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## TRANSACTIONAL AND INTERACTIONAL TALKS IN *ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ* MOVIE

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### Abstract

The objective of this research is to find out what is motive or purpose transactional and interactional talk used in *Escape from Alcatraz* movie based on McCarthy's theory. This research used qualitative descriptive method where the source of data was obtained from *Escape from Alcatraz* movie. The data were collected by watching the movie, coding and classifying the data. The researcher discovered that the movie has a transactional and interactional talk which is Frank Morris during his time in Alcatraz Prison; Morris knew guards treated inmates inhumanely. Seeing this condition, he invited two colleagues to escape from Alcatraz. Using transactional talks, slowly but surely, this secret was revealed by Morris by telling the actual situation. Thus, to reveal a secret, sometimes the main character Frank Morris use any transactional talk to disclose deeper information that is deliberately concealed, which happens in this movie. The results showed that Transactional talk is the most dominant compared to interactional talk, because every conversation carried out by the main character Frank Morris is closely related to telling someone something they need to know, exchanging information or giving ideas, and getting someone to do something based on McCarthy's theory.

**Keywords:** alcatraz movie, discourse analysis, transactional talk, interactional talk

### INTRODUCTION

Transactional talk is a model conversation between speaker and listener where the main goal is for the speaker to provide information, express views or ideas, or express a message to the listener. Transactional talk is forgetting business done in the world, i.e., to produce some change in the situation. It could be to tell somebody something they need to know, to affect the purchase of something, to get someone to do something, or many other

world-changing things (McCarthy, 1991). Whereas Interactional talk is a conversational model between a speaker and a listener where the aim is to establish closer social relationships and small talk to develop intimacy or to increase solidarity. Interactional talk has as its primary functions the lubrication of the social wheels, establishing roles and relationships with another person before the transactional talk, confirming and consolidating relationships, expressing solidarity, and so on (McCarthy, 1991).

*Escape from Alcatraz* is a 1979 American prison thriller movie directed by Don Siegel. It is an adaptation of the 1963 non-fiction book of the same name by J. Campbell Bruce and dramatizes the 1962 prisoner escape from the maximum security prison on Alcatraz Island. The movie stars Clint Eastwood, and features Patrick McGoohan, Fred Ward, Jack Thibau, and Larry Hankin.

This research investigates the use of transactional and interactional speech in a movie entitled *Escape from Alcatraz*. The focus of this research is to describe the transactional and interactional talk in *Escape from Alcatraz* movie based on McCarthy's theory. This research is a reference for further research, especially for conversational analysis research. This can be used as a reference for other researchers who want to study transactional and interactional in *Escape from Alcatraz* movie or other movies, so that their understanding of linguistic theory develops. Transactional and interactional conversations are not only standard in movie scripts but also quite common in everyday life. the reason of choosing the movie; first, he script for the movie *Escape from Alcatraz* because, based on preliminary research, the researcher found that the script for the movie *Escape from Alcatraz* had more transactional and interactional conversations than other movie scripts. Second reason, the movie *Escape from Alcatraz* has never been studied in terms of transactional and interactional conversations.

This research is a kind of documentary research and applied qualitatively descriptive method. A documentary research is one that has a substantial collection of reading material on one or more disciplines. A documentary research often has a comprehensive collection of resources on a single topic or range of topics, including both primary and secondary sources. While qualitative descriptive techniques are processes that result in descriptive data, including written and spoken of research objectives whether it be

from the community or literature, they also create qualitative descriptive data. On the other hand, Dey (2005) asserts that the goal of a qualitative researcher is frequently to describe how a subject experiences and comprehends a circumstance or occurrence.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The *Escape From Alcatraz* movie comes from a true story, about inmates who inhabit a prison on Alcatraz Island. Alcatraz Prison is said to be one of the prisons in the United States with a high security level in America. A group of brave prisoners try to escape from the notorious prison island of Alcatraz, where no one has managed to escape before. The location of the prison is in the middle of the high seas. This made it difficult for prisoners who tried to escape. Even for 29 years, not a single inmate managed to escape from this prison. An inmate named Frank Morris (Clint Eastwood) is imprisoned for bank robbery. Frank knew the guards treated the inmates inhumanely. Therefore, he invited 4 colleagues to escape from Alcatraz.

### Data 1

*Morris: I may have found a way out of here. You looking at something? The way I figure it. This cell block is really getting old. The moist air is corroding the concrete, and the salt is rusting the metal. I took a nail clipper. I dug around the grille in the back of the cell. With some work I can dig that grille out of there, enlarge the hole and get into the utility corridor that might lead to the roof.*

*Clarence: How will we hide the hole while we're working on it?*

*Morris: We can tear the ads out of magazines and make cardboard out of them. Paint grilles on that and put it back in the hole. Maybe partially obscure it with a towel or a bathrobe or whatever. I've ordered an accordion, which I'm going to put in front of my hole.*

*Clarence: If we get out of the cell house, they'll know we're gone at the next count.*

*Morris: We'll leave at night. That way, they won't know 'til the morning. We have to make dummy heads out of plaster, cardboard or whatever. Put them in the bunks, and the guards won't know.*

From the data above it can be seen that, when Morris and his fellow prisoners, named Clarence, Charley, and John were eating in the canteen. Morris told his friends that he had found a way out of this prison. Immediately his friends fell silent and did not believe that Morris could say that, but Morris said that he had found a way out by cutting a hole in

the wall of their prison room and then digging it out. Morris said that it was easy because the walls of Alcatraz prison were very old and fragile and that was what Morris was doing. The dialogues above are indicated as a transactional conversation because the dialogues contains information about one of Morris' strategies for getting out of Alcatraz prison, namely by punching a hole in the wall of their prison room using the steps Morris has already taken. Transactional talk is proven “We can tear the ads out of magazines and make cardboard out of them. Paint grilles on that and put it back in the hole. Maybe partially obscure it with a towel or a bathrobe or whatever. I’ve ordered an accordion, which I’m going to put in front of my hole”. Morris uses transactional dialogue because one of them is to get information, ordering something to be done, and so on.

#### Data 2

English : What’s your name, man?  
Morris : Frank. What’s yours?  
English : English.

From the data above it can be seen that, when Morris first came to Alcatraz prison, Morris was told by the warden to go to the prison library to get books to distribute to the inmates at Alcatraz. When Morris arrived at the Alcatraz prison library, Morris met a prisoner who was also in the library. There, Morris asked about the prisoner's name and got to know each other in the prison library, the prisoner's name was English.

The dialogues above are indicated as an interactional conversation because in this conversation it is more about building relationships between the two speakers or just making small talk and greetings between Morris and English. Interactional talk is proven “Frank. What’s yours?”

#### Data 3

Morris : What are you painting?  
Charley : I don’t know. The ocean, maybe.  
Morris : If you’re flesh colored paint, you’d better paint a portrait.

From the data above it can be seen that, In Morris' escape plan from Alcatraz prison, Morris asked several of his friends to look for some equipment needed for their escape. One of them was Charley, Morris asked Charley to borrow the painting tools that Morris needed

in his escape plan. Here we can see that when they were chatting about what picture Charley would draw, Morris then gave Charley directions that it would be best to paint a portrait using flesh colors.

The dialogues above are indicated as an interactional conversation because the dialogue contains a conversation between Morris and Charley to exchange opinions and ideas regarding how to use painting tools and painting colors. Interactional Talk is proven “If you’re flesh colored paint, you’d better paint a portrait.” This is a conversation between Morris and Charley, a simple form of conversation, not necessarily a conversation that requires the exchange of information, such as greetings, telling experiences, and can also be a conversation bridge before a transactional conversation occurs.

#### Data 4

Morris : I went on top last night. I saw the ventilator shaft to the roof. I can’t reach it, I might need a boost. How are you all coming?  
John : My dummy’s ready.  
Clarence : The hole’s done. I’m just starting the dummy.  
Charley : I ain’t too good.  
Morris : Tonight, John and I’ll go up.

From the data above it can be seen that, Morris told friends that he had seen the situation at night on top of the Alcatraz prison building. Morris said in order to get to the top of the Alcatraz prison building, he needed the help of some friends to lift Morris to climb on top of the Alcatraz prison building. After Morris provides information about the situation on top of the Alcatraz prison building, Morris then asks his other friends named Clarence, Charley, and John about their progressing in preparing the plan and the tools needed in their escape plan. And when everything is ready, Morris said that he and John will look at the situation on the top of the Alcatraz prison building again at night and prepare all their needs so that when they escape from prison there will be no obstacles for them.

The dialogues above are indicated as a transactional conversation because the dialogues contained an exchange of information and discussed the steps that Morris would take, and then Morris asked one of his friends John to help Morris. Transactional talk is proven “I went on top last night. I saw the ventilator shaft to the roof. I can’t reach it, I

might need a boost. How are you all coming?” Morris uses transactional talk because one way is to get information, order something to be done, and so on.

#### Data 5

Morris : Something special about those steps?

English : The higher you sit the more status you've got. We play king of the Mountain, except here we don't play for fun

Morris : And you're king?

English : Yeah.

From the data above it can be seen that, the first day Morris was imprisoned at Alcatraz, Morris went straight to the prison yard area to get some fresh air. However, as he walked, Morris saw English at the top of the stairs, where each step was occupied by a black prisoner. At that moment Morris headed towards English who was at the top of the stairs. When Morris met English, Morris asked what was special about each step and why English was sitting at the top of the steps. And English answered that he was the leader of the black prisoners at Alcatraz prison.

The dialogs above are indicated as transactional talk and interactional talk because the dialog contains a conversation to require information from English. Transactional talk is proven “Something special about those steps?” This is a conversation between Morris and English one of them is to get information, order something to do, and so on, but it also contains interactional talk because in this conversation it is more like building a relationship between the two speakers or just small talk.

#### Data 6

Warden : I'm assigning you a permanent job. The carpentry shop. It's a paying job.

Morris : How much?

Warden : 15 cents an hour.

Morris : I always knew crime would pay.

Warden : It's a job. See you later.

From the data above it can be seen that, Morris, who was sitting in his cell, was sitting pensively, when suddenly a Warden came in and offered Morris permanent work as a carpentry. Which work could provide wages for Morris. The dialogs above are indicated

as transactional talk because the dialog contains exchange information about their progress in preparing escape plan and giving order to them to do something in preparing escape. Transactional talk is proven “How much?” Morris used transactional talk because one of them is to get information, order something to do, and so on.

#### Data 7

Charley : Is anybody over there?  
Morris : Yeah, me.  
Charley : Come on up front, say hello.  
Morris : I’m busy.  
Charley : How busy can you be in one of these closets?  
Morris : Don’t worry, I washed it.  
Charley : How are you doing, neighbor? I’m Charley Butts.

From the data above it can be seen that, when Morris first entered Alcatraz prison, Morris occupied a cell next to Charley's room. That was where the introduction between Morris and Charley, who were cell neighbors, began. The beginning of their meeting began with Charley asking the name of the new prisoner who entered the room next to him, which was then responded to by Morris reaching out his hand from inside his cell to get to know Charley. The dialogs above are indicated as interactional talk because the dialog contains a simple conversation between Morris and Charley. Interactional talk is proven “I’m busy.” This is a conversation between Morris and Charley, a simple form of conversation, no need for conversations that require the exchange of information, such as greeting, telling experiences, and can also be a bridge for conversation before a transactional conversation occurs.

#### Data 8

Charley : I turn 35 today. Some birthday...When’s your birthday?  
Morris : I don’t know.  
Charley : What kind of childhood did you have?  
Morris : Short.

From the data above it can be seen that, while Morris was sitting around the prison yard, Charley came to greet him and then Charley sat beside Morris. At that time Charley

asked Morris random things about when Morris' birthday was and what Morris' childhood was like. The dialogs above are indicated as interactional talk. Interactional talk is proven “I don’t know.” Which is a conversation between Morris and Charley, a simple form of conversation, no need for conversations that require the exchange of information, such as greeting, telling experiences, and can also be a bridge for conversation before a transactional conversation occurs?

#### Data 9

Morris : Could you get me an extension cord and a drill bit out of the shop?  
Litmus : If they find out, I go to the hole. All right. But from now on, you put your desserts onto my tray.

From the data above it can be seen that, In Morris' planning to escape from Alcatraz prison, Morris asked his friend Litmus for help to find extension cables and drill bits from the shop where Litmus worked in Alcatraz prison. The tools that Morris asked for were part of the items he needed to escape from Alcatraz prison. Litmus then agreed to this on the condition that every side dish from Morris' lunch is given to Litmus. The dialogues above are indicated as a transactional conversation because the dialogue contains an exchange of information between Morris and Litmus in which Morris asks Litmus for help in finding items in the form of drill bits and cables that Morris needs in planning his escape from Alcatraz prison. Transactional talk is proven “Could you get me an extension cord and a drill bit out of the shop?” Morris used transactional talk because one of them is to get information, order something to do, and so on.

#### Data 10

Morris : I’m going to start digging, so keep an eye out for the bulls. If you see one coming, you start whistling.

From the data above it can be seen that, when Morris wanted to continue digging his escape hole from inside the prison, which at that time was their sleeping time, Morris asked Charley for help to monitor the warden who came to Morris' room. Morris told Charley that if the warden approached Morris's room, Charley had to give a code. Where the code was in the form of Charley's whistle so that Morris could know if the warden was approaching Morris' room. The dialogues above are indicated as a transactional

conversation because the dialogue contains an exchange of information between Morris and Charley. When Morris was digging his escape hole, Morris told Charley to watch the warden who approached Morris' room and give a code in the form of a whistle to Morris if the warden approached. Transactional talk is proven “I’m going to start digging, so keep an eye out for the bulls. If you see one coming, you start whistling.” Morris used transactional talk because one of them is to get information, order something to do, and so on.

Data 11

Morris : Hey, English... Is it possible to weld two pieces of metal together, here in the cell?  
English : For digging or sticking?  
Morris : Digging.  
English : It ain't easy, but I could show you.

From the data above it can be seen that, Morris, who was in his room, was suddenly approached by English who was carrying a stack of books to distribute to each inmate. English then approached Morris and gave Morris a book. Then Morris asked in English if it was possible to weld two pieces of metal together in a cell. Hearing this, English then asked Morris if he was digging in or holding on. Morris answered to dig. Hearing what Morris asked made English feel a bit difficult but English told Morris that he could show Morris and give the answer to Morris' question about welding two pieces of metal together in a cell. The dialogs above are indicated as a transactional conversation because the dialogue contains asking for directions and obtaining information between Morris and English. Which Morris asked in English if it was possible to weld two pieces of metal together in a cell. Hearing this, English then asked Morris if he was digging in or holding on. Morris answered to dig. Hearing what Morris asked made English feel a bit difficult but English told Morris that he could show Morris and give the answer to Morris' question about welding two pieces of metal together in a cell. Transactional talk is proven “Hey, English... Is it possible to weld two pieces of metal together, here in the cell?” Morris used transactional talk because one of them is to get information, order something to do, and so on.

## Data 12

Morris : Heard you had a visitor.  
English : My daughter. She's getting married. He's white just like you.  
Morris : Congratulations.

From the data above it can be seen that, Morris, who was in his cell room, was approached by English who was distributing reading books to every Alcatraz prisoner. There, Morris said to English that he heard that English had been visited by someone. Then English answered that it was his daughter who visited him. English said that his daughter would marry a man who had the same face and skin as Morris. Hearing this, Morris congratulated English on his daughter's wedding. The dialogues above are indicated as interactional talk. Interactional talk is proven "Congratulations." Which is a conversation between Morris and English, a simple form of conversation, no need for conversations that require the exchange of information, such as greeting, telling experiences, and can also be a bridge for conversation before a transactional conversation occurs.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the finding it can be concluded that the used of transactional talks is dominantly related to information exchange, information-oriented message, and also sharing opinions and ideas. In this case, the used of transactional talk in *Escape From Alcatraz* movie is based on the kind of information which is not known by both the speakers and hearers and is able to influence their way of thinking. On the other hand, the used of interactional talk in this movie is closely related to giving compliments, small talk or chit chat, creating a closer social interaction, giving a warm welcome, showing solidarity, greeting, and giving positive enthusiasm.

Based on the explanation above, the problem in this research have been answered so that the objective of this research clearly found and explained clearly, namely what is motive or purpose transactional and interactional talk in *Escape from Alcatraz* movie based on McCarthy's theory. The researcher discovered that the movie has a transactional and interactional talk which is Frank Morris during his time in Alcatraz prison, Morris knew guards treated inmates inhumanely. Seeing this condition, he invited two colleagues to

escape from Alcatraz. This plan is almost impossible to carry out, but they are not desperate. They planned in detail what to do to redeem the defensive fortress of Alcatraz. Using transactional talks, slowly but surely, this secret was revealed by Morris by telling the actual situation. Thus, to reveal a secret, sometimes people can use any transactional talk to disclose deeper information that is deliberately concealed, which happens in this movie. So that this movie contained elements of transactional and interactional talk. Transactional talk became the most dominant because the movie conveys information exchange, information-oriented message, and also sharing opinions and ideas who expressed by Frank Morris.

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