

## Конверсаційні жанри та їх основні характеристики

*Роботу виконано на кафедрі англійської філології  
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Конверсаційний аналіз – один з ключових методологічних підходів до вивчення вербальної інтеракції. У статті йдеться про види конверсаційних жанрів (оповідання, коментар та уточнення; мова в дії; сервіс; навчання), наводяться основні характеристики кожного жанру.

**Ключові слова:** конверсаційний аналіз, конверсаційний жанр, оповідання, коментар, уточнення, мова в дії, сервіс, навчання.

**Nedilenko N. V. Conversational Genres and Their Main Features.** Conversation analysis is one of the key methodological approaches to the study of verbal interaction. The article deals with the types of conversational genres (narrative, comment and elaboration; language in action; service encounter; learning encounter), the main characteristic features of every genre are presented.

**Key words:** conversation analysis, conversational genre, narrative, comment, elaboration, language in action, service encounter, learning encounter.

The English word, conversation, is made up of a combination of two Latin roots, ‘con,’ and ‘vers.’ ‘Con’ means: with, together. ‘Vers’ means: to turn about in a given direction. Thus, to engage in conversation literally means, to turn about with others.

Conversation can be said to contain two elements, the informational and the phatic. Phatic communion is a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words. Words in phatic communion fulfil a social function and that is their principal aim. In other words, phatic communication is used to establish social relationships rather than impart information.

At the beginning of a conversation participants often frame the event. That is, they make clear to each other the intended nature of the conversation-to-be. All conversations contain phatic communication; some conversations are also purposeful in that the participants have a defined goal, whether to impart information, formulate a plan, etc.

The most common place where language processing occurs is in conversations. Conversations have several characteristics.

For example, there are actually few openings and closings to conversations, although there could be many.

Another aspect of conversations is that people take turns, so that they are not talking at the same time. The duration of each speaker’s turn varies (and may be an individual difference) as does the number of turns taken. However, the duration of the pauses during a turn seems to be similar across speakers.

The end of a turns is generally signalled by the speaker (i. e., by pausing, not completing a sentence, looking away, etc.), who will often select the next speaker by making some sort of indication (“*Over to you, Tom*”). If the next speaker is not selected, then anyone can jump into the conversation, and that includes the person who was just speaking.

Different types of conversations can be evoked based on the roles of the speakers (student to teacher will differ from student to student, even if the subject is the same), also the context of the conversation can influence the conduct of the speakers (same people may speak differently during a formal setting than an informal setting).

Thus, conversation is any interactive spoken exchange between two or more people and can be:

- face-to-face exchanges – these can be private conversations, such as talk at home between the family, or more public and ritualised conversations such as classroom talk or Question Time in the Houses of Parliament;
- non-face-to-face exchanges, such as telephone conversations;
- broadcast materials such as a live radio phone-in or a television chat show.

Conversation is constructed with spoken language. Speech is usually spontaneous and temporary. It can be made permanent through recording and transcription, where transcription is an attempt to represent, in a written form, the sounds and words of the spoken language. The difficulty of transcribing accurately, clearly illustrates the differences between spoken and written communication. Conversation is obviously far more than words. Communication can take place through body language, through prosodic features such as intonation, speed, stress and volume and even through silence or laughter.

To operate efficiently in conversation our knowledge has to stretch far beyond an awareness of individual sounds or words. Instinctively, usually without any formal training in the rules of conversation, we are nevertheless capable of structuring and building conversation appropriate to the situations in which we find ourselves.

Schemata are data structures representing stereotypical patterns which we retrieve from memory and employ in our understanding of discourse. This means that as speakers, we take some mutually shared knowledge for granted. For example, we assume a shared knowledge of how the world works and interpret what is said by referring to this knowledge. This also explains why we construct varied conversational genres.

E. Goffman and J. Gumperz were exponents of frame theory. This theory argues that we use past experience to structure present usage. As we talk, we pick up cues (or frames) which enable us to recognize the situation and we structure our responses appropriately. These frameworks help us to interpret the conversation and anticipate what is going to happen next. In this way, 'asking for goods' or 'attending a job interview' have particular frames leading to a particular discourse structure or conversational genre.

The kinds of conversational strategies that are employed can depend on the genre. D. Nunan states how the term genre refers to, 'a purposeful, socially-constructed communicative event,' whereby, 'each has its own distinctive linguistic characteristics, and its own generic structure, (that is, its own internal structure.)' [7]. R. Carter & M. McCarthy describe genre as, 'episodes of speech of which participants (if interaction is successful) have a shared view of their nature as a social encounter' [1]. In their book, *Exploring Spoken English*, authentic conversations are recorded, transcribed and analysed. The book looks at eight main genres:

- narrative: a series of everyday anecdotes told with active listening participation.
- identifying: people talk about themselves.
- language-in-action: People doing something while speaking, eg cooking.
- comment-elaboration: people giving casual opinions and comments.
- service encounters: people buying and selling of goods and services.
- debate and argument: people take up positions, pursue arguments and expound on their opinions.
- language learning and interaction: institutionalised and informal learning.
- decision-making and negotiating outcomes: people work towards decisions/consensus or negotiate their way through problems towards solutions.

In this article we single out only five genres of conversation which are discussed at the lectures of Conversation analysis, namely: narrative, comment-elaboration, language-in-action, service encounters, learning encounters.

According to the context and purpose of conversation, different features of conversation are exploited.

People communicate daily through their use of spoken narrative. The features of spoken language that distinguish it from written one will be present. These include pauses, voiced phrases (*er, um*), fillers (*you know*), repetition, rephrasing, vague language (*sort of, kind of*), colloquial vocabulary, discourse markers (*right, well*), ellipses, context dependent language (*this, these*), frequent use of *and*.

According to Labov [4], narrative is natural to both written and spoken language and its structure can be divided into the following:

- abstract (signals that the story is about to begin; is a brief explanation of what the story is about);
- orientation (context in which the story takes place, the who, what, where and when of the story);
- action (what happened);
- resolution (what finally happened);
- coda (signals end of the story);
- evaluation (comments, gestures).

Some of these elements may be missing, for example abstracts or codas but generally, if the story is going to be worth listening to, then the story will contain these components. Evaluation runs throughout the story constantly.

M. McCarthy [5, 139] gives common codas are expressions such as *makes you wonder, so, there we are, so let that be a lesson to you*, etc. He points out that these sort of expressions are not often given in dictionaries, and are often absent in coursebooks too. This is the kind of language that could perhaps be taught to advanced learners.

Besides the basic ingredients of time, place, setting, characters involved, an interesting or funny plot and conclusion of events, a good story needs the following:

- embellishments or decorations by the teller (e. g. exaggeration, intensification, suspense, amusing details.)
- features which make the story more vivid (e. g. dialogue, changing of tense from the past to the present.)
- comments on the events (e. g. telling how the characters involved felt)
- some sort of relevance to the conversation in which the story is told (e. g. linking it to an earlier story or something someone has just said.)
- a suitable opening and closing.

Comment and elaboration is one of the most common genres of conversation, usually found in informal conversation, between speakers who know each other well.

Its most common features are:

- Topics switch freely.
- Topics are often provoked by what speakers are doing, by objects in their presence or by some association with what has just been said.
- There does not appear to be a clearly defined purpose for the conversation.
- All speakers can introduce topics and no one speaker appears to control the conversation.
- Speakers comment on each other's statements.
- Topics are only elaborated on briefly, after follow-up questions or comments from listeners.
- Comments in response to a topic often include some evaluation.
- Responses can be very short.
- Ellipsis is common.
- The speakers' co-operation is often shown through speaker support and repetition of each other's vocabulary.
- Vocabulary typical of informal conversation will be present, such as cliches, vague language and taboo language.

Language in action is defined as language used when people are doing something. The language, therefore, accompanies the task in hand.

- People using language in action frequently do not mention what is directly in front of them.
- They have no need to because they share the same context.
- They refer to what they can see with words such as 'that', 'there', 'it' and 'here'.
- This is called deictic reference.
- There can be much ellipsis.
- There can be more silence than normal while activities take place.

One conversational genre is known as a service encounter. Eija Ventola suggests there are four elements to a service encounter.

A service encounter is the term used to describe a wide range of conversations whose principal purpose is transactional. These are conversations where people want to get things done. This kind of transaction, where requests for service are made by one person to another, has been called a service encounter (conversation that takes place when we go shopping). The elements obligatory in a service encounter are: an offer of service; a request for service; a transaction; a salutation.

A service encounter means a transaction takes place. Ellipsis and deictic language are usually present. Discourse markers organize the structure.

Learning encounters is another conversational genre: a conversation between a teacher and a student (students). The main characteristics for this genre are:

- The teacher takes most turns.
- The teacher's turns are longer than the students.
- The structure is based on adjacency triplets or exchanges (initiation, response and feedback).

- Discourse markers are used by the teacher to signpost the structure of the conversation.
- The teacher reformulates, summarizes and evaluates what the students say.
- The students' answers are usually short and elliptical.
- The teacher uses 'known answer' or 'display' questions (i.e. questions to which they already know the answer).

Spoken language produces a variety of conversational genres. Some elements are obligatory, some – optional. The language features of a genre reflect the purpose and context of the genre.

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Статтю подано до редколегії

05.02.2007 р.