pause, it is overlapping.

Dominance through Interruption

Tannen (1993, as cited in Pakzadian & Tootkaboni, 2018) states that interruption is a primary cause of conversation failure. The main function of an interruption is to prevent the first speaker from finishing their point and to allow the interrupter to take control (Shams et al., 2021). However, not all interruptions are dominance-related; some can be supportive and cooperative (Shams et al., 2021). For instance, interruptions like saying "*hmm*" or "*I see*" show attentiveness and support (Taboada, 2006, as cited in Alsahafi, 2024). In contrast, in settings like interviews or debates, interruptions are often used to take over the conversation and assert authority. Cerny (2010, as cited in Alsahafi, 2024) explains that these competitive interruptions act as tools for demonstrating dominance in such competitive contexts.

Dominance through Topic Shifting or Controlling

According to Pakzaidan and Tootkaboni (2018), conversations typically follow focused topics introduced by various participants. Shifting the topic can signal dominance or avoidance of a subject. For example, redirecting discussions with phrases like "*by the way*" to steer them towards one's preferred subject. This strategy also involves recognizing and counteracting others' attempts to change the topic. Another instance is found in interviews and formal discussions, where controlling the topic becomes a powerful way to control the conversation. Greatbach (1986, as cited in Alsahafi, 2024) notes that interviewers usually decide what topics to discuss, leaving interviewees with little choice but to respond to their questions. This shift or control over topics is a way to assert dominance and to keep the conversation focused in formal settings such as legal discussions.

Dominance through Strategic Questioning

Questioning aims to control the flow of information in formal conversations. Heritage (2002, as cited in Alsahafi, 2024) explains that questions in settings such as news interviews, questions serve more than just to get answers as they also set the topic and guide how the discussion unfolds. In legal settings, questions can steer the conversation and shape how the respondent reacts. Previous studies have shown that questioning is a dominant strategy used to control conversations. In Pakzadian and Tootkaboni's (2018) study, men used questioning to assert authority, while participants in Yuliana's (2021) study, both male and female used questions to guide or support the conversation. Additionally, according to Pakzadian and Tootkaboni (2018), taking the initiative to ask questions or introduce new topics can indicate dominance in a conversation, allowing the speaker to lead the discussion and ensure their interests are addressed.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research investigates the strategies participants use to dominate the legal discussions in the *YouTube video Janggalnya Kasus Vina Menyasar ke Mana-mana*. A qualitative approach was employed to achieve this objective. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is a method that explores and understands the meanings individuals or groups assign to social or human issues. This approach involves formulating open-ended questions and evolving methodologies, collecting data in the participants' natural environment, analyzing it from specific instances to broader themes, and interpreting the data's significance. Importantly, the structure of the written report remains flexible to accommodate the dynamic nature of qualitative research.

Additionally, ethnomethodology is used to complement the qualitative approach in this study. Introduced by Garfinkel (1967), ethnomethodology examines how individuals create and maintain social order through their interactions. This aligns with the research goal of investigating the specific strategies participants employ to dominate discussions in legal settings. By focusing on the techniques used to assert dominance and control during these interactions, the study demonstrates how participants actively construct social order in online legal debates, rather than following predetermined structures. Ethnomethodology's emphasis on context and the specific methods individuals use in social interactions provides valuable insights into the dynamics of online legal discussions, contributing to a deeper understanding of conversational dominance.

Following current standards in qualitative research, the researchers recognize that their views could influence how they interpret the conversation patterns. To make the study more trustworthy, the researchers stayed aware of this throughout the research. Their interpretations were based on what could clearly be seen in the conversations. Although conversation analysis usually relies on the analyst's close observation, the researchers also took time to consider how their own perspective might affect the analysis.

Data

The data source for this study is a YouTube video titled *[FULL] Janggalnya Kasus Vina Menyasar ke Mana-mana | Catatan Demokrasi tvOne*, which was featured on the *Catatan Demokrasi* program by tvOne. The video, released on May 21, 2024, is 79 minutes long and is owned by tvOneNews.

The discussions, conducted in Indonesian, center around the controversial Vina murder case and includes several high-profile participants. For convenience reason, the writers used initials for the following names: Andromeda Mercury (AM), the moderator of the discussions, Titin Prialianti (TP), the legal counsel for Saka Tatal, Saka Tatal (ST), a former convict in the Vina murder case, Selis (S), Saka's sister, and Putri Maya Rumanti (PMR), the legal counsel for Vina's family.

Data Collection and Analysis

Some steps were taken in order to collect the data in this study. First, the writers accessed the data source (YouTube) with a valid account. Second, the writers downloaded the whole discussion (full video). Next, the writers selected the discussions in which dominance occurs. After that, the selected discussions were transcribed and translated into English. Next, the writers analysed the discussions by applying Jefferson Transcription System. Finally, the writers presented the results of analysis, findings, discussions, and conclusions.

Moreover, to improve trustworthiness, the coding of dominance features was reviewed collaboratively by the researchers. Although no formal inter-rater reliability test was conducted, selected excerpts were discussed to ensure consistency in identifying and interpreting conversational dominance. This collaborative process aimed to reduce subjectivity and reinforce the accuracy of the analysis. The method of data analysis in this research involved a thorough examination of the collected discussions using Conversation Analysis (CA) techniques. Specifically, the Jefferson Transcription System was utilized to reveal various conversational features such as turn-taking, overlapping, interruptions, and other indicators of dominance. The process began with transcribing the selected discussions according to the Jefferson Transcription System. Next, each excerpt was coded for specific conversational features that indicated dominance, such as turn-taking, overlapping, and interruptions. After coding, the data was grouped to identify similar instances or frequencies of dominance strategies. The data were then mapped out by providing an overview of the strategy within the discussions. Once grouped, the researcher interpreted the results, analyzing how the participants employed various strategies to assert dominance and control the conversation. Finally, the analysis was written, including detailed findings, discussions, and a conclusion summarizing the research insights. The following is the Jefferson Transcription System adopted by the writers as cited in Locke (2003).

Table 1. Jefferson Transcription system (Locke, 2003)

No	Symbols	Meaning
1.	[ ]	Square brackets indicate the start and end of overlapping speech, aligned to mark the precise position of overlap.
2.	↑↓	Vertical arrows indicate significant pitch changes.
3.	Underlining	Underlining signifies emphasis, with the extent of underlining within individual words indicating both the location and intensity of the emphasis.
4.	CAPITALS	Words in capitals indicate speech that is noticeably louder than the surrounding speech.
5.	°...°	Degree signs enclose noticeably quieter speech.
6.	(0.4)	Numbers in parentheses measure pauses in seconds (e.g., four-tenths of a second).
7.	(.)	A micropause, which is audible but too brief to measure.
8.	she wa::nted	Colons indicate the elongation of the preceding sound; the more colons, the greater the elongation.
9.	Hhh	Aspiration (out-breaths), proportional to colons.
10.	.hhh	Inspiration (in-breaths), proportional to colons.
11.	Yeh,	A comma marker, indicating the speaker has not finished, marked by fall-rise or weak rising intonation, similar to delivering a list.
12.	Yeh.	Full stops indicate falling, stopping intonation, irrespective of grammar, and not necessarily followed by a pause.
13.	bu-u-	Hyphens indicate a cut-off of the preceding sound.
14.	>he said<	'Greater than' and 'less than' signs enclose speeded-up talk.
15.	solid.=We had	Equals signs denote the immediate latching of successive talk, with no interval, whether one or more speakers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
This study investigates how individuals display dominance when talking in high-stakes legal discussions on YouTube, using the *Catatan Demokrasi* episode about the Vina murder case as the data. As stated in the introduction, the goal is to understand how legal experts take control of the discussions and shape the story during televised debates. The analysis reveals several strategies to dominate the discussions: turn-taking, interruptions, overlaps, questioning, and assertive language. For example, interruptions are often used to stop someone else from finishing their point or to change the topic. This matches Deutsch's (2014) idea that competitive speakers use control and criticism to dominate a conversation. Turn-taking is also clear, especially when speakers with legal power or status talk for a long time or stop others from speaking. This supports Sacks's et al. (1974) idea that the person who is speaking can choose who talks next or keep speaking to stay in control of the conversation. Lastly, some speakers use leading or tricky questions to push their views and make others look less credible. This reflects Pakzadian and Tootkaboni's (2018) point that questioning can be a way to show power in legal settings.

Moreover, the findings of this study both align with and differ from previous research on turn-taking strategies in televised debates. One relevant study is by Sari et al. (2021), entitled "Conversational Analysis: Turn Taking on Indonesia Lawyer Club Talk Show", which analyzed the Sunda Empire episode of the Indonesia Lawyer Club (ILC). Both this study and Sari et al.'s research utilize conversational analysis to examine the dynamics of spoken interaction in televised debates. The ILC study, using Stenström's framework, identified a wide range of turn-taking strategies such as starting up, interrupting, taking over, overlapping, and repairing, with "starting up" emerging as the most frequently used (Sari et al., 2021). In contrast, the current study on the Vina murder case reveals that interruptions dominate most of the interaction. Moreover, while the ILC debate was set within a culturally controversial and politically charged context, this research focuses on demands for justice. These differences show how the situation or setting can affect how people take turns speaking in different kinds of public debates.

In legal discourse, conversational dominance is crucial as it can influence not only the direction of the discussion but also the ultimate outcome of the case. Participants in the legal debate surrounding the Vina murder case utilize various dominance strategies, such as interruptions, turn-taking, and strategic questioning to control the discussions and assert their dominance. These strategies are evident in the interactions between Saka's legal counsel, Vina's legal team, and the moderator, as they navigate the high-stakes discussion.

Interruptions are identified as the most dominant strategy in the discussions. They are a strong conversational tool that help speakers take control and steer the discussion in their favor. The interrupter shows authority and establishes dominance by cutting off someone else. Furthermore, one of the key functions of interruptions is to redirect the conversation. Dominant speakers use interruptions to stop the current speaker and guide the conversation to topics they know well.

Interruption as a Tool for Dominance
Interruptions are a powerful strategy for grabbing control of the conversation and redirecting its flow. In the excerpt below, AM interrupts ST by asking more questions before ST has finished answering (turn 3 – 4). From a CA perspective, this interruption occurs at a Transition Relevance Place (TRP), a point where a speaker transition might be expected.

> *Excerpt 1*
> The transcript below is extracted from 09:48-09:56.
>
> 1. AM : *setibanya di kantor polisi* [*ada*] *keterangan-keterangan ada penjelasan?*
>   (Upon arriving at the police station, was there any information, any explanation?)
>
> <div align="center">(0.4)</div>

2. ST   :   [*langsung dibawa*]
(Immediately taken)
                                                    (0.2)

3. ST   : *gak ada,* [*langsung dibawa*]
(No, I was immediately taken)

4. AM   :   [*saat itu, saka*] *berumur berapa?*=
(How old were you at that time?)

5. ST   : =*waktu itu 15 tahun*
(15 years old)

However, AM continues speaking before ST gives up the floor, which shows a clear intention to take control of the conversation. This type of interruption has two main purposes: it helps AM control what information is shared and shifts the audience's focus away from Saka's weaknesses and towards the flaws in the investigation. Meanwhile, the next excerpt demonstrates a more explicit use of dominance strategies by Titin Prialianti (TP), Saka's legal counsel. Here, TP interrupts PMR's question, asserting discomfort and using direct criticism (turn 7 – 14) to assert control over the discussion.

Excerpt 2
The excerpt below is extracted from 25:32-26-46.

1. ST   : *banyak tekanan dari polisi saya dipukulin tu polisi*
(There were lots of pressure from the police, I was beaten)
                                                          (1.0)

2. PMR   : *oke kamu- kamu kan dipukulinya di kantor polisi toh?*=
(Okay, you- you were beaten at the police station, right?)

3. ST   : =*iya*=
(Yes)

4. PMR   : =*saat kamu dilimpahkan ke kejaksaan apakah kamu dipukuli lagi?*
(When you were handed over to the prosecution, were you beaten again?)

5. ST   : *udah jarang*
(Rarely)

6. PMR   : *jarang nah waktu- ibu titin waktu di persidangan apakah-*
(Rarely. Now at the time- Mrs. Titin, at the trial was there-)

7. TP   : *eh saya- saya tidak suka diinterogasi seperti itu mbak kan enggak tahu ↑ <u>suasana</u> persidangan seperti apa mbak cuma bisa berteori hari ini ↑ saya yang paling tahu ↑ apa yang ada* [*di dalam sidang*]=
(Uh, I- I don't like being interrogated like that. Miss, you don't know what the trial was like. You can only theorize today. I know best what happened in the trial)

8. PMR   :   ↓ [*saya bertanya bu*] *justru saya bertanya kenapa kok*] *baru 8 tahun ↑ <u>I:BU:</u> ↓ baru muncul ke permukaan karena film ini tayang?*=
(I'm asking, ma'am, just asking why does it take 8 years for you to finally speak up? Because the film was released?)

9. TP   :   =[*enggak saya- saya tidak mau*]-
(No, I- I don't want to-)

10. TP   : =↑*karena mbak enggak pernah tahu apa yang sudah saya lakukan*=
(Because you never know what I've done)

11. PMR : =*justru saya bertanya: karena Ibu sebagai kuasa hukumnya jangan ibu menggiring opini 8 tahun ↑ bu ↑ [ini] institusi ↑ bu=*
(I'm asking because you're his legal representative. Don't try to sway opinion, it's been 8 years, ma'am. This is an institution, ma'am)

12. TP   :   [*mbak*]-
    (Miss)

13. TP   : (looking at AM) =*mas sejak awal saya menyatakan kalau saya dihadapkan pada ↑ pengacara yang ↑ TIDAK TAHU apa di dalam sidang untuk apa saya bicara? kayak pepesan kosong dia enggak ngerti apa-apa apa sih yang terjadi di dalam sidang*
(*Mas*, from the beginning, I've said that if I'm faced with a lawyer who doesn't know what happened in the trial, then what's the point of this talking? It's just empty talk. She doesn't understand anything, what really happened in the trial)

            (1.0)

14. TP   : ↑ *saya yg menjelaskan↓ atau ↑SAYA YANG KELUAR*= (puts down her mic)
   (Either I explain or I leave)

15. AM   : =*semua saksi sudah dihadirkan di sidang ibu titin tetap di tempat kami undang ibu titin karena secara etika kami mengundang ibu titin agar ibu titin mendapatkan porsi yang adil porsi yang seimbang di meja catatan demokrasi*
(All witnesses have been presented in the trial. Mrs. Titin, stay seated. We invited you here to ensure you have a fair and balanced chance to speak at the *Catatan Demokrasi*)

In this interaction, TP interrupts PMR before she can finish her question, showing her control over the topic and the conversation. Ethnomethodology suggests that such interruptions help participants create and maintain social order during discussions. TP's interruption breaks the usual turn-taking rules that are important in conversation analysis (CA). By cutting PMR off and pointing out her lack of experience, TP not only takes control of the conversation but also positions herself as the authority.

Moreover, TP's statement in turn 14, "↑ *saya yg menjelaskan↓ atau ↑SAYA YANG KELUAR*= (either I explain or I leave)" further emphasizes her dominance. This ultimatum reflects the CA idea of sequential organization, where speakers control how the conversation flows by asserting their right to continue or stop speaking. By making such an ultimatum, TP eliminates any chance for cooperative dialogue, showing that her approach is competitive.

From an ethnomethodological perspective, this interaction highlights how participants negotiate power and authority in real-time. By disrupting the normal flow of conversation and silencing PMR, TP actively changes the social dynamics. Her rising intonation signals urgency and discomfort, reinforcing her intent to dominate the discussion. In legal settings, this type of talk shows how authority is established and maintained through conversational strategies, further reinforcing the hierarchy present in legal discussions.

Turn-Taking and Maintaining Control
In legal discussions, maintaining control over one's turn is critical to ensuring that an argument is fully developed and communicated. In Conversation Analysis (CA), turn-taking is an essential mechanism through which speakers negotiate who has the floor, and disruptions to this process are often used as a means to assert dominance. In the following excerpt, TP employs a clear dominance strategy by refusing to relinquish her turn, despite attempts by PMR to interject.

Excerpt 3
The excerpt below is extracted from 27:28-27:37.

1. TP   : *seka*[*rang*] ↑ *gini*
         (Now here's the thing)
2. PMR : (trying to speak) [(   )-]
3. TP   : *denger dulu*
         (Listen first)
4. PMR : *mbak-*
         (Miss-)
5. TP   : ↑*denger*
         (Listen)
6. PMR : *bu-* (puts down her mic)
         (Ma'am-)
7. TP   : [↑*saya mau ngomong dulu atau* ↑*SAYA YANG KELU*]*AR*
         (Let me speak first, or I'm leaving)
8. AM   : [*mbak- mbak putri ditahan dulu*]
         (Miss- Miss Putri, hold on)
9. PMR : [*silahkan*]
         (Go ahead)
10. AM   : [*kita habiskan*] *ke ibu iitin kita habiskan bu kami kasih anda durasi bu titin silahkan*
         (We'll wrap it up with you, Mrs. Titin. We'll give you the time. Mrs. Titin, please go ahead)

In this interaction, TP interrupts PMR when she tries to speak, using direct commands like "↑*denger* (Listen)" to take control. These commands are tools that TP uses to assert her authority in the conversation. When TP says, "[↑*saya mau ngomong dulu atau* ↑*SAYA YANG KELU*]*AR* (Let me speak first, or I'm leaving)" in turn 7, she is clearly trying to dominate the turn-taking process. By making this threat, she ensures that she stays in control of the discussion and implies she will walk away if she doesn't get to speak first. This disrupts the usual way conversations flow, which typically allows for orderly exchanges between speakers. Additionally, her raised tone emphasizes her urgency and authority in the situation.

Despite PMR's attempts to interject and challenge TP's position, she is repeatedly cut off, as seen in excerpt below.

Excerpt 4
The excerpt below is extracted from 44:06-44:40.

1. TP   : *kalau saya dipercaya satu kasus entar dulu kamu pernah enggak pakai pengacara lain? coba berkasnya mana? coba saya lihat deh enggak ujung-ujung nanyain jadi mohon maaf mbak mungkin gaya kota kayak gitu kalau di kampung enggak pelajari* [*dulu*]
         (If I'm trusted with a case, hold on, have you ever hired another lawyer? Show me the documents, let me see. Don't suddenly start asking questions. Sorry, Miss, maybe that's how things work in the city, but in the village, we would study the case first)
2. PMR :   [*ya*]- (checking her mic)
         (Yeah)
3. TP   : *pahami dulu mbak kan bisa cari* [*tahu ke saya*]
         (Study the case first, and you can ask me)

4. PMR   :   [*saya jawab ya*] *bu saya jawab ya bu
       ya-*
       (Let me answer, Ma'am. Let me answer-)
5. TP   : (doesn't allow PMR to speak) *jadi kalau ada pertanyaan* [*mbak*] *ke
       saya ↑tidak akan saya jawab=*
       (So, if you ask me, I'm not going to answer it)
6. PMR   :   [*bu*]-
       (Ma'am)
7. PMR   : *=ya udah ngapain ibu ngomong kalau begitu di sini nih kita bukan
       berdebat bu saya diundang di sini ini mendengarkan bukan berdebat
       kenapa ibu jadi marah-marah?*
       (Then why are you here if you're not going to speak? This isn't a
       debate, ma'am. I'm here to listen, not to argue. Why are you getting
       angry?)

In this exchange, PMR tries hard to respond, showing her attempt to challenge TP's control. However, TP keeps interrupting her, which shows her assertiveness and dominance over the conversation. From the perspective of Conversation Analysis (CA), this behaviour breaks the usual rules of turn-taking, which should allow everyone to contribute. By not letting PMR finish her statements, TP controls the conversation and limits PMR's chance to make her argument.

TP maintains her dominance by strategically interrupting PMR and stopping her from taking her turn at points where a change of speaker is expected (known as Transition Relevance Places or TRPs). By denying PMR these chances to speak, TP keeps control, which is typical in high-pressure situations. This behavior reflects the idea in ethnomethodology that social order is created by participants during real-time interactions, where power and authority are continually established and reinforced through conversation.

Strategic Questioning to Frame the Discussions

Strategic questioning serves as an important tool in asserting dominance during legal conversations, allowing participants to control the narrative and frame the discussion to suit their position. In Excerpt 1 previously, AM questions directly to guide the conversation, establishing a dominant role by controlling the flow of information.

Excerpt 5
The excerpt below is extracted from 14:58-15:45.

1. S   : *emm*: *terror*: (2.4) *oh kalau teror sih bukan yang dulu dulu sekarang=*
       (Um... terror... well, there was none before, but now)
2. AM   : *=yang baru baru ini*?
       (Recently?)
3. S   : *heeh=*
       (Yeah)
4. AM   : *=setelah saka bebas*?=
       (After Saka was released?)
5. S   : *=iya* (0.7) *kalau dulu enggak ada=*
       (Yes. There was none before)
6. AM   : *=terornya seperti apa bentuknya?*
       (What kind of terror is it?)
7. S   : *=ya datang tamu lagi, datang tamu lagi nanyain kasus seperti itu yang
       kemarin*
       (Guests keep coming, asking about the same case)
                                          (1.5)

8. S : *padahal saka ini sudah mau selesai kan apa namanya laporannya 2 bulan lagi*
    (Even though Saka's case is about to be finished, emm.. what do you call it, the report is due in 2 months)

<div align="center">(1.4)</div>

9. S : *walaupun di luar saka juga masih laporan ini tuh*=
    (Even though Saka still has to report)
10. AM : =*sampai sekarang masih laporan?*=
    (He is still reporting until now?)
11. S : =*masih*=
    (Yes)
12. AM : =*berarti sampai sekarang masih berinteraksi sama polisi?*=
    (So, he is still in contact with the police?)
13. S : =*masih*
    (Yes)

<div align="center">(1.5)</div>

14. S : ( ) *di bapas*
    (At the Board of Corrections)

<div align="center">(2.3)</div>

15. AM : *berarti* [*masih pembebasan bersyarat*]
    (So, he is still under conditional release)
16. S :   [*masih wajib laporan*]
    (Still on parole)
17. ST : *di dalam pengawasan*
    (Under supervision)
18. S : [*masih dalam-*]
    (Still under-)
19. AM : [*dalam pengawasan*] *pembebasan dalam pengawasan*
    (Under supervision, release under supervision)

In this exchange, AM uses a technique called latching (shown by "="), where he quickly asks questions most of the turns without leaving much pause in between. This rapid questioning helps AM stay in control of the conversation. By asking questions in this way, AM positions themselves as the dominant speaker and directs how the discussion goes. From the perspective of Conversation Analysis (CA), this behaviour shows how AM manages the topic, which is an important way to assert dominance in a conversation.

AM's control over the flow of questions allows them to influence S's responses, keeping S in a position where they are reacting rather than leading. Even though S provides detailed information, AM controls the pace and direction of the conversation, showing his dominance over both what is discussed.

Overlapping Speech as an Indicator of Power Struggles
Overlapping speech frequently occurs in legal discussions as participants attempt to interrupt or resist interruptions. In *Excerpt 3* previously, especially from turn 1 – 3,TP and PMR engage in overlapping speech during a heated exchange, which reflects their struggle for dominance.

1. TP : *seka*[*rang*] ↑ *gini*
    (Now here's the thing)
2. PMR : (trying to speak) [( )-]
3. TP : *denger dulu*
    (Listen first)

In this situation, TP interrupts PMR by saying "Listen first" before PMR has a chance to finish her response. This overlapping speech is a way for TP to disrupt the conversation and take control, preventing PMR from making her argument. From the perspective of Conversation Analysis (CA), overlapping at Transition Relevance Places (TRPs), where a change of speaker is usually expected, shows a competitive effort to dominate the conversation. In legal settings, this kind of interruption can cut off the other speaker, making it harder for them to make their point and helping the interrupter maintain control of the discussion.

Another example of a power struggle appears in *Excerpt 1* previously from turn 1 – 4, where AM continuously overlaps with ST, preventing ST from fully elaborating.

1. AM : *setibanya di kantor polisi* [*ada*] *keterangan-keterangan ada penjelasan?*
   (Upon arriving at the police station, was there any information, any explanation?)
   (0.4)
2. ST : [*langsung dibawa*]
   (Immediately taken)
   (0.2)
3. ST : *gak ada,* [*langsung dibawa*]
   (No, I was immediately taken)
4. AM : [*saat itu, saka*] *berumur berapa?*=
   (How old were you at that time?)

In this interaction, ST tries to explain the situation but gets interrupted by AM's overlapping questions. Even though ST is trying to provide information, AM's constant questioning shows their control over the conversation. The overlapping speech indicates AM's dominance. This behaviour fits with the ideas of ethnomethodology, which sees conversational dominance as a way that participants actively create social order. By continually guiding the discussion, AM establishes their authority.

Excerpt 5 provides another instance of overlap, but in a more supportive context (turn 15 – 17).

15. AM : *berarti* [*masih pembebasan bersyarat*]
    (So, he is still under conditional release)
16. S : [*masih wajib laporan*]
    (Still on parole)
17. ST : *di dalam pengawasan*
    (Under supervision)

In this case, ST's overlap is non-competitive, indicating a supportive role rather than one of dominance. The smooth, cooperative overlap shows that ST is contributing to the conversation without attempting to take control. From a CA perspective, this type of overlap is indicative of alignment rather than competition, signaling cooperation within the interaction.

Use of Tone and Ultimatums

In *Excerpts 2* and *3*, TP takes control of the conversation by raising her voice and using ultimatums, like saying, "*I am leaving*" This approach shows a direct and assertive way of communicating, known as bald-on-record politeness, which is often used in confrontational situations. According to Yuliana (2021), this type of speech is typically associated with men in competitive environments trying to maintain dominance. However, in this study, TP's authority comes from her professional role as a lawyer, not her gender. This indicates that in legal discussions, power and expertise are more important than gender in determining who controls the conversation. TP's loud tone and ultimatums demonstrate her ability to guide the conversation and make others comply with her demands. These

methods show how legal professionals use their authoritative roles to dominate important discussions.

Gender vs. Authority
This research shows that dominance is influenced not only by gender but also by authority, expertise, and professional roles, especially in formal settings like legal discussions. When comparing this study to Fei's (2010), there are clear differences in how interruptions are used. In this study, interruptions are competitive. They silence opponents, change topics, and take control of the conversation. These interruptions are deliberate tools of dominance in high-stakes formal settings. In contrast, Fei's study focuses on informal settings, where interruptions are a mix of competitive and cooperative. Supportive interruptions, such as affirmations, help build connection in casual conversations.

Alsahafi's (2024) study also shows that power is shown through how questions are asked and topics are controlled. In this study, similar strategies like asking questions and controlling topics decide who holds authority in debates. Interruptions help show dominance but are also supported by controlling the conversation flow. Just as Alsahafi explains how interviewers control the agenda, participants in legal debates manage the discussion to maintain power.

Moreover, in this study, gender plays a minimal role in interruptions. Dominance is based on professional roles, and both men and women use interruptions to assert authority. However, in Fei's study, gender has a bigger impact. Men interrupt more often, while women are more competitive in informal settings where they feel confident. This shows how gender roles shift depending on the context, with formal discussions focusing on power and informal ones reflecting personal dynamics.

Finally, the function of interruptions differs in this study compared to Fei's. In this study, interruptions are used to disrupt the flow and reinforce authority, fitting the competitive nature of legal debates. In contrast, interruptions in Fei's study are often cooperative, aimed at supporting or involving others, fitting the casual and friendly nature of the setting.

CONCLUSION
This study investigates the conversational dominance strategies used in the discussions surrounding the Vina murder case, as presented in a YouTube video. Using CA and ethnomethodology, the research identifies key strategies such as turn-taking, interruptions, overlaps, questioning, and assertive language, with interruptions emerging as the most dominant strategy. Furthermore, the findings highlight that dominant participants like AM and TP effectively control the conversation by strategically using questioning and frequent interruptions to shift the focus toward their preferred topics. By employing overlapping speech and assertive language, they manage to steer the conversation and enforce their authority, a common occurrence in legal discourse where control over the narrative is crucial. While other participants, such as ST and PMR, attempt to resist, their efforts are consistently overpowered by those with greater authority and expertise.

Moreover, this study shows how power operates in legal debates, where conversational dominance can have a direct influence on how cases are presented and how justice is administered. Moreover, the findings in this study suggest that conversational dominance plays a significant role in controlling legal narratives and influencing the outcome of legal cases. In legal discourse, conversational dominance is not simply about much talking, but controlling the flow of information and shaping perceptions to influence the legal decisions.

While this study contributes valuable insights into interactional dominance in digital legal discussions, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The analysis is based on a single high-profile case, which may not fully represent broader trends in legal CA across different contexts. Future research could expand on these findings by examining multiple cases across various legal settings. In addition, because conversation analysis is a qualitative method, the findings are shaped by the researcher's point of view and may include some bias. Although the researchers made efforts to be careful and consistent in our analysis, future studies could involve more than one analyst or use both qualitative and quantitative methods to make the results more reliable.

Lastly, future studies should investigate conversational dominance in other high-stakes situations like political debates or courtrooms. This can provide further understanding on how power is practiced in formal settings. Moreover, this can show how dominance not only affects interactions but also influences broader social narratives, such as public perceptions of legal cases. Therefore, this can provide a deeper understanding of how conversational dynamics influence various social outcomes.

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