

**FELICITY CONDITIONS IN LEGAL DISCOURSE: A CASE STUDY OF
THE REALITY SHOW PATERNITY COURT**

THESIS

By:

Latifatuz Zakiyah Darajat
NIM 15320042



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
2024**

**FELICITY CONDITIONS IN LEGAL DISCOURSE: A CASE STUDY OF
THE REALITY SHOW PATERNITY COURT**

THESIS

Presented to
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

By:

Latifatuz Zakiyah Darajat
NIM 15320042

Advisor:

Zainur Rofiq, S.S., M.A.
NIP 19861018201802011180



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
2024**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **Felicity Conditions in Legal Discourse: A Case Study of the Reality Show Paternity Court** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, October 29th, 2024

The Researcher



Latifatuz Zakiyah Darajat

NIM 15320042

APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that the thesis of Latifatuz Zakiyah Darajat, **Felicity Conditions in Legal Discourse: A Case Study of the Reality Show Paternity Court** has been approved by the advisor for further approval by the Board of Examiners as one the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S) in Department of English Literature.

Malang, November 4th, 2024

Approved by
Advisor,

Head of Department of English Litterature



Zainur Rofiq, S.S., MA.
NIP 19861018201802011180



Ribut Wahyudi, M.Ed., Ph.d.
NIP 198112052011011007

The Dean of Humanities Faculty
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang



LEGITIMATION SHEET

This is to certify that Latifatuz Zakiyah Darajat, entitled **Felicity Conditions in Legal Discourse: A Case Study of the Reality Show Paternity Court** has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.) in Department of English Literature.

Malang, November 4th, 2024

The Board of Examiners

1. Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A.
NIP 198805232015031004

Signatures

(Main Examiner)



2. Vita Nur Santi, M.Pd.
NIP 198306192011012008

(Chair)



3. Zainur Rofiq, S.S., M.A.
NIP 19861018201802011180

(Advisor)



Approved by
Dean of Humanities Faculty
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang



Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag.
NIP 197411012003121003

MOTTO

“... Know that if the entire creation were to gather together to do something to benefit you- you would never get any benefit except that Allah had written for you. And if they were to gather to do something to harm you- you would never be harmed except that Allah had written for you. The pens are lifted and the pages are dried.”

HR. Tirmidzi (2516)

DEDICATION

This thesis dedicated to:

My Mother Asrorit Toyibah.

Thank you to my parents for always supporting me.

Thank you for patiently waiting for me to finish this thesis.

My beloved brother Muhammad Nashruddin Zulkifli.

My aunt Julis Lukluil Maknun.

My cute cousin Asri Khuril Aini. ☺

My honorable advisor, Zainur Rofiq, S.S., M.A.

My honorable examiner, Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A. and Vita Nur Santi, M. Pd.

I really thank to every guidance, knowledge, and sincerity.

Also, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all my lecturers, friends, and everyone who contributed to the completion of this thesis.

I cannot thank to them enough for everything that they gave.

Last but not least, I wanna thank me for doing this work, my sweet and tears.

Thank You ☺

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Alhamdulillah, praise be to Allah SWT and greetings to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and hopefully, there will be useful intercessions in the hereafter. On this occasion, the researcher would like to thank her mother Asrorit Toyibah, her younger brother Muhammad Nashruddin Zulkifli, and her aunt Julis Lukluil Maknun for supporting the researcher, as well as her friends Mas'ula too for cheering her, in making this thesis. The researcher would also like to thank the lecturers who have helped her to get this far.

In this case, as a researcher, she is expected to be wise and accept constructive criticism and suggestions from readers to perfect this thesis in the future. This thesis can be used as a reference material for further researchers to review study about the condition of felicity to be studied.

Malang, November 4th, 2024
The Researcher



Latifatuz Zakiyah Darajat
NIM 15320042

ABSTRACT

Darajat, Latifatuz Zakiyah. (2024). *Felicity Conditions in Legal Discourse: A Case Study of the Reality Show Paternity Court*. Undergraduate Thesis Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Advisor : Zainur Rofiq, S.S., M.A.

Keywords : Felicity conditions, courtroom discourse, speech acts, Paternity Court, qualitative analysis.

In courtroom discourse, particularly within *Paternity Court*, felicity conditions play a vital role in ensuring the success of speech acts in structured and high-stakes interactions. This study explores how different types of felicity conditions, including general, sincerity, content, preparatory, and essential conditions, are applied within *Paternity Court*, a context that has received limited attention in prior research that primarily focuses on political or everyday discourse. Employing qualitative content analysis, this study identified 46 instances of felicity conditions across five selected episodes, finding that general conditions were the most prominent and accounted for 39.13 percent of the data, followed by content and sincerity conditions. The prevalence of general conditions highlights the courtroom's reliance on mutual understanding and procedural norms, reinforcing clarity and adherence to a formal structure. These findings contribute to the field of linguistics by broadening the study of felicity conditions to include legal contexts and offer practical insights for enhancing communication training within courtroom settings.

ABSTRAK

Darajat, Latifatuz Zakiyah. (2024). *Kondisi Felisitas dalam Wacana Hukum: Studi Kasus Acara Realitas Paternity Court*. Skripsi Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Dosen Pembimbing : Zainur Rofiq, S.S., M.A.

Kata Kunci : Kondisi felicity, wacana ruang sidang, tindak tutur, Paternity Court, analisis kualitatif

Dalam wacana ruang sidang, khususnya di dalam acara *Paternity Court*, kondisi felicity memainkan peran penting dalam menjamin keberhasilan tindak tutur dalam interaksi yang terstruktur dan berisiko tinggi. Studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana berbagai jenis kondisi felicity, termasuk kondisi umum, ketulusan, konten, persiapan, dan esensial, diterapkan dalam *Paternity Court*, suatu konteks yang jarang mendapat perhatian dalam penelitian sebelumnya yang umumnya berfokus pada wacana politik atau sehari-hari. Dengan menggunakan analisis konten kualitatif, studi ini mengidentifikasi 46 contoh kondisi felicity dalam lima episode yang dipilih, di mana kondisi umum menjadi yang paling menonjol dan mencakup 39.13 persen data, diikuti oleh kondisi konten dan ketulusan. Dominasi kondisi umum menunjukkan ketergantungan ruang sidang pada pemahaman bersama dan norma prosedural, yang memperkuat kejelasan dan kepatuhan terhadap struktur formal. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada bidang linguistik dengan memperluas kajian kondisi felicity ke dalam konteks hukum serta memberikan wawasan praktis untuk meningkatkan pelatihan komunikasi di ruang sidang.

الملخص

درجات , لطيفة الزاكية .(2024). شروط النجاح في الخطاب أطروحة القانوني: دراسة حالة لبرنامج الواقع *Paternity Court* قسم الأدب الإنجليزي, كلية العلوم الإنسانية, جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكيمة مالانغ.

المشرف: زين الرفاق ليسانس الأدب , ماجستير في الأدب
الكلمة لمفتاحية: شروط السعادة , خطاب المحكمة الأفعال *Paternity Court* تحليل نوعي الكلامية برنامج.

في خطاب المحكمة , وخاصة في برنامج *Paternity Court* , تلعب شروط السعادة دورًا حيويًا في ضمان نجاح الأفعال الكلامية في التفاعلات المنظمة وذات المخاطر العالية. تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيفية تطبيق الأنواع المختلفة من شروط السعادة , بما في ذلك الشروط العامة والإخلاص والمحتوى والإعداد والأساسية , في *Paternity Court* , وهو لمسياق يحظ باهتمام كبير في الأبحاث السابقة التي تركز أساسًا على الخطاب السياسي أو اليومي. باستخدام تحليل المحتوى النوعي , حددت هذه الدراسة 46 حالة من شروط السعادة عبر خمسة حلقات مختارة , حيث كانت الشروط العامة هي الأكثر بروزًا وشكلت 39.13 بالمئة من البيانات , تليها شروط المحتوى والإخلاص. توضح هيمنة الشروط العامة اعتماد المحكمة على التفاهم المتبادل والأعراف الإجرائية , مما يعزز الوضوح والالتزام بالهيكل الرسمي. تساهم هذه النتائج في مجال علم اللغة من خلال توسيع دراسة شروط السعادة لتشمل السياقات القانونية , وتقدم رؤى عملية لتحسين التدريب على التواصل في المحاكم.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the discussion on the background of the study, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, and significance of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Language serves as the fundamental means of human communication, enabling individuals to convey thoughts, emotions, and ideas effectively. Both spoken and written forms of language play crucial roles in facilitating human interaction, forming a basis for understanding and expressing the nuances of meaning. In human conversations, which involve spontaneous exchanges between individuals, it becomes vital for participants to interpret each other's intentions accurately to achieve meaningful communication. Pragmatics, as a subfield of linguistics, addresses the study of language use in context, focusing on how meaning is constructed and interpreted beyond the literal level of words.

Within pragmatics, the concept of felicity conditions plays an essential role in understanding how speech acts function effectively. Felicity conditions, first introduced by Austin in his seminal work *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), refer to the specific criteria required for a speech act to be successfully performed. Austin's theory provided the foundation for speech act theory, highlighting that utterances are not merely strings of words but actions performed by speakers within social contexts. Austin's contributions to the field underscored

the importance of non-truth-conditional aspects of language, showing that communication depends on more than literal content. His work established a framework for analyzing speech acts that remain central to contemporary pragmatics research.

Building upon Austin's initial concepts, Searle (1969) further delineated felicity conditions into distinct categories—propositional content, preparatory, sincerity, and essential conditions. Each category specifies criteria for the contextual and intentional aspects necessary for speech acts to achieve their intended effect. Propositional content requires the speech act's content to match the intended action's context; for example, a factual basis for making claims. Preparatory conditions involve prerequisites such as authority or situational factors needed to validate the speech act, while sincerity conditions demand genuine intent from the speaker, such as sincerity in apologies or promises. Essential conditions outline the intended change the speech act brings about, such as enacting a decision or establishing an obligation. These categorizations have facilitated the systematic study of various communicative acts, especially those embedded within institutional and legal contexts where authority, intention, and authenticity are paramount.

Research on felicity conditions has extended these foundational theories to specific discourse types, offering insights into how speech acts are operationalized in different settings. For instance, Hamza and Nordin (2024) examined how felicity conditions are manipulated in political speech, particularly in the speeches of Donald Trump, where propositional content and sincerity conditions were

strategically altered to achieve persuasive aims. Their study revealed that deviations from expected felicity conditions can effectively shape public opinion by constructing narratives aligned with political agendas. This analysis highlights that felicity conditions do not merely serve as evaluative standards but can be strategically manipulated to influence audiences, adding a layer of intentional complexity to the use of speech acts in politics.

Another study by Langton (2018) investigated felicity conditions in counter-speech, focusing on how hearers and bystanders impact the success of speech acts by reinforcing or challenging the speaker's presuppositions. Her research explored how listeners could undermine or reinforce the intent of harmful speech, demonstrating that felicity conditions rely not only on the speaker's intent but also on the audience's response. This perspective enriches the understanding of felicity conditions by acknowledging the influence of social dynamics in determining whether a speech act accomplishes its goal, making it particularly relevant in discussions of free speech and discourse regulation.

In the context of argumentation, Corredor (2021) explored how felicity conditions encompass both normative and objective elements, arguing that successful argumentation requires speech acts to align with factual evidence and social norms. This study emphasized the dual responsibility in communicative acts: not only must speakers conform to expected social conventions, but their arguments should also withstand objective scrutiny. Corredor's work adds a layer of evaluative complexity to felicity conditions, proposing that effective argumentation depends on both the authenticity of intent and factual accuracy.

Additionally, Oishi (2021) examined how felicity conditions adapt across cultural contexts by analyzing the use of honorifics in Japanese. His study demonstrated that societal conventions, such as politeness and formality markers, modulate felicity conditions, particularly sincerity and essential conditions, revealing that the criteria for successful speech acts are contextually variable. This research underscores that felicity conditions cannot be universally applied without considering cultural conventions, which shape how speech acts are interpreted and validated within specific societies.

Kozmenkova et al. (2018) extended the application of felicity conditions to legal discourse, focusing on how sincerity conditions are manipulated in deceptive communication. Their research analyzed how speakers strategically alter sincerity to mislead or manipulate in legal settings, where truthfulness and reliability are paramount. Their findings highlighted the importance of distinguishing between genuine and deceptive intent, demonstrating the utility of felicity conditions as an analytical framework in legal proceedings where speaker authenticity is critical to the justice process.

While previous studies have provided a rich understanding of how felicity conditions function in varied contexts such as politics, argumentation, cultural interactions, and legal discourse, limited research has explored the application of felicity conditions in semi-formal, entertainment-based legal shows. Programs like *Paternity Court*, which blend elements of legal proceedings with entertainment, present unique challenges in the application of felicity conditions. In such settings, the distinction between sincerity and performative intent is often blurred,

as speakers navigate between authentic communication and dramatization for audience engagement. The existing literature does not adequately address how felicity conditions operate in this hybrid context, where the formality of legal speech acts intersects with the relaxed, performative aspects of reality television.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the felicity conditions in *Paternity Court*, a unique format that showcases family legal disputes in a televised court-like setting. Unlike traditional courtrooms, *Paternity Court* combines real conflict resolution with elements of performance, requiring speakers (litigants and the judge) to balance authenticity with engagement. Investigating how felicity conditions are met or violated within this context will offer new insights into the adaptability of speech act theory in settings that defy strict categorization as either purely formal or informal. The findings will contribute to an expanded understanding of felicity conditions, particularly in environments that straddle institutional authority and entertainment, and may provide implications for pragmatic analysis in similar hybridized communication contexts.

The focus is on categorizing instances of different felicity conditions to illustrate how these conditions function within a structured, legal setting. Additionally, the study examines how courtroom interactions in *Paternity Court* align with or diverge from the principles of felicity conditions as outlined by Yule. Through this analysis, the study seeks to clarify the role of felicity conditions in supporting clarity, sincerity, and procedural order within legal-themed media representations.

Research on felicity conditions in speech acts has laid an important foundation for understanding the criteria that make speech acts effective and appropriate. Key studies have delved into the components and applications of felicity conditions as developed by Austin and Searle, focusing on preparatory, propositional content, sincerity, and essential conditions as essential for successful communication.

Hadiati (2019) conducted a study titled *Felicity Conditions of the Speech Acts in Banyumasan Daily Conversation*, which investigates how speech acts in Banyumasan daily interactions adhere to felicity conditions. Using descriptive analysis, Hadiati identifies representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts within these conversations, emphasizing the importance of cultural context in fulfilling felicity conditions in real-world interactions.

Novanti (2016), in her work *The Analysis of Felicity Condition Found in The Hunger Games Movie and Its Application to Teach Speaking at the Twelfth Grade of Senior High School*, examines felicity conditions within *The Hunger Games* film. She categorizes 49 instances of felicity conditions, including general, content, preparatory, sincerity, and essential conditions. Novanti's work extends the application of felicity conditions into a pedagogical framework, showing how speech act analysis can support language teaching and improve communicative skills among high school students.

Adnyasuari (2014) explores felicity conditions in *Felicity Condition of Women's Illocutions in the Novel Stand by Me*, where she identifies assertive illocutions among other types and evaluates whether they meet the conditions for

felicitous acts. Her findings highlight the role of felicity conditions in literary analysis, showcasing the ways in which characters' intentions and communicative contexts shape their illocutions within the narrative.

Azizah (2007) examined felicity conditions in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, focusing on how these conditions influence the fulfillment of various speech acts. Using a qualitative approach, Azizah analyzed dialogues to classify felicity conditions within the categories of ordering, asking, asserting, and offering, revealing those specific conditions—such as preparatory, execution, and sincerity—are essential for understanding the characters' intentions and interactions.

Wisatawati (2013) conducted a study titled *Illocutionary Act and Its Felicity Conditions Analysis in the Rise of The Guardians Film*, examining the illocutionary acts and felicity conditions in the film's dialogues. She concludes that not all illocutionary acts satisfy their respective felicity conditions, resulting in infelicitous utterances when one or more conditions are unmet. This study underscores the need for fulfilling all felicity conditions to ensure that speech acts convey their intended meaning without causing misunderstandings.

These previous studies provide a rich background for understanding felicity conditions across various contexts, including conversational, pedagogical, literary, and cinematic settings. They collectively underscore the importance of meeting specific conditions for speech acts to achieve their intended communicative outcomes, illustrating the wide applicability of felicity conditions in speech act analysis.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher aims to address the following question:

1. How are the felicity conditions, as defined by Yule, applied and manifested within courtroom interactions on the reality show *Paternity Court*?

C. Significance of the Study

This study offers a valuable theoretical contribution to the field of linguistics by deepening the understanding of felicity conditions within speech act theory, specifically in how these conditions operate across different types of interactions. By exploring and categorizing the types of felicity conditions, this research aims to equip readers with insights into the underlying principles that guide effective and appropriate communication. Such knowledge can enhance readers' awareness of interactional norms, helping them apply felicity conditions in real-life conversations and ensuring that communicative acts align with the expected standards of context and intent.

On a practical level, the findings from this study may serve as a useful reference for future researchers interested in investigating similar topics or expanding on the current analysis of felicity conditions. The study's insights can inform further research across various communicative settings, encouraging scholars to explore how felicity conditions function in diverse contexts and

contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of pragmatics and effective communication.

D. Scope and Limitation

This study is rooted in pragmatics, a branch of linguistics focusing on language use in context and the intentions behind speakers' utterances. Pragmatics delves into how meaning is constructed during interactions, examining language's functionality beyond its structural form. Within this field, the study centers on speech acts, with particular emphasis on felicity conditions—criteria that determine whether a speech act achieves its intended communicative effect. Foundational theories on felicity conditions have been developed by scholars such as Austin, Searle, and Yule, each offering insights into the prerequisites for effective communication. This analysis specifically draws on George Yule's (1996) framework, which categorizes felicity conditions into distinct types, providing a structured approach for examining how these conditions manifest in various speech acts.

The study's scope is confined to five selected episodes of *Paternity Court*, chosen for their complex conflicts and rich conversational exchanges that offer substantial material for analyzing the application of felicity conditions in real-life contexts. The selected episodes span multiple seasons: *Couple Broke Up 1 Week Before Prom* (Season 4), *Man Thought Child Support Papers Were Fake* (Season 3), *Family Doubtful but Man Is Certain of Paternity* (Season 1), *Woman Finds Mother's Ex-Lovers to Find True Father* (Season 5), and *Mother Reveals*

Father's Identity on Her Deathbed (Season 6). By focusing on these episodes, the study aims to uncover how Yule's categorized felicity conditions function within conversational exchanges that address sensitive family and legal matters, demonstrating their relevance and applicability in real-life communicative scenarios.

E. Definition of Key Term

1. **Felicity Condition:** According to Yule (1996: 50), felicity conditions refer to specific expected or appropriate circumstances under which a speech act can be effectively performed and perceived as intended. These conditions ensure the appropriateness of an utterance, taking into account factors like the speaker's authority and sincerity. The types include general, propositional content, preparatory, sincerity, and essential conditions.
2. **Speech Act:** Introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle, speech acts are actions performed via utterances, such as making promises, giving commands, or making declarations. Each speech act involves an intention and relies on certain conditions to be fulfilled for the intended action to succeed.
3. **Pragmatics:** Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines language use in context, focusing on how meaning is conveyed through interactions, speaker intentions, and situational factors beyond mere structural or grammatical elements.

4. **Paternity Court:** *Paternity Court* is a television show with a plaintiff/defendant format where familial and legal issues, especially related to paternity, are adjudicated. The cases are often complex and involve emotionally charged exchanges, making it a valuable source for analyzing speech acts in context.
5. **Preparatory Condition:** This is a type of felicity condition in which certain situational prerequisites must be met for the speech act to be appropriate. For instance, for a promise to be valid, the speaker must intend to fulfill it, and the listener must want it fulfilled.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a thorough review of the literature relevant to the current study, offering a theoretical foundation and contextual insights into the analysis. It covers pragmatics, felicity conditions, the role of reality shows in studying language use, and the significance of *Paternity Court* as a unique case study for examining speech acts within high-stakes communicative settings. By understanding the intersections between these elements, this review establishes a strong basis for the study's focus on how felicity conditions affect communication outcomes in legally framed but emotionally driven interactions.

A. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that investigates how language operates in social contexts, delving beyond structural forms to understand the nuances of speaker intent and listener interpretation. Levinson (2008) emphasizes pragmatics as essential to understanding how language and context are intertwined in constructing meaning. Building on this, Griffiths (2006) explains pragmatics as the study of how individuals use language within specific contexts, allowing more to be communicated than what is merely encoded by syntax and semantics. This branch of linguistics encompasses not only sentence meaning but also the speaker's intentions, the effect on the listener, and the social context influencing interaction.

The work of Yule (1996) further specifies pragmatics as a study of contextual meaning, concentrating on how meanings are conveyed and interpreted within given circumstances. Pragmatics examines the ways in which interlocutors communicate implicit messages or infer meaning based on situational factors. Mey (2001) also adds that pragmatics concerns itself with both the process of language production and the relationship between language and its social context. In this light, pragmatics becomes essential to the analysis of felicity conditions, as it clarifies how context impacts the appropriateness and effectiveness of speech acts.

Cutting (2002) extends this view by noting that pragmatics is influenced by socio-cultural factors, where the distance between speakers and listeners can affect the language used. Social behaviors, norms, and relationships shape the language choices made in specific settings. Therefore, the principles of pragmatics are deeply rooted in social context and interpersonal dynamics, which dictate the use and interpretation of language. This understanding is central to the study of felicity conditions, as it highlights how situational appropriateness and the relationship between speakers contribute to the success or failure of speech acts.

Pragmatics, in sum, is the study of language use within context, with applications across several aspects such as implicature, deixis, presupposition, and, most relevant here, speech acts. Felicity conditions play a crucial role within pragmatics, serving as guidelines for determining when speech acts are effective or suitable in specific contexts. Yule (1996) categorizes these conditions into four types, which are examined in greater detail within this research.

B. Felicity Condition

The concept of felicity conditions, established by Austin and further developed by Searle, defines the prerequisites that must be met for a speech act to achieve its intended effect. According to Austin's model, felicity conditions require that certain contextual and social factors align to render speech acts valid and appropriate. Cutting (2002) asserts that for a speech act to be felicitous, it must adhere to these conditions, which include social roles, contextual appropriateness, and the speaker's intentions.

Searle expands on this by specifying general rules for felicity conditions that apply across speech acts. These rules indicate that listeners must understand the language used and recognize the speaker's intent as genuine and appropriate for the situation. Levinson (2008) elaborates on this by introducing the idea of pragmatic fit, where felicity conditions are context-dependent and subject to how well they align with both the speaker's intent and the listener's expectations.

Yule (1996) refines these categories, defining felicity conditions into five distinct types: general, content, preparatory, sincerity, and essential conditions. Each category serves to determine specific aspects of a successful speech act. For example, sincerity conditions require that the speaker's intent aligns with the utterance, ensuring a commitment to truth or action. Preparatory conditions establish prerequisites that validate the act, such as authority in making declarations. These categories allow for a structured examination of how language functions in varying contexts, making them essential for studying verbal exchanges in high-stakes scenarios such as courtroom settings.

C. Reality Shows and Language use

Reality shows occupy a unique space within media, presenting unscripted, often spontaneous interactions that mimic real-life communication. They offer a valuable framework for studying pragmatics, as the language used reflects genuine reactions and personal expressions. Reality shows, or "chat shows" in British English, revolve around face-to-face interactions, often focusing on significant social, political, or personal issues. Unlike scripted television, reality shows prioritize spontaneous language, which serves to engage viewers and create a sense of authenticity.

Ilie (2001) discusses how reality shows share characteristics with historical public forums, such as salons and coffeehouses, where conversational exchange shaped public opinion and social norms. This unscripted dialogue on reality shows becomes a platform for public discourse, offering insights into how speakers navigate social expectations, face-threatening acts, and conversational norms. The genre's appeal lies in its spontaneous nature, allowing viewers to witness unfiltered expressions and interactions that often reflect broader societal issues. Scannell (1991) explains that despite being pre-recorded, reality shows retain an aura of immediacy, creating a connection between the participants and the audience that feels genuine and relatable.

D. Paternity Court as a Case Study

Paternity Court exemplifies a reality show grounded in both legal and familial discourse, where participants navigate high-stakes conversations about identity, paternity, and family relationships. Presided over by Lauren Lake, this

non-traditional courtroom show provides a platform for analyzing felicity conditions within emotionally charged and socially complex exchanges. Produced by MGM and structured around legal frameworks, *Paternity Court* presents a unique blend of legal adjudication and personal narrative, making it an ideal case study for exploring the application of felicity conditions.

The format of *Paternity Court* sets it apart from traditional courtroom shows by focusing exclusively on familial issues, particularly paternity disputes, and the implications of DNA testing on family dynamics. Since its debut in 2013, the show has garnered attention for its raw emotional content and the interpersonal complexity it reveals. Lake, as both judge and mediator, facilitates discussions that are laden with both personal and legal consequences. The structure of the show, which emphasizes unscripted and often volatile exchanges, aligns with the study's focus on felicity conditions, as it provides ample examples of contextually bound speech acts.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This section details the research method used in this study, outlining the research design, instruments, data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

A. Research Design

The researcher adopted a descriptive qualitative research design, which is suitable for providing an in-depth examination of the types of felicity conditions observed in the *Paternity Court* reality show. This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of speech acts in context, particularly how felicity conditions operate within conversational exchanges. Qualitative description was chosen because the analysis focuses on language use, exploring the interactions and identifying various felicity conditions as they naturally occur within selected dialogues from the show.

B. Data Source

The study's data were derived from selected episodes of *Paternity Court*, which were transcribed and analyzed to explore instances of felicity conditions. *Paternity Court* is a United States-based reality court show where legal analyst and judge Lauren Lake presides over paternity cases, often using DNA test results as evidence. Produced by 79th & York Entertainment and Orion Television, the show offers a unique platform for observing speech acts, as it combines legal

language with real-life family dynamics. The five episodes selected for this study provide a range of conversational content, rich in emotion and conflict, which allows for an examination of how felicity conditions contribute to the unfolding interactions and the effectiveness of communication. These episodes include "Couple Broke Up 1 Week Before Prom" (Season 4), "Man Thought Child Support Papers Were Fake" (Season 3), "Family Doubtful But Man Is Certain of Paternity Court" (Season 1), "Woman Finds Mother's Ex-Lovers to Find True Father" (Season 5), and "Mother Reveals Father's Identity On Her Deathbed" (Season 6). The use of subtitles accompanying these episodes helped ensure accuracy in identifying specific phrases, words, and expressions that illustrate felicity conditions.

C. Data Collection

The data collection process involved a systematic approach to selecting and preparing the episodes for analysis. First, the researcher downloaded the episodes and subtitles from the official *Paternity Court* YouTube account. This enabled the researcher to have a permanent record of both the visual and spoken elements of each episode. The subtitles were then converted into Microsoft Word documents to facilitate a detailed line-by-line analysis. The researcher watched each episode multiple times, carefully comparing the spoken language with the subtitles to ensure accuracy in the transcription. This approach allowed for a deep understanding of the nuances in conversation, providing insight into the speaker's intent, tone, and emotional context. Each utterance that met the criteria for felicity

conditions was then identified, focusing on how each instance contributed to the overall interaction and communicated meaning effectively or ineffectively.

D. Data Analysis

The analysis of data followed a structured process to categorize and understand the felicity conditions at play in each episode. First, the researcher identified all utterances that met the criteria for felicity conditions, guided by Yule's (1996) theoretical framework, which divides felicity conditions into five primary types: general conditions, content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and essential conditions. Each instance of a felicity condition was classified according to these categories, allowing for a clear view of how different types of felicity conditions influenced the interaction.

For example, general conditions were observed to establish whether the speech act was recognized as valid by both the speaker and hearer, while content conditions were identified to assess the relevance of the speech act's content to the immediate context. Preparatory conditions were analyzed in terms of whether the speaker had the necessary authority or standing to make the statement, which is particularly relevant in the legal setting of *Paternity Court*. Sincerity conditions were observed to determine the extent to which the speaker genuinely intended their speech act, such as in promises or apologies. Essential conditions were assessed by examining whether the speech act met the fundamental purpose of the interaction, as in declarations that affect the lives of those involved, like paternity declarations.

The researcher then compared the occurrence of each felicity condition type across the five episodes, examining the frequency and impact of each type within specific conversational exchanges. Patterns were noted, particularly regarding how certain types of felicity conditions, such as sincerity and preparatory conditions, tended to shape the outcomes of interactions. The analysis concluded with an interpretation of how felicity conditions facilitated or hindered effective communication, emphasizing the crucial role these conditions play in legal and emotional discussions, as illustrated by the *Paternity Court* context.

This structured analysis enabled the researcher to observe felicity conditions in a real-world setting, highlighting their practical implications in ensuring that speech acts fulfill their intended purposes and contribute to effective communication.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains findings and discussions based on the steps mentioned in the data analysis section. The results contain an explanation of the analysis of the types of felicity conditions found in the reality show Paternity Court. The researcher then describes the analysis section using George Yule's theory (1996:50) using the theory of felicity conditions.

A. Findings

The data from this research is a conversation from a reality show Paternity Court. This reality show is produced by David Armor. Therefore, the researchers found this analysis data from the transcripts and subtitles contained in the Youtube video. The initial data in the form of speech is then transformed into sentences by transcribing the subtitles on the video. In analyzing the data, the researcher determined the types of felicity conditions consisting of general conditions, preparation conditions, sincerity conditions, content conditions, and essential conditions in the reality show Paternity Court. Then, the researcher explained that each type of felicity condition were divided based on its classification. In this section, the researcher found 46 data containing felicity conditions from reality shows that lasted about 17 minutes or more on each topic. And to avoid data saturation, the researcher divided the type of felicity with each episode.

This section presents the description of the data used by the researcher to analyze the felicity condition in the Reality Show Paternity Court.

Paternity Court E93 Season 4: Couple Broke Up 1 Week Before Prom

- 1) Setting: Opening the trial and greeting all audiences.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Jerome (Bailiff), and the audience.

Conversation: Lauren Lake (Judge): *Please be seated.*

Jerome (police): Hello, Your Honor.

Lauren Lake : Hello.

Jerome: This case is of Jones v. Houston.

Lauren Lake: Thank you, Jerome. Good day, everyone.

Audience: Good day.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the speaker command to sit down and the hearer understands the language being used and they are not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

- 2) Setting: There was an argument between the plaintiff and the defendant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Bridget Houston, and Nakesha Jones.

Conversation: LL: Ms. Houston, how did you see text messages in a high school girl's phone?

BH: Because she used to let my daughter use her phone, like, to play on. My daughter, like, uh, she's 15 now, but she would let her use the phone at my house sitting on my couch, 'cause she to come...

NJ: No. I never let her daughter.. use my phone.

BH: ... and, so, she would be on the phone...

NJ: She used to my phone.

BH: She would bounce the wifi and all ...

LL: So, hold on, one at time.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the speaker asks the plaintiff to speak one by one so that the judge can hear clearly and understand what they mean. So, her utterance includes the general condition.

3) Setting: There was an argument between the plaintiff and the defendant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Bridget Houston, Nakesha Jones, Nigel Houston, and Nicole Strange.

Conversation: BH: Because, you know, these two use to know each other.

LL: And you are 18 years old, with two girls pregnant at the same time?

NS: At the same time.

NH: No.

BH: Well, if you would have known the first one, maybe he wouldn't have did the second one.

NJ: Oh, well, if you wouldn't, if you all wouldn't have gone through all that drama, if you all wasn't so drama..

BH: You know what, you are a drama. You're not gonna talk to me...

NJ: No, no, no...

BH: Or my children about any kind..

NJ: NO, no, no, you..

LL: One at a time.

(ALL ARGUING INCOHERENTLY)

LL: One at a time. I can't hear you all when you're talking at the same time.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition. The speaker asks the plaintiff to speak one by one because the speaker can't hear them all when they are talking at the same time.

- 4) Setting: One of the plaintiffs advised that because he did not respect his opinion.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Nicole Strange and Nakesha Jones.

Conversation: LL: One at a time. I can't hear you all when you're talking at the same time.

NS: Your Honor, that's why I told you my daughter to stop reaching out to Mr. Houston and his mother because she don't have enough sense to teach her son with respect any way.

NJ: Yeah, they're very disrespectful.

NS: And to take care of his...

NJ: They was disrespectful the whole time..

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Nicole Strange told the judge that she warns her daughter not to reach out to Mr. Houston and his mother because his mother doesn't respect Nicole Strange's family.

- 5) Setting: The judge gave advice and suggestions to the plaintiff to be more careful when speaking.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Nakesha Jones, and Savanah Hasty.

Conversation: NJ: Your Honor, this wouldn't be happening if he wasn't trying to get me pregnant. He admitted to it. So... (AUDIENCE GASPS) He wanted a baby.

LL: Well, news flash for you, sweetie. Someone can't get you pregnant if you protect yourself. (APPLAUSE) And at your age, and his age, getting ready for your prom, you should be getting ready to go on to college. Figure out what

you wanna do with your life. Where are we now with this.
Now we've got two children, Ms, Hasty's had a baby, you have a baby. Ms. Hasty, is Mr. Houston involved in your child's life?

SH: Yes.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the content condition of warning because, in Lauren Lake's utterances, she warns Nakesha Jones about what will exactly happen in the future if she didn't protect herself. She will get pregnant by someone.

- 6) Setting: The judge asked for help from his assistant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Nakesha Jones.

Conversation: LL: *Jerome, can you hand me that, please?* You submitted to the court a list of receipts as well as the physical receipts for clothes, diapers, food, toiletries, toys, books. Totaling \$2,819 and furniture. Yes, of course, we need that. Crib, et cetera, am I correct?

NJ: Yes, ma'am.

Analysis: The speaker asks Jerome to give the data. The condition above belongs to the general condition because he can understand the language being used and that he is not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

- 7) Setting: In the middle of the conversation, there was impoliteness towards the judge because the judge criticized the defendant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Nigel Houston and Bridget Houston

Conversation: LL: How do you think you cannot have a job?

NH: Yes, what?

LL: How do you... What?

NH: I can't hear you...

LL: It's called, no, it's call excuse me, ma'am.

NH: Excuse me, ma'am.

LL: See, we're gonna get it right in here today, I don't know who's teaching you, but I'm gonna give you a lesson...

BH: I'm teaching him.

LL: Well, you're not. Because when I say something...

BH: I am.

LL: ...the answer is not, "What."

BH: I understand...

LL: The answer is not, "What."

BH: Okay.

LL: You didn't teach him.

BH: I obviously did.

LL: You didn't teach him correctly! But I am going to today...

BH: Okay.

Analysis: The speaker is angry because the hearer is not polite. When the speaker says something, the hearer can't answer it quickly. She also interrupts the speaker many often. So, the speaker says that she is gonna give her a lesson. This utterance includes in general condition because she can understand the language being used and that she is not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

- 8) Setting: The judge gave advice and suggestions to the plaintiff to be more polite.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Bridget Houston, Nigel Houston and Nakesha Jones.

Conversation: LL: When I corrected him...

BH: Mmm-hmm.

LL: ...the next time he responded to me, he did it correctly because I corrected him. (APPLAUSE) The point is... He, it is possible for him to be employed right now.

BH: Right

LL: And his should be. We starting a bad pattern we're going to break today. (AUDIENCE MURMURING) I'm ready for the results. (APPLAUSE)

NH: Me too.

LL: These results were prepared by DNA Diagnostics and they read as follows. In this case of Jones v. Houston, when it comes to 6-month-old Sinclair Lyric, it has been determined by this court, Mr. Houston... You.. are the father.

NJ: Boom! Yeah.

LL: Ms. Jones, Ms. Jones, don't act silly. Don't act silly in here.

NJ: Oh. Oh.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Judge Lauren Lake warns Nakesha Jones not to act silly in the courtroom.

- 9) Setting: The judge gave advice and suggestions to the plaintiff to be more polite.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Nakesha Jones and Savannah Hasty.

Conversation: LL: Ms. Jones, Ms. Jones, don't act silly. Don't act silly in here.

NJ: Oh. Oh.

LL: Don't! Don't do it. I know you feel somewhat vindicated. I realized that, but this is not a time to perform 'cause this is not a joke. You're 20 years old, Mr. Houston 18 years old. You're at 18 years old, you got a 6-month-old

and a 6-week-old, and no job. We must change this. Your son, what is your baby, Ms. Hasty, a boy or a girl?

SH: A girl.

LL: So, they're brother and sister. They deserve an opportunity to know one another, to be able to play together, I saw that look. That's his sister.

NJ: That's okay.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Lauren Lake warns Nakesha Jones not to be silly by showing her attitude or bad looking toward the judge.

10) Setting: The judge advised the plaintiff and the defendant as well as closing the trial.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Nakesha Jones

Conversation: LL: So, they're brother and sister. They deserve an opportunity to know one another, to be able to play together, I saw that look. That's his sister.

NJ: That's okay.

LL: And he deserves an opportunity to know his sister.

NJ: He do.

LL: *So, don't do that look when I'm talking.* Ms. Jones, you presented receipts totaling \$2819 for child rearing expenses for baby Lyric. Mr. Houston, you have agreed that you have not paid anything to this point because it has been determined that you are his biological father. You do owe Ms. Jones \$1409.50 which is half of that amount. Judgment for the plaintiff. Court is adjourned.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Lauren Lake gives a warning to Nakesha Jones who had a bad personality in the courtroom and asks her not to do silly actions when she is talking.

Paternity Court E39 Season 3: Man Thought Child Support Papers Were Fake

11) Setting: Opening the trial and greeting all audiences.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Jerome, and audience.

Conversation: Lauren Lake (Judge): *Please be seated.*

Jerome (bailiff): Hello, Your Honor.

Lauren Lake : Hello.

Jerome: This is the case of Hanger v. Babbit.

LL: Thank you, Jerome. Good day, everyone,

Audience: Good day.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the speaker command to sit down and the hearer understands the language being used and they are not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

12) Setting: The judge advised Mr. Babbit.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Royce Babbit and Kristen Hanger.

Conversation: LL: So the bottom line is that there was an attempt, to notify you and you did get the paperwork that said, "Show up for a DNA test, as it relates to baby Khloe."

RB: I've also seen paperwork saying I want a free ipod, that doesn't mean it's true. I mean...

LL: *All right, you can be a smart mouth if you want, but you're the one on child support.* Yes, ma'am. What do you have?

KH: I have the proof showing the paperwork stating that he is on child support.

LL: Let me see that, Jerome. So this is the paperwork that shows that you are supposed to pay \$272.50 per month in child support.

Analysis: Lauren Lake says to Mr. Royce Babbit that he could be a smart mouth if he wants. This condition belongs to the content condition because it is related to the hearer's future actions.

13) Setting: The judge spoke about the truth said by the plaintiff, and the judge asked Jerome to show the document to be more accurate.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Royce Babbit and Kristen Hanger.

Conversation: LL: So the bottom line is that there was an attempt, to notify you and you did get the paperwork that said, "Show up for a DNA test, as it relates to baby Khloe."

RB: I've also seen paperwork saying I want a free ipod, that doesn't mean it's true. I mean...

LL: All right, you can be a smart mouth if you want, but you're the one on child support. Yes, ma'am. What do you have?

KH: I have the proof showing the paperwork stating that he is on child support.

LL: *Let me see that, Jerome.* So this is the paperwork that shows that you are supposed to pay \$272.50 per month in child support.

Analysis: The speaker asks Jerome to give the paperwork. The condition above belongs to the general condition because he can understand the language being used and that he is not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

14) Setting: The judge was angry because Mr. Babbit always behaved rudely.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Royce Babbit and Kristen Hanger.

Conversation: LL: Mr. Babbit. This has nothing to even do with the birth certificate. This has to do with the fact, your failure to appear caused you to be named the father by default.

RB: Did I look confused about that?

LL: No, you look confused period! And you look like you've got a smart mouth! And you think you know too much, but what you should've known, was to bring your butt to court! Then you wouldn't be here!

KH: Thank you!

LL: *Now, you can get smart with me if you want to. Let me tell you something...*

RB: I'm having fun!

LL: Let me tell you something, Mr. Babbit.

KH: (Chuckles)

LL: You can get smart with me if you want to. You gonna loose every day of this week! I'll give you a minute to get yourself together. 'Cause you're not gonna clown. 'Cause there's a baby here, whose father is in question. And we're gonna get down to the bottom of it. I'm doing you a favor of trying to understand your position. But every time I ask you a question, you've something smart to say.

RB: We're not getting...

LL: Now hold on! Do not question, what I think you look like. I'm here to ask question, you are here to answer them. I'm here to give you the answer to questions you have, as relates to paternity. Now whether you have animosity towards Ms. Hanger, or you feel like someone tried to rail road you, that's your personal feelings, but what you're not gonna do, is take them out on me.

RB: I'm sorry, I'm was just trying to tell the truth.

Analysis: Lauren Lake says to Mr. Royce Babbit that he could get smart talk if he wants. Every time she asks him a question, he has something smart to say. So, this condition belongs to the content condition because it is related to Mr. Royce Babbit's future actions.

15) Setting: The judge advised the defendant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Royce Babbit and Kristen Hanger.

Conversation: LL: Mr. Babbit. This has nothing to even do with the birth certificate. This has to do with the fact, your failure to appear caused you to be named the father by default.

RB: Did I look confused about that?

LL: No, you look confused period! And you look like you've got a smart mouth! And you think you know too much, but what you should've known, was to bring your butt to court! Then you wouldn't be here!

KH: Thank you!

LL: Now, you can get smart with me if you want to. Let me tell you something...

RB: I'm having fun!

LL: *Let me tell you something, Mr. Babbit.*

KH: (Chuckles)

LL: You can get smart with me if you want to. You gonna loose every day of this week! I'll give you a minute to get yourself together. 'Cause you're not gonna clown. 'Cause there's a baby here, whose father is in question. And we're gonna get down to the bottom of it. I'm doing you a favor of trying to understand your position. But every time I ask you a question, you've something smart to say.

RB: We're not getting...

LL: Now hold on! Do not questions, what I think you look like. I'm here to ask question, you are here to answer them. I'm here to give you the answer to questions you have, as relates to paternity. Now whether you have animosity towards Ms. Hanger, or you feel like someone tried to rail road you, that's your personal feelings, but what you're not gonna do, is take them out on me.

RB: I'm sorry, I'm was just trying to tell the truth.

Analysis: The speaker intends to advise Mr. Royce Babbit and he listens to her. The condition above belongs to the general condition because he can understand the language being used and that he is not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

16) Setting: The judge warned Mr Babbit not to ask questions that are not related to the trial.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Royce Babbit and Kristen Hanger.

Conversation: LL: Mr. Babbit. This has nothing to even do with the birth certificate. This has to do with the fact, your failure to appear caused you to be named the father by default.

RB: Did I look confused about that?

LL: No, you look confused period! And you look like you've got a smart mouth! And you think you know too much, but what you should've known, was to bring your butt to court! Then you wouldn't be here!

KH: Thank you!

LL: Now, you can get smart with me if you want to. Let me tell you something...

RB: I'm having fun!

LL: Let me tell you something, Mr. Babbit.

KH: (Chuckles)

LL: You can get smart with me if you want to. You gonna loose every day of this week! I'll give you a minute to get yourself together. 'Cause you're not gonna clown. 'Cause there's a baby here, whose father is in question. And we're gonna get down to the bottom of it. I'm doing you a favor of trying to understand your position. But every time I ask you a question, you've something smart to say.

RB: We're not getting...

LL: *Now hold on! Do not questions, what I think you look like. I'm here to ask question, you are here to answer them. I'm here to give you the answer to questions you have, as relates to paternity.* Now whether you have animosity towards Ms. Hanger, or you feel like someone tried to rail road you, that's your personal feelings, but what you're not gonna do, is take them out on me.

RB: I'm sorry, I'm was just trying to tell the truth.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Lauren Lake warns Mr. Royce Babbit not to ask the question which is not related to the court.

17) Setting: In the middle of the conversation, there is an argument, so the judge becomes the mediator of the situation

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Jerome, Royce Babbit, Kristen Hanger and Roy Babbit.

Conversation: LL: Court is adjourned. We're back in session in the case of Hanger v. Babbit. Uh, you all have gone and submitted to the DNA testing, and we have those results for you. Jerome. The envelope.

Jerome: Here you go.

LL: Thank you. Before I read these results, if either of you have any words you'd like to say, truth you'd like to tell...

RB: A drumroll...

LL: No? All right. These results were prepared by DNA Diagnostics and they read as follows. In the case of Hanger v. Babbit, when it comes to 17- months-old Khloe Hanger, it has been determined by this court Mr. Royce Babbit you are her father.

(Crowd Clapping)

RB: Oops, I guess.

KH: All I want is an apology, Royce.

RB: Huh?

KH: All I want is an apology for her.

RB: I don't owe you any apology.

KH: You owe me an apology for denying her.

RB2: C'mon, dude. It's your child.

KH: I told you from day one.

RB: Yeah, it's my child now, but it wasn't then...

KH: It was then.

LL: All right, let's not go into this nonsense because it just doesn't matter anymore.

RB: It doesn't.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Lauren Lake warns the plaintiffs and defendants not to continue the nonsense conversation, because it is all over and there is no problem anymore.

Paternity Court E09 Season 1: Family Doubtful But Man Is Certain Of Paternity Court

18) Setting: Open the trial and greet the audience.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Jerome.

Conversation: Lauren Lake (Judge): *You may be seated.*

Jerome (police): Hello, Your Honor. This is case of Chandler v. Jackson.

Lauren Lake: Thank you, Jerome.

Jerome: You're welcome.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the speaker command to sit down and the hearer understands the language being used and they are not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

19) Setting: There is an argument between the plaintiff and the defendant.

Participants: Gina Jackson and Ann Chandler.

Conversation: GJ: Well, Brandon still was thinking that you guys were getting back together.

AC: And you should not be talking about me sleeping around. (Audience Gasp)

GJ: Um, what I do with my life is my business.

AC: Three babies, three baby daddies. (Audience React)
I've got three babies with the same man.

GJ: *Okay, we'll see if that's true, won't be?*

AC: We will.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of promising because in Gina Jackson's utterance, she promises will see the truth if the three babies are from the same man. So, it will be the future event of the speaker.

20) Setting: Gina wants to confirm the truth of the DNA of Ann Chandler's child.

Participants: Gina Jackson and Ann Chandler.

Conversation: GJ: Well, Brandon still was thinking that you guys were getting back together.

AC: And you should not be talking about me sleeping around. (Audience Gasp)

GJ: Um, what I do with my life is my business.

AC: Three babies, three baby daddies. (Audience React)
I've got three babies with the same man.

GJ: *Okay, we'll see if that's true, won't be?*

AC: We will.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition of promising. The speaker intends to carry out the future action. In this case, Gina Jackson promises to see the truth in the future that Ann Chandler had got all three babies from her brother, Brandon Hilliard.

21) Setting: The judge mediates the conversation between the defendant and the plaintiff because the situation is out of control.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Ann Chandler.

Conversation: LL: All right, let's have some order in the court, because I'm trying to understand this situation. It seems like everybody is very emotional, and this has hurt all of you.

AC: I don't want my kids to do without their grandparents or their family.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Ann Chandler loves her kids very much, that's why she doesn't want her kids to live without their grandparents or their family.

22) Setting: Ann Chandler tells the judge that she has hidden the facts about her pregnancy.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ann Chandler, Brandon Hilliard and Gina Jackson.

Conversation: AC: I knew I was pregnant. I don't know how.

LL: So, Mr. Hilliard, when she said that to you, what were you thinking?

BH: What the hell? (Audience Laughter) How's that possible?

LL: I asked you to be honest, and you were. Okay.

BH: How's that possible?

AC: But I didn't tell him that I was pregnant for another 2 months.

GJ: No, she waited... she waited until he was in California with his sick son to call and say that she is pregnant, mysteriously.

AC: I didn't want to tell him until I had proof.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition of promising. Ann Chandler promise not to tell Brandon Hilliard about her pregnancy until she had proof. It means that the speaker intends to carry out the future action.

23) Setting: There is an argument between the plaintiff and the defendant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ann Chandler and Gina Jackson.

Conversation: LL: Okay, I wanna understand from you. Why is it so bad that he... Your brother is dating Miss Chandler? What is it?

AC: 'Cause I'm a real woman.

Audience: Oh!

AC: I know how to satisfy and take care of my man. I'm sorry you can't do it.

GJ: That's why you just recently slept with his best friend, huh?

AC: Uh, first off, we were broken up. Second, whatever I do while we're broken up is none of your business, so you need to stay out of it.

GJ: So, don't call me, telling me about guys you're sleeping with..

AC: Why don't you pay attention to your own life? 'Cause it I'm not as good as mine, I'm sorry.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Gina Jackson warns Ann Chandler not to call her and tell her about the guy she's sleeping with.

24) Setting: The judge advises Ann Chendler to be polite during the trial.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ann Chandler and Gina Jackson.

Conversation: LL: You all do a lot of breaking up! When are you all together?

AC: Because of them. Because of them. This drama split our family apart. You do a lot of drama.

GJ: No, you and him broke up because of you.

AC: This drama split us apart.

GJ: Not because of me.

AC: Because, four years of this... (Inaudible). How can you be with somebody?

(Gavel Pounding)

LL: Let us proper language for the court. I know you're upset.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the speaker commands Ann Chandler to use proper language for the court, even if she was being upset.

25) Setting: There is an argument between the plaintiff and the defendant

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ann Chandler and Gina Jackson.

Conversation: LL: Let us proper language for the court. I know you're upset.

AC: But for years of this split a part, because we can't even go a day...

GJ: No.

AC: ...without arguing about them. I cannot be with him and be a part of them. They hurt me way too much.

LL: I want you to look at me and tell me right now.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the essential condition because the speakers change their statement from non-obligation to obligation. The judge, Lauren Lake, asked the plaintiff to look at her and tell her the problem at the time.

26) Setting: Ann Chandler thinks that their baby looks like Mr Babbit, but Gina denies it.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ann Chandler and Gina Jackson.

Conversation: LL: So, that's Brandon Sr. as a child, and there's Brandon Jr.

AC: The same smile, the same nose. They have the same hairline....

GJ: They look nothing alike.

AC: They look alike.

GJ: No.

AC: They look alike.

GJ: Nope.

AC: I'm sorry, but whenever the DNA test comes back, I'll show you. I'll laugh at you.

GJ: Okay. All right.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the preparatory condition of promising. Ann Chandler promised Gina Jackson to show her the DNA test of her son whenever it comes and she also would like to laugh at her if the DNA result shows the fact that the kid belongs to her. So, in this condition, it is not clear that Gina Jackson as the hearer knows the event will occur and the event will not have a beneficial effect.

27) Setting: There is an argument between the plaintiff and the defendant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Kathy Hilliard and Ann Chandler.

Conversation: LL: Do you feel like Miss Chandler uses your grandkids as pawns?

KH: Yes, ma'am. Just to get whatever she needs out of Brandon.

LL: Give me specifics.

KH: Well, for one thing...

AC: I don't think so, 'cause there's nothing I need that I don't already have. I got three beautiful kids, and they love me, and I don't care what you say.

KH: I know one thing...

AC: I have never...

KH: ...and it's better to shut up before I give it to you.
(Audience React)

AC: I have never... I have asked you to be there for my kids. And you refused.

KH: You asked me nothing!

AC: Have you ever been there for a Christmas?

KH: The only thing you have...

AC: Have you ever been there for any holiday? Our mama always invited you...

KH: The only thing you asked me was to stay the hell out of your life.

AC: My mom had... After you called my son a little punk.
(Gavel Pounding)

*LL: Let's calm down. Let's calm down, ladies...
(Overlapping Dialogues) I can't understand any of you when all of you are talking.*

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the judge command to defendant and plaintiff to calm down. After all, the judge can't understand what they are saying.

28) Setting: There is an argument between the plaintiff and the defendant.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Gina Jackson, Ann Chandler, and Kathy Hilliard.

Conversation: LL: You were close?

GJ: We were all close. We've always been close. I've always looked out for my little brother.

(Sobbing)

GJ: Every girlfriend Brandon's ever had, I've always tried to friends with them. I've always tried to...

AC: Being friends with them...

GJ: Can you please... hold on a minute?

KH: Shut up, you witch!

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Kathy Hilliard warns Ann Chandler not to cut Gina Jackson's statement.

29) Setting: Kathy warns Ann Chandler to keep her word.

Participants: Ann Chandler and Kathy Hilliard.

Conversation: AC: Come on. No, apologize. You, too, Kathy. That's your grandson that you've been denying for four years. That's your baby.

KH: Yeah, now I want to see my baby.

AC: I have never kept him for you.

KH: Don't even try it!

AC: I have never... You know where I live.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of warning. Kathy Hilliard warns Ann Chandler not to try keeping her grandson away from her.

30) Setting: Ann Chandler suggests to Gina that all she wants is to make peace and be a family again.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ann Chandler and Gina Jackson.

Conversation: LL: You know, in light of these results, Miss Chandler, Mr. Hilliard, I can give you opportunity to just drop that suit.

AC: If they promise that we can be a family again. That's all I want.

GJ: I'm fine with that.

LL: Ms. Hilliard, Ms. Jackson?

AC: That's all I care about.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the content condition of promising. Ann Chandler hopes that Gina Jackson and Kathy Hilliard accept her to be involved in their family.

31) Setting: Brandon hopes that the results of the trial can give something positive to him.

Participants: Ann Chandler, Gina Jackson, Kathy Hilliard and Brandon Hilliard.

Conversation: AC: Coming to the Paternity Court today, I feel like I got the answer, 'cause we could be a family again.

GJ: You know, with the results, our family is complete. And you know, that little boy is part of our family

KH: I feel that now we could all be one. (Sobs)

BH: I'm just excited that the results have come out positive.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition of happiness. The act is carried out sincerely because Brandon Hilliard feels excited that the result of the DNA test for his kid is positive. It means the kid belongs to him.

Paternity Court E29 Season 6: Mother Reveals Father's Identity On Her Deathbed

32) Setting: Open the trial and greet the audience.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Jerome and audience.

Conversation: Lauren Lake (Judge): *Please be seated.*

Jerome (Bailiff): Hello, Your Honor

Lauren Lake: Hello!.

Jerome: This case is of Hannon v. Dorsey.

Lauren Lake: Thank you, Jerome. Good day, everyone!.

Audience: Good day.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the speaker command to sit down and the hearer understands the language being used and they are not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

33) Setting: The judge orders Jerome to call the plaintiff's friend.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Falon Hannon.

Conversation: LL: Are you ready to meet the man you believe you've been told is your true biological father?

FH: Yeah.

LL: All right. Jerome, please escort Mr. Dorsey in the courtroom. Please.

Analysis: The judge asks his assistant to call Mr. Dorsey to enter the courtroom. Then his assistant immediately does it. So, this condition belongs to the general condition.

34) Setting: The judge orders Jerome to call the second plaintiff's friend.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), David Dorsey and Jerome.

Conversation: DD: My name used to be David Walkins. I was a... (AUDIENCE EXCLAIMS) I was adopted, and he changed my name to Walkins. And then when I got grown, I changed my name back to my dad's name.

LL: So, now, it's getting even more closely connected to you.

DD: I mean, well, I was well-known in the Northend. I mean, everybody knew my name.

LL: So what are you thinking? You're thinking this woman just made this up?

DD: Your Honor, I don't know this woman.

LL: But it's such a coincidence that Ms. Hannon has been called your daughter's name. And...

DD: Yeah, she resembles my daughter.

LL: Oh, you admit she resembles your daughter.

DD: When she was younger, yes.

LL: Her godmother remembers you. She remembers where you work. She remembers the woman talking about you and saying it was David Dorsey or David Walkins.

DD: Yes, ma'am. I don't know her mother.

LL: All right. I think we need to hear from your daughter. Jerome, will you please escort Mr. Dorsey's daughter into the courtroom.

Jerome: Yes, ma'am. (AUDIENCE MURMURS) Watch your step going up the stairs.

Analysis: The judge asks his assistant to call Mr. Dorsey's daughter to enter the courtroom. Then his assistant immediately does it. So, this condition belongs to the general condition.

35) Setting: The judge orders Jerome to call the second plaintiff's friend.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Melody Dorsey.

Conversation: *LL: Ms. Dorsey, Thank you for joining us today.*

MD: Thank you for having me.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Lauren Lake thanks or feels grateful to Ms. Dorsey because she can join the court season.

36) Setting: Melody Dorsey thanks the judge for helping the trial.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Melody Dorsey.

Conversation: *LL: Ms. Dorsey, Thank you for joining us today.*

MD: Thank you for having me.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Melody Dorsey replies with pleasure to Lauren Lake that she can join the court season.

37) Setting: Melody Dorsey tries to calm Fannon Halon.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Falon Hannon and Melody Dorsey.

Conversation: *LL: Ms. Hannon, listening to the testimony of Ms. Dorsey, and also of Mr. Dorsey, have your feelings changed? Do you have doubt? Are you still confused? What do you feel?*

FH: I still feel like she's my sister 'cause we look so much alike. I just, you know, I just want to know for sure because I don't know. Like, if he is my dad, and I really hope he is, I have sisters, I have brothers, I have nieces. If he's not, it's just me and my three kids. So...

MD: I love you. Okay, stop. Just don't cry. Don't cry. It's gonna be okay. Like I told you before. You are my sister. Period.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Melody Dorsey calmed down Falon Hannon. She asks her not to cry

because she loves her. She tries to convince her that everything is gonna be okay.

38) Setting: Mr Dorsey calms Melody Dorsey by hugging her.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Falon Hannon, David Dorsey and Melody Dorsey.

Conversation: LL: And I think it's important to note that Ms. Hannon is standing there because she does want to know where she came from. And for those of us who do know who our father is, and we've had that all of our lives, we know we can never take for granted that there are young woman, beautiful young woman and men all over this country, all over the world that don't have that answer and have to live with that every day. And I have felt your pain today, Ms. Hannon. You tears, I see you. And I know this has been difficult.

FH: Yeah.

LL: Because your mother's no longer here.

FH: Yeah.

LL: With that said, I think it's time for the results. Jerome. (AUDIENCE APPLAUDING) These results were prepared by DNA Diagnostics and they read as follows. This is the case of Hannon v. Dorsey. When it comes to 30-year-old Falon Hannon, it has been determined by this court, Mr. Dorsey you are not the father.

DD: Come here.

FH: I'm sorry.

MD: Don't be sorry. You are my sister. (SOBBING)

FH: Uh, I know I'm not your daughter and all, can you still just be my dad? (SOBS)

DD: Yes. Yes.

MD: And I can be you sister.

Analysis: Mr. David Dorsey tries to ask Ms. Falon Hannon to come right beside him to hug him, and then Ms. Falon comes closer to him.

Paternity Court E79 Season 5: Woman Finds Mother's Ex-Lovers to find True Father

39) Setting: Open the trial and greet the audience.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Jerome and audience.

Conversation: Lauren Lake (Judge): *Please be seated.*

Jerome (Bailiff): Hello, Your Honor

Lauren Lake: Hello.

Jerome: This case is of Hardy v. Lynn.

Lauren Lake: Thank you, Jerome. Good day, everyone.

Audience: Good day.

Analysis: The condition above belongs to the general condition because the speaker command to sit down and the hearer understands the language being used and they are not playing-acting or being nonsensical.

40) Setting: The judge orders Mr Hardy to explain the statement he had made earlier.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and William Hardy.

Conversation: LL: Mr. Hardy, you say Ms. Lynn is a master manipulator who has stopped you from being a daddy to your little girl. Ms. Lynn, you claim the plaintiff is not Taylor's biological father and you intend to prove that today. Is that correct?

BL: There is a possibility between him and one other person.

LL: All right. So, Mr. Hardy, you say you've always known you were Taylor's biological father?

WH: Yes, Your Honor.

LL: Tell me why.

WH: I was... Brandy and I was together at the time that Taylor was conceived. I was there as much as we could possibly be together, every chance we got to be together. Also, she has same color eyes, same color hair, looks just like my oldest son.

Analysis: Lauren Lake asks William Hardy about the reason that he has always known he is Taylor's biological father. Then he answered that he was. This condition fulfills the requirement of the general condition.

41) Setting: The judge tried to calm Brandy down, and Brandy accepted the advice sincerely.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Brandy Lynn.

Conversation: LL: And so, Ms. Lynn, when you hear your daughter speak so beautifully about a day spent with Mr. Hardy, that just having that moment, just meant the world to her, how does that make you feel? Because it is your assertion that there is very real possibility that he is not her biological father.

BL: It hurts me for her. 'Cause she grew up knowing the man I was married to as her father. And, you know, I hated that he didn't spend that type of time with her. All I can do is make sure that she knows, regardless of what happens here or who raised her, she is my daughter and I love her.

LL: In your heart, you do know, wrong or right, you felt like... This was well-intentioned. You were a young girl. Quite frankly...

BL: I made a lot of bad decisions, for a lot of good reasons.

(AUDIENCE SIGHS)

LL: We see that a lot here in this courtroom. And I just wanna tell you, in this moment, you're not alone. You're not the only one

BL: Well, I appreciated that, 'cause sometimes it feels like it.

LL: You explained in court previously, that there was a man you loved and that was George Jennings. (AUDIENCE SIGHS) And that you were doing anything you could, at that time, so that you could marry him.

BL: Yes.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Lauren Lake tries to comfort Brandy Lynn. She says that Brandy Lynn is not the only one who got the same problem. Then, Brandy Lynn appreciate that motivation.

42) Setting: The judge thanked Mr Bryant for coming to court.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Ralph “Junior” Bryant.

Conversation: *LL: So, Mr. Bryant, thank you for joining us today. We are here to discussing the paternity surrounding this beautiful young woman, Taylor. And, um, we’ve been told that you are a potential biological father. Do you believe you are her biological father? Ralph “Junior” Bryant.*

RB: Yes, ma’am.

LL: You do? Tell the court why.

RB: Because she got so much resemblance of my daughter. I’ve been believing it for 26 years. It’s time to get it over with, you know.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Lauren Lake thanks Mr. Bryant because he can join the courtroom on the day.

43) Setting: The judge asked why Ralph Bryant was so sure of what he said.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Ralph “Junior” Bryant.

Conversation: *LL: So, Mr. Bryant, thank you for joining us today. We are here to discussing the paternity surrounding this beautiful young woman, Taylor. And, um, we’ve been told that you*

are a potential biological father. Do you believe you are her biological father? Ralph “Junior” Bryant.

RB: Yes, ma’am.

LL: You do? Tell the court why.

RB: Because she got so much resemblance of my daughter. I’ve been believing it for 26 years. It’s time to get it over with, you know.

Analysis: Lauren Lake asks Ralph Bryant to tell the court why he has a potential biological father for Taylor. Then Ralph Bryant answered that Ms. Lynn got so much resemblance to his daughter. This condition fulfills the requirement of the general condition.

44) Setting: Bryant thanked the judge because he had gotten a positive result in court.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ralph “Junior” Bryant and William Hardy.

Conversation: LL: (SIGHS) I think it’s time we get these results. Jerome. (AUDIENCE APPLAUDING) These results were prepared by DNA Diagnostics and they read as follows... In the case of Hardy v. Lynn, as it pertains to whether or not Mr. Bryant or Mr. Hardy is the biological father of 26-year-old Taylor Martini, it has been determined by this court, Taylor’s biological father is Mister... Bryant.

RB: Yes! (AUDIENCE APPLAUDING) Yes! I told you. *Thank you. Thank you very much.* (APPLAUSE CONTINUES) Can I give her a hug?

LL: Yes. Absolutely. He’s asked to hug his daughter.

RB: Thank you.

(AUDIENCE APPLAUDING)

LL: You can stand next to your daughter if you’d like. Mr. Hardy, I wanna check in on you. How are you in this moment? Are you all right?

WH: It's like kind a surreal.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Ralph "Junior" Bryant thanked Lauren Lake had shown the positive result of her son's DNA test.

45) Setting: The judge advised Mr Hardy to get closer to his daughter.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge), Ralph "Junior" Bryant and William Hardy.

Conversation: LL: (SIGHS) I think it's time we get these results. Jerome. (AUDIENCE APPLAUDING) These results were prepared by DNA Diagnostics and they read as follows... In the case of Hardy v. Lynn, as it pertains to whether or not Mr. Bryant or Mr. Hardy is the biological father of 26-year-old Taylor Martini, it has been determined by this court, Taylor's biological father is Mister... Bryant.

RB: Yes! (AUDIENCE APPLAUDING) Yes! I told you. Thank you. Thank you very much. (APPLAUSE CONTINUES) Can I give her a hug?

LL: Yes. Absolutely. He's asked to hug his daughter.

RB: Thank you.

(AUDIENCE APPLAUDING)

LL: You can stand next to your daughter if you'd like. Mr. Hardy, I wanna check in on you. How are you in this moment? Are you all right?

WH: It's like kind a surreal.

Analysis: Lauren Lake says to Mr. Hardy that he could stand next to his daughter if he liked. So, this condition belongs to the content condition.

46) Setting: Brandy Lynn thanked her mother for allowing her to come to court.

Participants: Lauren Lake (Judge) and Brandy Lynn.

Conversation: LL: What would you like to say to your mom, in this moment?

BL: I wanna thank her for being honest, and even though it hurt, and she didn't want to come out here today, then she's here and we got the results and I have closure.

Analysis: The conditions above belong to the sincerity condition because Brandy Lynn would like to thank her mother for being honest, and coming to the courtroom even though she didn't want to.

B. Discussion

In examining the findings, the study demonstrates that the most frequently occurring felicity condition in *Paternity Court* is the general condition. This condition serves as the baseline for mutual understanding, ensuring that all parties can comprehend and appropriately respond to one another's statements. The prevalence of the general condition aligns with Yule's (1996) framework, which emphasizes that a foundational level of shared comprehension is essential for successful speech acts. This baseline is particularly vital in legal settings like *Paternity Court*, where clear communication is paramount for equitable case resolutions. The findings show that the general conditions are evident in moments where the judge, bailiff, or participants rely on procedural exchanges understood by all parties in the courtroom. In contrast, sincerity and content conditions appear slightly less frequently due to the highly structured, rule-bound nature of courtroom dialogue, where the focus remains on clarity, consistency, and adherence to formal protocols.

This study explored how felicity conditions function in the context of the reality show *Paternity Court*, examining how types of felicity conditions manifest in courtroom interactions. The research identified 46 instances of felicity conditions across five selected episodes, each instance classified according to Yule's categories: general conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, content conditions, and essential conditions. General conditions emerged as the most prominent, accounting for 39.13% of the data, followed by content and sincerity conditions. The prominence of general conditions underscores that courtroom interactions in *Paternity Court* significantly rely on mutual understanding and procedural norms, which support the evaluative structure of the courtroom setting and allow the discourse to function effectively.

The strong reliance on general conditions highlights the need for established norms in courtroom discourse, particularly in *Paternity Court*, where formality and clarity are indispensable. This setting requires adherence to procedural standards that ensure all parties are clear about roles and expectations in each interaction. Such reliance on general conditions corresponds with the requirements of legal contexts, where every utterance must be understood and processed within a structured framework. Conversely, the infrequent appearance of essential conditions underscores the evaluative rather than transformative nature of most courtroom discourse; these interactions focus more on assessing claims and rendering judgments than on creating new obligations or redefining participant roles.

These findings resonate with prior research, particularly regarding the application and frequency of felicity conditions in structured discourse. Studies such as Hamza and Nordin's (2024) analysis of Donald Trump's political speeches illustrate how propositional and sincerity conditions can be strategically manipulated to serve persuasive aims, showing that deviations from expected felicity conditions can influence public opinion. In *Paternity Court*, however, the purpose of communication is grounded in legal protocols and truth-seeking rather than persuasion, thereby requiring adherence to sincerity conditions with minimal deviation. In courtroom discourse, participants fulfill sincerity and content conditions without strategic alteration, adhering to a direct expression of intent. This contrast highlights how felicity conditions adapt based on communicative aims: in political contexts, sincerity may be flexible, whereas in judicial settings, it serves as a core requirement for credible and transparent communication.

Another comparative layer emerges when examining Langton's (2018) research on counter-speech, which emphasizes the impact of hearers and bystanders on the success of speech acts. Langton's findings reveal that the reinforcement or contestation of presuppositions by others can affect the felicity of speech acts, highlighting the role of social interactions in communicative success. In *Paternity Court*, while audience reactions and participant responses contribute to the atmosphere, the felicity of speech acts primarily relies on the judge, who upholds the general and sincerity conditions by maintaining control over the discourse. This setup contrasts with Langton's findings, suggesting that in *Paternity Court*, felicity conditions are upheld through structured authority

rather than the fluid interaction of bystanders, thereby reducing the influence of outside reinforcement or contestation.

Additionally, studies by Corredor (2021) and Oishi (2021) further contextualize these findings by examining how cultural and normative frameworks shape felicity conditions. Corredor's work highlights that successful argumentation relies on aligning speech acts with both social norms and objective facts, a dual standard that resonates with courtroom discourse. In *Paternity Court*, felicity conditions frequently adhere to societal expectations of courtroom conduct, where participants are expected to uphold sincerity and relevance to facilitate understanding and ensure legal clarity. Oishi's (2021) study on honorifics in Japanese underscores that felicity conditions may vary with cultural conventions, suggesting that successful speech acts are shaped by societal norms. While *Paternity Court* operates within the formal legal framework, cultural norms around respect and authority influence how sincerity and essential conditions are fulfilled, revealing that courtroom discourse integrates both normative and contextual factors in its felicity conditions.

Overall, the findings affirm that while felicity conditions are essential across various communicative settings, their application is influenced by the specific goals, social factors, and cultural contexts unique to each discourse type. *Paternity Court* illustrates a distinctive application of felicity conditions, emphasizing general understanding, sincerity, and procedural adherence. This approach contrasts with the strategic manipulations observed in political and social discourse. These findings imply that in legal settings, felicity conditions not

only facilitate the success of individual speech acts but also support the broader goals of justice and impartiality. The study highlights the importance of fidelity to felicity conditions in structured, high-stakes interactions, where adhering to these standards can reduce misunderstandings and enhance the legitimacy of the discourse.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After reviewing the findings and examining the types of felicity conditions in the reality show *Paternity Court*, this chapter concludes the study by summarizing its main insights and offering recommendations for future research.

A. Conclusion

This study reveals significant insights into the presence and role of felicity conditions within *Paternity Court* interactions. The research examined five episodes across various seasons, identifying 46 instances of felicity conditions. The data indicated a notable presence of general conditions, accounting for 39.13% of the analyzed speech acts, which underscore the importance of mutual comprehension and procedural understanding in court discourse. Additionally, 32.60% of speech acts involved content conditions, while sincerity conditions accounted for 23.91%, demonstrating the necessity of clear and truthful expressions. Lastly, preparatory conditions emerged in 21.17% of cases, emphasizing the importance of contextual readiness within courtroom exchanges.

These findings suggest that felicity conditions are not only relevant in everyday conversations and formal instructional settings but also hold significant implications within legal discourse. By demonstrating how general, sincerity, and content conditions govern courtroom communication, this study illustrates that felicity conditions contribute to establishing fairness, clarity, and transparency. This pattern reaffirms that felicity conditions serve as a crucial framework in

structured interactions, ensuring that all speech acts are effective, appropriate, and comprehensible. Furthermore, these findings highlight the value of using *Paternity Court* as a teaching resource to illustrate and analyze felicity conditions, as the examples provide relatable, real-world applications of these pragmatic principles.

B. Suggestion

While this study provides an overview of felicity conditions in courtroom discourse, it was limited to five episodes from *Paternity Court*, with one episode selected from each season. Future research could enhance these findings by examining a wider array of episodes or by incorporating other legal or court-based television programs to allow a more comprehensive analysis. Expanding the scope to diverse legal settings or discourse types could offer richer insights into how felicity conditions adapt to various communicative contexts.

Additionally, the framework of felicity conditions, as defined by Yule, could be further developed by investigating its application across different cultures or by analyzing more nuanced elements within each type of felicity condition. In educational contexts, this research could serve as a resource for teachers, providing real-world examples of speech acts for linguistics students. This study emphasizes the importance of felicity conditions within both linguistic analysis and practical communication, with further research encouraged to deepen our understanding of how these conditions operate across different settings.

The researcher hopes that this study serves as a valuable contribution to the field of linguistics and provides a foundation for future studies to expand on the concept of felicity conditions, especially within structured, high-stakes interactions such as legal discourse.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Latifatuz Zakiyah Darajat was born in Malang on July 29, 1996. She graduated from Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Gondanglegi Malang before entering UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. During her studies at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, she gained PKLI experience through the following programs: *Pengabdian Masyarakat Tematik Posdaya Berbasis Masjid* and the *PKL (Praktik Kerja Lapangan) Profesi of Translation* in the Department of English Literature, at Trans Komunika 2, Malang.