

# The Political vs. Celebrity Interview: A Case Study in Bengali Institutional Talk

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> <i>Date of Submission:</i>02-02-2023 <i>Date of Acceptance:</i>03-11-2025 <i>Date of Publication:</i> 24-03-2026</p> <p><i>Keywords</i></p> <p><i>Conversation analysis, institutional talk, accountability, adversarial questioning, neutrality, political news interview, and celebrity interview.</i></p>	<p><i>This study presents a comparative analysis of Bengali political and celebrity interviews in the context of institutional Conversation Analysis (CA). This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. The data consisted of institutional talk (interviews) conducted by a political leader and a celebrity, with two journalists (interviewers) from two local and international Bangla news channels. This study aimed to investigate significant differences between political and celebrity interviews in Bengali. To answer the question, two selected Bangla political and celebrity conversations are analysed according to the framework of Clayman and Heritage (2002). The Jefferson Transcription system (2004) is used to produce the analysis results. From this research, it is evident that in a news interview, the views of both interviewers and interviewees can be presented to the public through questions and answers, thereby creating the context of their accountability to the public. Similarly, this study shows how the interviewer maintains a neutral position in news interviews through adversarial questioning and how politicians exhibit evasiveness or resistance in answering those questions. In contrast, this analysis reveals that a Bengali celebrity interview typically employs a non-adversarial, unchallenging question-and-answer format, in which the interviewer elicits personal and professional information from celebrities in a polite, congenial manner for the public.</i></p>

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## Introduction

Interviews with public figures play a prominent role in broadcast journalism in almost every country today. Interviews are an essential part of traditional hard

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news, political news, as well as celebrity and entertainment news, both for gathering information behind the scenes and for conveying information directly to viewers (Clayman et al., 2010). Over time, news interviews have become increasingly crucial in broadcast journalism and political communication. From the 1970s onward, political news interviews in Britain and America gained widespread public acceptance (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

Because of the interaction between interviewers and interviewees (politicians), their views can be presented to the public, or, through this interview, the context for their accountability to the public is created. Because politicians are elected representatives of the people, they are held accountable for any severe issues in the country. On the other hand, celebrity interviews have long been a form of entertainment in the mass media. These iconic individuals from diverse professions can inspire an entire generation through their interviews.

Although political news and celebrity interviews are forms of institutional talk, a divide exists between the conduct of celebrity and political news interviews (Loeb, 2016). News interviews often featured restricted speech practices with politicians or public officials on serious topics (Clayman & Heritage, 2002), whereas celebrity interviews featured talk that more closely resembled a casual conversation, with topics mostly revolving around personal life and popular culture (Loeb, 2016). Ordinary conversation encompasses various rules and practices deployed to pursue every imaginable kind of social goal, which embody an indefinite collection of inferential frameworks (Heritage, 2005, p. 109). Institutional interactions, such as news interviews, by contrast, generally involve a reduction in the range of interactional practices used by the participants (interviewers and interviewees), restrictions in the context they can be deployed, and frequently involve some specialization and re-specifications of the interactional relevance of the practices that remain (Drew & Heritage, 1992).

Political news interviews in Bangladesh have undergone radical changes over the last thirty years. Currently, political or government officials in Bangladesh are expected to demonstrate accountability through media appearances, including news interviews, talk shows, panel discussions, and press conferences. In a news interview, Bangladeshi government and opposition politicians can present their position to the audience through questions and answers on any issue in the country. On the other hand, Bengali celebrity interviews have been entertaining audiences for decades.

The news interview is a straightforward medium for communicating with a mass audience. However, it is also a form of interaction between the Interviewer (IR) and the Interviewee (IE). It is a crucial platform within the public sphere, but it is constituted through everyday practices of talk and interaction adapted from ordinary conversation (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p. 12). According to Heritage (2006), "As CA turned to the study of talk in institutions, it began with the same

assumptions that had proved successful in studying ordinary conversation.” They also argue that the conversation-analytic study of institutional talk concerns how these institutional realities are evoked, manipulated, and transformed in interaction (pp. 2-4). However, conversation analysis is an approach to studying human interaction that involves directly observing naturally occurring interactions as captured on audio and video recordings (Heritage, 1995; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

The boundaries between institutional talk and conversation analysis are not fixed and restricted, though the distinction is helpful and empirically sound (Heritage, 2005). It is evident that institutional talk embodies many practices of everyday conversation; it is also usually distinctive in specific ways from its ordinary counterpart (Heritage, 2005). In terms of news interviews, there are several basic methods of CA, including the speech exchange system (turn-taking), action sequences (sequence organization), turn design, and the accomplishment of actions (lexical choices), among others (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Heritage, 2005).

In Bengali, there is a notable lack of research on conversation analysis or institutional talk; therefore, this aspect will add a new dimension to the study of the Bengali language. Similarly, there is very little literature on the explicit role of political interviews in shaping public opinion, or on how political affairs talk is organized in this type of media discourse (Feldman, 2016, p. 63). However, in a recent study, Feldman (2016) examined the question-and-answer paradigm in political interviews in Asian countries, with a primary focus on Japan. The author discusses the nature of the questions, their structure, the potential bias of the interviewers, the extent to which the interviewees’ replies are evasive, and how interviewees attempt to construct a particular image of themselves and others through their responses (p. 63). However, this study does not analyse audio or video recordings according to the framework of news interviews and transcription systems to decode the data.

In another study, Pujiati, Al-Rawafi, and Suparno (2020, pp. 25-27) noted that the interviewer (Wolf Blitzer, a journalist for CNN) did not begin the conversation with greetings but instead started with an introduction as an opening conversation with the interviewee (Adel Al-Jubeir regarding the Yemen campaign). This research indicates that the interview content mainly consisted of declarative questions. However, this study does not cover the other vital norms and conventions of institutional CA; instead, it primarily focuses on implicature analysis of the political interview.

## **Literature review**

### ***News interview***

To understand the importance of news interviews with public figures or celebrities, it is essential to be aware of previous research on this topic. Several significant

works on news interviews, aiming to understand the fundamental norms and principles (examples include Clayman, 1992; Clayman & Heritage, 2002, 2010; Clayman, 2006; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Schegloff, 1992).

For the last fifty years, news interviews have become an indispensable part of people's daily lives worldwide, and celebrity interviews are no exception. Interviews have long been a vital part of television and radio journalism. However, the mass media have undergone significant changes over time. Various factors have contributed to the growth of news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). News interviews are now broadcast on countless channels due to the proliferation of cable networks (Clayman et al., 2002).

From previous research, it can be observed that a news interview is typically a course of interaction in which participants contribute turn by turn, for the most part by asking and answering questions (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). In political news interviews, the interviewer usually asks aggressive or adversarial questions that convey an expectation of the type of answer that would be correct or preferable, thereby exerting pressure on the IE (politician) to answer in a particular way (Clayman et al., 2002). Additionally, the adversarial norm leads interviewers to act as "watchdogs of democracy" by challenging political guests and their positions (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Journalists use footing or footing shift to maintain their neutral role while asking questions in news interviews. Additionally, politicians often exhibit evasiveness or resistance when responding to adversarial questioning in news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

The news interview is a straightforward medium for communicating with a mass audience, yet it also serves as a form of interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Clayman et al., 2010). It is a crucial platform within the public sphere, but it is constituted through mundane practices of talk and interaction adapted from those of ordinary conversation (Clayman & Heritage, 2002, p. 12).

## ***2.2 Conversation analysis and institutional talk***

Conversation analysis focuses on interaction practices and how people accomplish actions through talk (Schegloff, 2007). This method is particularly relevant in understanding the implications of questioning, the main activity of interviewing (Clayman & Heritage, 2010). Institutional interactions have undergone significant changes, such as news interviews and doctor-patient interactions of the 1970s. However, the ordinary conversation of the 1970s does not look very different from today's interactions (Clayman et al., 2010).

Heritage (2005) states that conversation analysis has investigated institutional interaction; however, he also notes that "most of the early work in conversation analysis focused on the ordinary conversation" (p. 104). The boundaries between institutional talk and conversation analysis are not fixed and restricted, though the distinction is helpful and empirically sound (Heritage, 2005). It is evident

that institutional talk embodies many practices of everyday conversation; it is also usually distinctive in specific ways from its ordinary counterpart (Heritage, 2005, p. 108). In terms of news reviews, some basic methods of CA are followed differently, such as the speech exchange system (turn-taking), action sequences (sequence organization), turn design, and the accomplishment of actions (lexical choices), among others (Clayman & Heritage, 2002 & 2010; Heritage, 2005).

### ***2.2.1 Turn-taking***

Turn-taking is an organizational pattern in conversation in which participants take turns speaking, alternating with one another. Drew & Heritage (2006) argue that in practice, it involves processes for constructing contributions, responding to previous comments, and transitioning to a different speaker, using a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic cues (p. 34). In CA, turn-taking organization refers to the set of practices (including interruptions, overlaps, pauses, or silences) that speakers use to construct and allocate turns (Drew & Heritage, 2006). However, the news interview follows specific and systematic transformations in conversational turn-taking procedures, known as “action or pre-allocation” (Clayman et al., 2010). The effect of pre-allocation significantly restricts when and which persons may speak (the addressee of the question) and the type of contribution they may make (responding to the question). In news interviews, where two or more individuals may be in opposition, this restriction also prevents direct opposition or argument between the opponents by forcing them to present their positions to a third party (Greatbatch, 1992; Clayman et al., 2010). Additionally, this process restricts the institutional representative from turning the question; also, it deprives them of the right to make statements, to overtly evaluate the responses to the previous questions, and even to engage in the kind of routine acknowledgments (“mm-hm,” “huh-uh,” yes, etc.) (Clayman et al., 2010).

### ***2.2.2 Sequence organization***

Sequence organization- how turns-at-talk are ordered and combined to make actions take place in the conversation. Its scope is the organization of courses of action enacted through turns at talk—coherent, orderly, meaningful, or sequences of actions or moves (Schegloff, 2007). This sequence organization role is proper for ordinary conversation and institutional interaction (Clayman et al., 2010). In a news interview, some action sequences are very tightly organized, so a particular response with little room for variation under normal circumstances routinely follows the initial action. For example, news interviewers rarely acknowledge interviewee responses (Clayman et al., 2002 & 2010).

### ***2.2.3 Preferences***

CA may reveal structural preferences in conversations for certain types of actions (within sequences of actions) over others, as responses in specific sequential environments (Pomerantz, 1978). For example, responsive actions that agree with or accept a first action tend to be performed more straightforwardly and more

quickly than actions that disagree with or decline those positions (Pomerantz, 1984). Additionally, we tend to give preference to “yes” answers over “no” answers in ordinary conversation (Clift, 2016). However, regarding preferences in news interviews, Clayman and Heritage (2002) argue that a question can be designed to exert pressure on a respondent by facilitating one response over another. We will examine this phenomenon in detail later in the data analysis section.

### ***2.3 Celebrity interview***

Celebrity interviews have long been a form of entertainment in the mass media. Celebrity interviews often feature conversations that closely resemble casual conversations with celebrities, primarily focusing on their personal lives and popular culture (Loeb, 2016). In celebrity interviews, IR is to feature the guest (IE) positively; it might be expected that the IR will show a liking towards the IE or celebrity. In contrast, in political news interviews, IR treats political guests differently from celebrities, with regard to neutrality or adversarial questioning (Loeb, 2016). IRs do not have the same professional codes and public service ideals as celebrity interviews. Celebrities appear in these interviews to increase their publicity, and the interviewer uses them to boost viewership of their program, leading to a mode of interviewing that is personalized to feature the host or interviewer and relatively congenial to showcase the guest or interviewee (Loeb, 2016). However, these iconic figures from diverse professions can inspire an entire generation through interviews.

### ***2.4 Rules and conventions of news interviews***

According to Clayman & Heritage (2010), the news interview is distinguished from other interaction-based genres of the broadcast talk by a unique constellation of participants, subject matter, and interactional form, and IRs are typically recognized as professional journalists rather than celebrity entertainers or partisan activists (p. 215). Interviewees generally are politicians, public officials, experts, or individuals with a connection to current events or significant issues (Clayman et al., 2010).

Within the framework of “The News Interview: Journalists and Public Figures on the Air” by Clayman & Heritage (2002), which analyses the institutional talk, especially news interviews, in the light of Conversation Analysis. The context and aim of the professional norms of journalism in news interviews are that IRs are required to be seen as neutral and independent of their political sources, serving as adversarial watchdogs of democracy (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Clayman & Heritage (2002) mainly focus on question design, categorizing questions by directness, assertiveness, presuppositions, agenda-setting functions, and degree of adversarialness. Regarding adversarialness, the framework emphasizes how IE can be accountable to the people through their responses in aggressive questioning, and how IR challenges the IE to prove their neutral position through the turn design, questions (footing), and preferred answers to fulfill the objectives of the interview.

We will discuss neutralism and footing, adversarial questioning (agenda-setting), and answering in the context of evasiveness in the following sections according to the framework of Clayman and Heritage (2002).

### ***2.5.1 Neutralism and Footing***

Previous research on the nature of political news interviews has demonstrated that journalists achieve neutrality in several ways. Firstly, in the design of the political news interview, IRs are restricted to asking questions, while politicians are required to provide answers (Clayman & Heritage, 2002; Greatbatch, 1988; Heritage, 1985). To maintain a neutral role in a news interview, IR primarily challenges the IE (politician) to strike a balance. Heritage et al. (1995) state that professional journalists are expected, on the one hand, ‘to be impartial, objective, unbiased, and disinterested in their questioning of political figures’ whereas, on the other hand, they are expected ‘to actively challenge their sources rather than being simply mouthpieces for them’ (p. 57).

Interviewers use footing or footing shifts to maintain their neutral role in news interviews. IRs commonly shift footings during production, placing some distance between themselves and their more overtly opinionated remarks (Clayman, 1992). Through this practice of footing shift, IR can voice controversial viewpoints without being seen as endorsing them. Accordingly, they can fulfil the complex journalistic requirement of being interactionally “adversarial” while remaining officially “neutral” (Clayman, 1992).

Regarding footing shifts, McVittie, Sambaraju, and McKinlay (2011) found that interviewers’ shifts provided distinct benefits for IR and IE. On the one hand, it allows IR to ask challenging questions while maintaining an objective, neutral posture. In the same way, given the apparent advantage to the IE of the IR’s introduction to footing shifts to allow IEs to put their own views across, even though such questions have the evident characteristics of being challenging (pp. 23-24).

### ***2.5.2 Adversarial questioning***

Previous research has focused on the nature of this balancing act between adversarialness and neutrality by examining the IRs’ question design (Heritage, 2002; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991; Clayman & Heritage, 2002 & 2010). According to Clayman et al. (2010), the norm of adversarialness prompts interviewers to prevent the interview from becoming a platform or soapbox for political leaders to disseminate their spin on events (p. 227). Alternatively, IRs can exert pressure on the IE to respond in particular ways through the preference organization of questions (Pomerantz, 1984). However, this kind of pressure favours one response over another and can affect IR’s objectivity or neutrality (Clayman et al., 2002). For example, some questions in political news interviews that specifically favour a particular response are those that use negative interrogative syntax, such as ‘won’t

you’ or ‘isn’t it,’ where IR can incorporate “preferences” often designed to invite or favour one type of answer over another; here, IE can align or dis-align with its preferences (Clayman et al., 2002).

In designing adversarial questions, agenda-setting is crucial: IR establishes particular agendas, and IE responses indicate engagement or a refusal to engage. Regarding agenda setting, a recent study by Khan, Qadir, and Aftab (2019, pp. 49-50) highlighted interruptions in Pakistani political news interviews. In their study, the authors found that disruptive interruptions are most common in political interviews in Pakistan. Firstly, the interviewer interrupted the participant to disagree. Secondly, interruptions were created to take the floor. Moreover, an interruption occurred due to a topic change. This research work focuses solely on interruptions, whereas pauses and silences also happen frequently in political interviews.

### ***2.5.3 Answers and evasiveness***

Clayman and Heritage (2002) discuss the perception that public figures or politicians often try to avoid giving direct answers to questions (which, of course, is partly a result of journalists spending much time devising questions that interviewees cannot easily answer). It is evident that IEs face numerous pressures—from interviewers, the audience, and subsequent media exposure—“just to answer the question”. Nevertheless, when the question is adversarial, there are cross-cutting pressures to take the opposite course of action or to answer it evasively. We will look at this phenomenon by analysing Bengali news and celebrity interviews.

There are two general approaches to describing evasiveness: overt and covert resistance. Firstly, covert practices are primarily employed in the context of positive resistance or talk that diverges from the question’s agenda (Clayman et al., 2002 & 2010). According to Clayman and Heritage (2002), regarding covert resistance, the IE actively avoids any explicit acknowledgment that they are shifting the agenda and may go so far as to conceal that fact (p. 269). On the other hand, regarding overt resistance, IE tries to be up-front and explicit about what is taking place (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

## ***2.6 Research questions***

From the above discussion, we get the main research question for our data analysis, and try to find out how these two interviews differ through the news interview framework:

1. What are the differences between political and celebrity interviews in Bengali?

Previous research has shown that, typically, political and celebrity interviews differ in two ways: first, in the unique structure of the question-and-answer exchange in terms of adversarialness and evasiveness; and second, in how both public figures

demonstrate their accountability to the audience, especially politicians. Regarding these distinct natures, we can get two more sub-research questions as follows:

A) How different are the questions and answer patterns in these two interviews regarding adversarialness and evasiveness?

b) How do IRs prove their neutrality through the footing shifts, and how do both public figures show their accountability to the people through these interviews?

### **Methodology**

This research employs descriptive qualitative methods and purposive sampling. This research method is based on existing facts or phenomena that are produced or recorded as data. In this study, the researcher attempted to explain the data clearly in accordance with the data obtained. In accordance with this idea, the data will be analysed using the dimensions of adversarial questioning identified by Clayman and Heritage (2002).

### ***Data Collection***

Data based on conversation analysis, using video or recordings, allows for the possibility of playing and replying to the interaction, both for transcribing and developing an analysis. It permits rechecking the analysis against complete, detailed material and allows returning to the data with new interest (Liddicoat, 2007). For this research, we have selected a 2018 political interview from a Bangladeshi news channel featuring the alliance of opposition political parties and their purpose ahead of the 2018 election in Bangladesh (DBC News). For the celebrity interview, we selected one interview with an actor from film, television, and stage on the occasion of winning a national acting award for a supporting role in a movie (BBC Bangla). Within the framework of Clayman & Heritage, we will examine how these two interviews differ with respect to adversarial questioning, the IR's neutral position, and the degree of evasiveness in their responses. We selected one video clip from a Bangladeshi local television channel featuring a political interview, and for the celebrity interview, we selected a video clip from the BBC Bangla channel. All video interview clips, one for each group, will be sourced from various online platforms (e.g., YouTube) and made available online.

### ***3.2 Data Analysis***

The data will be analysed clearly to answer the research questions. In conducting data analysis, the primary step is analysing political and celebrity interviews using the framework of Clayman & Heritage (2002). The second step is analysing the conversation structure, and the researcher uses transcription systems proposed by Jefferson (2004b).

As noted in the literature, we observe that the empirical norms and principles of the political news interview align with Bengali norms and principles, and we will

differentiate them from those of celebrity talk as follows.

## Findings and Discussions

### 4.1 *Neutralism and Footing*

#### 1) Political interview

In the following example from an interview, before the 2018 elections in Bangladesh, almost all significant and other opposition parties, except the ruling party (The Bangladesh Awami League), declared unity. A meeting was organized to provide an insight into the alliance's objectives and future action plans. This political news interview focuses on the alliance and its first public meeting, where IE1 Barrister Andalib Rahman Partho (Chairman, Bangladesh Jatio Party) and IE2 Advocate Subrata Chowdhury (Acting Chairman, Gonoforam) were present. On the other hand, IE3 Md. Tajul Islam (Member of Parliament, The Bangladesh Awami League) represents the ruling party in this interview. This interview illustrates how the norms of neutralism and footing shift in the context of Bengali political news interviews.

#### **Excerpt-1 DBC News, September 24, 2018, IR: Nobonita Chowdhury IE1: Barrister Andalib Rahman Partho**

1. IR: ami:(0.1) jante cai je:  
I want to know...
2. IR: e?to, bicittro loker e: somabeshe:: kono(0.2) oikko shombhob kina (.)  
Is any unity possible in gathering people of these different ideologies?
3. IR: sokole ashole(.) sheshporjonto (0.1) oikkoboddho hote parbe bole (. ) apni mone koren kina (.)  
Do you think that everyone can be united?
4. IR: → r (0.2) e jot (0.1) nirbaconi(.) jot na (0.2), Emma BNP (opposition party) bibhinno (0.1) netara bolcen (0.2)  
BNP leaders say this alliance is not an electoral alliance.
5. IR: →Mahmudur Rahman Manna gotokal bolecan (0.2), eta kono nirbaconi(.) jot na (0.1)  
Mahmudur Raman Manna (member of the opposition party) said yesterday that this is not an electoral alliance.
6. IR: eta tahole ki (. ) jot Adorshik (. ) jot (0.2)  
What kind of alliance is this? Ideological alliance
7. IE1: apnake dhonnobad (.)  
Thank you.

In lines 4 and 5, the IR speaks on behalf of a third party, or, we can say, she tries to shift her footing to propose her neutrality in this conversation. Firstly, IR asks two questions (2 & 3): “Whether any unity is possible in gathering people of these different ideologies?” Furthermore, “Do you think that everyone can be united?” Then, IR uses a footing shift in line 4, ‘BNP (opposition party) leaders say this alliance is not an electoral alliance’, and in line 5, she again mentions a third party to maintain her neutral stance in this interview, ‘Mahmudur Rahman Manna (Chairman of another party) said yesterday that this is not an electoral alliance.’ To maintain a neutral role in an interview, IR uses the name of a third party or employs footing to support her opinion or questions.

## 2) *Celebrity interview*

In the following example of a celebrity interview, the question pattern indicates that, in terms of personalization, IR does not need to prove its neutral position in this interview. The following celebrity interview took place after the recipient received a national award for a supporting role alongside IE Fazlur Rahman Babu and as an IR, BBC Bangla journalist, Afroza Neela. They discuss the importance of a movie’s leading and supporting characters. IR also inquires about the actor’s personal life during this interview.

### Excerpt-2

#### **BBC Bangla, 1 May 2022 IR: Afroza Neela IE: Fazlur Rahman**

1. IR: kintu (.) apni bollen je: boejhoshtho (.)  
You call yourself an older person.
2. IR: apnake: to dekhe to: sheta mone hoe na (.)  
However, it does not appear that way to you.
3. IR: apni jotheshtho shusto: ebong khub fit (.)  
You are very fit and relatively healthy.
4. IR: kibhabe (.) nijke etota fit (.) rakhchen apni (.)  
How do you keep yourself fit?
5. IE: ee (0.2) ektu to: niom kore choltei: hoe (.)  
You have to follow some rules.

From extract 2, we can see that in lines 1-4, IR recurrently uses her views or experiences as a frame for eliciting the IE’s response. In line 1, IR says, “You call

yourself an older person.” Then she shares her opinion in line 3, “But it does not look like that to you”, then in line 4, IR again gives compliments to the celebrity, “You are very fit and quite healthy”, and finally IR asks a related question in line 5, “How do you keep yourself fit?” The question and all views are related to the actor’s personal and professional life. IR does not need to use footing to prove neutrality in this casual conversation. However, in celebrity interviews, IR can produce assessments that would not be possible in political interviews because news interview norms do not permit IR to express their opinions or assessments of the politicians or the agenda, unlike in celebrity interviews.

## **4.2 adversarial questioning (agenda-setting & preferences)**

### **4.2.1 Agenda-setting**

#### 1) Political interview

Regarding the adversarial question, we first examine agenda setting. The agenda-setting function of the question involves decisions about how narrowly or broadly the interviewee’s response should be defined (Clayman et al., 2002). The following extract shows that IR initially asks two questions in lines 2 and 3. IR then asks the question again in line 6, “What kind of alliance is this? Ideological alliance? After these questions, IE finally starts answering from line 8, and then in line 10, he responds according to the question, “to this day, I do not want to call this alliance an electoral alliance”, whereas he avoids answering the previous two questions. However, IR requires a yes/no answer to these questions, whereas IE avoids answering in accordance with the agenda.

#### **Excerpt-1 DBC News, September 24, 2018, IR: Nobonita Chowdhury IE1: Barrister Andalib Rahman Partho**

1. IR: ami:(0.1) jante cai je:  
I want to know...
2. IR: e?to, bicittro loker e: somabeshe:: kono(0.2) oikko shombhob kina (.)  
Is any unity possible in gathering people of these different ideologies?
3. IR: sokole ashole(.) sheshporjonto (0.1) oikkobodho hote parbe bole (. ) apni mone koren kina (.)  
Do you think that everyone can be united (.)
4. IR: → r (0.2) e jot (0.1) nirbaconi(.) jot na (0.2), emm BNP (opposition party) bibhinno (0.1) netara bolcen (0.2)  
BNP leaders say this alliance is not an electoral alliance.
5. IR: →Mahmudur Rahman Manna gotokal boleccen (0.2), eta kono

nirbaconi(.) jot na (0.1)

Mahmudur Raman Manna (member of the opposition party) said yesterday that this is not an electoral alliance.

6. IR: eta tahole ki(.) jot? Adorshik (.) jot (0.2)

What kind of alliance is this? Ideological alliance (.)

7. IE1: apnake dhonnobad (.)

Thank you.

8. IE1: ashole (0.4) ei: jottar prokkria kintu onek: (.) agey thekei: colchilo(.)

The process of forming this alliance has been ongoing for a long time.

9. IE1: amader (.) nettri (0.1) jokhon mukto cilen (0.2) a a: tokhon thekei alap hocchilo (.)

Talks have been ongoing since our leader (President, the opposition party, Bangladesh Nationalist Party) was released.

10. IE1: ei: jottake ami(.) ajker din porjonto (0.2), erokom (.) kono nirbaconi jot (0.1) hishebe ami (.) akkha dite cai na (0.2)

To this day, I do not want to refer to this alliance as an electoral alliance.

## 2) Celebrity interview

In terms of celebrity interviews, we can see whether the agenda-setting or presupposition is typical. We can consider the following extract from a celebrity interview to identify differences with political news interviews regarding adversarial questioning (agenda-setting). In line 1, IR asks, “So, what is the reason for choosing only the side character?” Then IE answers the question in line 3, “in fact, it does not matter which side character to choose, and then IE adds another comment on this topic in line 5, “we have the main character according to the format of our film.” Therefore, this interview does not involve adversarial questioning regarding agenda setting.

Additionally, the objectivity of agenda-setting in news interviews, as part of adversarial questioning, differs from that in celebrity interviews, as these data show. Because IR here does not have a challenging or complex agenda, it does not need to provide a narrow or broad answer, unlike politicians. Moreover, guests are allowed to share their wishes; there are no particular restrictions on celebrities in this kind of interview.

### Excerpt-2

**BBC Bangla, 1 May 2022 IR: Afroza Neela IE: Fazlur Rahman**

1. IR: To (.) amra (.) prae somoe:i dekhi: je apni

Parsho:corittre: e obhinoe korchen (0.1)

So, we almost always see that you are playing a side character.

2. IR: Mane (.) shudhu parsho: corittro beche near (.) karonta: ki ashole (0.1)

I mean, what is the reason for choosing only the side character (?)

3. IE: parsho corittro (.) beche near bishoe na (.)

It is not a matter of choosing a side character.

4. IE: ashole: amader e: je format arki (0.1) colocchitre (0.1) sekhane akta: prodhan corittro thake (.)

We have the main character, as per the film's format.

#### 4.2.2 Preferences

##### 1) Political interview

Regarding preferences, in the following example, in lines 4 and 5, IR asks two questions, whereas IE answers in line 6 with “none”. In line 4, IR asks, “Are you talking about releasing Khaleda Zia (opposition leader) to restore democracy?” then, in line 5, she asks another question, “Or does the restoration of democracy mean a neutral election government?” So, from these two questions, IR prefers a particular “yes” answer; however, IE here dis-align with IR's preferences with the answer “none” in line 6.

#### **Excerpt-1 DBC News, September 24, 2018, IR: Nobonita Chowdhury IE1: Barrister Andalib Rahman Partho**

1. IR: ta ei oikker konta (.) ak dofa ak dabi bole (0.1) apni mone koren (0.1)

Which of the following is one of the demands of this alliance (?)

2. IE1: amito (.) mone kori (.) gonotontro punoruddhar e: sobceye boro dabi (0.1)

I think the most considerable demand is the restoration of democracy.

3. IE1: [because (.) ei dosh bochor (.) dhore je practice ta:

Because that is the practice for ten years (.)

4. IR: [gonotontro punoruddhar (.) bolte apnar kace ki (0.1) Khaleda

Zia'r mukti: (.)

Are you talking about releasing Khaleda Zia (opposition leader) to restore democracy (?)

5. IR: naki gonotonttrer punoruddher (.) mane apnar kace niropekkho nirbacon kalin sorkar (0.1)

Or does the restoration of democracy mean a neutral election government?

6. IE1: aktao na (0.2) None.

- 1) Celebrity interview

In celebrity interviews, preferences such as those found in political news interviews and ordinary conversation can be observed. So, the choices are still available in both interviews; however, the preference in the news interview is entirely different. Because in news interviews, preferences are shaped by IR in the environment of aggressive or adversarial questioning, which is designed to elicit particular or preferred answers. On the other hand, in celebrity interviews, the conversation between IR and IE is entirely personal and casual, about interaction norms. Here, IR will never make any argument to obtain the preferred answers from IE, as seen in political news interviews.

### *Answers and evasiveness*

- 1) Political interview

Regarding answering the questions, IE1 has used overt and covert resistance most of the time, as shown in the following Bengali political news interview extract. Firstly, in lines 1 and 2, IR asks, "Whether any unity is possible in gathering people of these different ideologies?" Furthermore, "Do you think that everyone can be united?" Then IR finishes her turn with two questions in line 3, "What kind of alliance is this? Ideological alliance?" Regarding evasiveness, IE1 does not respond directly in this interview; instead, it begins providing answers to these multiple questions through covert resistance (lines 5-7). Although IE1 responds to the questions accordingly in line 8, stating, "To this day, I do not want to call this alliance an electoral alliance."

#### **Excerpt-1 DBC News, September 24, 2018, IR: Nobonita Chowdhury IE1: Barrister Andalib Rahman Partho**

1. IR: eto, bicittro loker e: somabeshe:: kono(0.2) oikko shombhob kina (.)

Is any unity possible in gathering people of these different ideologies?

2. IR: sokole ashole(.) sheshporjonto (0.1) oikkobodho hote parbe bole (.) apni mone koren kina (.)

Do you think that everyone can be united?

3. IR: eta tahole ki(.) jot? Adorshik (.) jot (0.2)  
What kind of alliance is this? Ideological alliance
  4. IE1: apnake dhonnobad (.)  
Thank you.
  5. IE1: ashole (0.4) ei: jottar prokkria kintu onek: (.) agey thekei: colchilo(.)  
The process of this alliance has been going on for a long time.
  6. IE1: amader (.) nettri (0.1) jokhon mukto cilen (0.2) a a: tokhon thekei alap hocchilo (.)  
Talks have happened since our leader (President, the opposition party, Bangladesh Nationalist Party) was free.
  7. IE1: bibhinno somoe (.) bibhinno netara jacchilen (0.4)  
Different leaders were going to meet our leader at various times.
  8. IE1: ei: jottake ami(.) ajker din porjonto (0.2), erokom (.) kono nirbaconi jot (0.1) hishebe ami (.) akkha dite cai na (0.2)  
To this day, I do not want to refer to this alliance as an electoral alliance.
- 2) Celebrity interview

In terms of evasiveness, like in political news interviews, we can also find covert and overt resistance in celebrity interviews. Here, IR asks a question in line 1, “What is the reason for choosing only the side character?” Here, IE offers covert resistance in lines 2-5, beginning with “It is not a matter of choosing a side character.” In line 3, the actor added another answer to show his thinking about the topic, “We have the main character, as per the film’s format.” Then, in lines 4-5, the celebrity gives reasons why a side character can be a big or great character, depending on the film’s content. However, the actor provides the answers indirectly to the question. From the above data on Bengali political news interviews, it is evident that these celebrity resistances differ from those of politicians.

### Excerpt-2

**BBC Bangla, 1 May 2022 IR: Afroza Neela IE: Fazlur Rahman**

- 1) IR: Mane (.) shudhu parsho: corittro beche near (.) ka?ronta: ki ashole (0.1)  
I mean, what is the reason for choosing only the side character (?)
- 2) IE: parsho corittro (.) beche near bishoe na (.)  
It is not a matter of choosing a side character.
- 3) IE: ashole: amader e: je format arki (0.1) colocchitre (0.1) sekhane

akta: prodhan corittro thake (.)

We have the main character, as per the film's format.

- 4) IE: Parsho chorittro manei je choto corittro (.) ta  
Na (.)  
Side character does not mean minor character.
- 5) IE: sheta: boro chorittro-o hote pare (.)  
That could be a significant (main) character.

These findings demonstrate that in Bengali political interviews, IRs employ footing or footing shifts to convey a neutral stance. In excerpt one, IR speaks on behalf of two third parties to keep the agenda on track. In terms of footing shifts, McVittie et al. (2011) describe in extract 2 IR Keller mentioned in lines 1 to 3 a third party accused Hamas of the abduction of Gilad Shalit to maintain her neutral stance. In contrast, IE Marzook denied the accusation, and this shift in footing allowed him to evade the challenge in lines 4-5 (pp. 14-15). In contrast, the Bengali celebrity interview extract shows that the questions and all views relate to the actor's personal and professional life. Here, IRs do not need to use a footing to prove neutrality in this polite, personalised conversation.

These findings (extract 1) manifest as part of the agenda setting of adversarial questions; IR asks questions with footing to obtain yes/no answers from IE. However, according to the agenda-setting theory, IE declines to answer. In contrast, the objectivity of agenda-setting in news interviews, as part of adversarial questioning, differs from that in celebrity interviews, as evident from the data (extract 2), because IR here does not have a challenging or complex agenda to elicit a narrow or broad answer, as in a political interview. As part of agenda-setting, interruptions or overlaps are common in Bengali political or celebrity interviews. A recent study by Khan et al. (2019, p. 50) argued that interruptions or overlaps happen when IR wants to take the floor when they understand that IE deviates from the topic (in extract 13) and when IR interrupts the IE to change the subject to stand on agenda setting (in extract 14).

Regarding the preference for the adversarial question design, the data (excerpt 1) show that IR asks two questions to favour the "yes" answer, whereas IE disagrees with her. The preferences are also available in celebrity interviews; however, the preferences in the news interview are entirely different. Because in news interviews, preferences are shaped by IR in the environment of aggressive or adversarial questioning, which is designed to elicit particular or preferred answers. On the other hand, in celebrity or entertainment interviews, IR makes preferences through questions in a congenial environment to get the preferred information as a representative of the audience.

The findings present politicians' accountability to the public in news interviews. Here, from Extract 1, it is evident that IE1 attempts to remain accountable and stay on message despite the adversarial questioning. However, regarding evasiveness, it is obvious that IE avoids answering directly during the interaction. On the other hand, in celebrity interviews, the data shows that the guest is discussing their personal or professional life, so there is no room for proving accountability to the question asked by IR. Though a celebrity has to show responsibility through their talk, as many people, including young generations, follow and idolize their personality and work.

The data findings show that IE answers in overt and covert resistance, as well as in the dimension of evasiveness, in political interviews. However, in celebrity interviews, we see resistance from IE in the conversation, unlike in political interviews, where they are polite and resist giving the audience more information.

From the discussion, it is evident how the IRs maintain their neutral position in news interviews through adversarial questioning. IR also employs the tactic of foot-in-mouth syndrome—speaking on behalf of a third party—to demonstrate its neutrality in political news interviews. It also discusses how interviewees face aggressive questioning and how they show their evasiveness or resistance. On the other hand, in a celebrity interview, IR attempts to ask questions in a friendly manner, mainly about the celebrity's personal or professional life, and IR is also relatively congenial to the celebrity guest.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that all data from Bengali political news and celebrity interviews demonstrate how Bangladeshi interviewers maintain their neutral position in news interviews through adversarial questioning. Additionally, IR uses the tactic of footing shift, or speaking on behalf of a third party, to convey its neutrality in political news interviews. After that, it also discusses how Bangladeshi interviewees (politicians) face this aggressive questioning and how they respond to it, showing their evasiveness or resistance while trying to remain accountable to the public or audience. On the other hand, in the comparative discussion, the Bengali celebrity interview differs from the Bengali news interview in many respects, as it is not an aggressive questioning interview. The IR here does not need to use footing or footing shift to prove them neutral in this interview. Here, IE does not necessarily face complex or critical questions like in a news interview. For this reason, celebrities do not need to answer evasively or avoid answering adversarial or complex questions, as politicians often do, to demonstrate accountability to the public or their audience.

It is recommended that interviewers and reporters from television, radio, and online platforms develop greater awareness through these interaction variations to enhance communicative effectiveness and ethical balance in news and other

political or celebrity interviews. Future research could include a vast corpus of interviews across various Bengali media to identify broader conversational patterns. Researchers can also incorporate multimodal conversation analysis (gesture, tone, gaze, and facial expressions), which provides richer insights into institutional interaction.

Regarding implications, the study increases understanding of institutional talk in Bengali by examining interactional norms (question-answer pattern, adversarialness, and evasiveness) across political and celebrity interviews. Based on data from Bengali institutional conversation, it can enhance the likelihood of further comparative work on cross-cultural languages, such as English, Hindi, and other Asian languages. The findings can open up a new research arena—for example, across different institutional contexts such as emergency calls, classroom conversation, doctor-patient interaction, courtroom speech, and sports interviews—or in a cross-linguistic analysis of institutional talk.

This study has several limitations. First, it does not cover all the norms and conventions of institutional CA. Lastly, due to word or space limitations, this study uses a small number of samples and does not address turn-taking structures and some other areas in detail, which should be considered in future research.

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