

FACTORS AFFECTING THE FLOW OF CONVERSATION

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ABSTRAK

Percakapan adalah salah satu cara untuk berkomunikasi yang bertujuan untuk sosialisasi, membangun hubungan dan menjaga hubungan. Percakapan tidak hanya melibatkan penggunaan bahasa verbal juga bahasa non-verbal, seperti tatapan mata, gerak tubuh, postur dan konteks. Isu tentang percakapan menjadi perhatian dalam penulisan artikel terutama tentang bagaimana ide dalam percakapan tersampaikan (Burke, 1993). Percakapan merupakan kegiatan rutin yang melibatkan dua pihak yaitu pembicara dan pendengar (Sacks, 1974). Tambahan, percakapan akan berhasil jika ide tersampaikan secara komprehensif ke dua belah pihak dan aspek-aspek terpenuhi, yaitu partisipan, topik, dan setting. Percakapan dapat terhambat dan faktor-faktor yang ditemukan adalah giliran berbicara (turn-taking), bahasa tubuh, pembukaan dan penutup percakapan dan back channel.

Kata kunci: Percakapan, faktor penunjang percakapan, partisipan, bahasa verbal dan non-verbal

ABSTRACT

Conversation is the way in which people socialize, develop, and maintain their relationships with each other. When people converse they engage in a form of linguistic communication, there is much more going on in a conversation than just the use of a linguistic code. Much that is important in conversation is carried out by things other than language, including eye gaze and body postures, silences, and the real-world context in which the talk is produced.

The issue of conversation has received a great deal of attention from writers over a very long period of time; much of that attention has been paid to the idea of what makes a good conversationalist (Burke, 1993). Conversation is not solely an elite activity, but rather an everyday one, and it is important to understand how people engage in everyday activity as a structured social event. Conversation can be held if “there is at least, and not more than one party talks at a time” (Sacks, 1974). In other words, the conversation can occur if it fulfills the aspects that are needed in conversation such as participants, topics, and setting.

Keywords : conversation, participants, factors supporting the conversation, verbal and non-verbal language

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing and developing interaction in English in an Arabic-speaking country seems to be challenging. Many teachers suffer much to establish the communicative competence needed for a successful interaction. Arab students, who see English as a global language and, to a great extent, a priority in a country's foreign-language teaching even though the English language has no official status, see the excessive need to learn it.

With the adult conversation classes in the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport, students are not able to create a successful communicative atmosphere in their classes while they converse. The students' lack of conversational rules makes them fail unintentionally in places where they severely break some major rules as they lack factors that undermine their abilities to reach a highly agreed-upon standard of conversation. When discussing language use, it involves the aspects of pragmatics such as participants, turn-taking, politeness, and speech acts.

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that studies the meaning of language in its physical, epistemic, linguistic, and social contexts. A person can make a direct speech act, in which what is said is exactly what is meant, or an indirect speech act, where the meaning differs from the actual words spoken. These differences are typically and automatically understood because of the context. The four aspects of context can all affect pragmatics. Physical context refers to the setting of a conversation, such as a library, football field, or bedroom. Epistemic context refers to the background knowledge shared by a speaker and his or her audience.

The information that has already been shared in the discussion is known as linguistic context, including all antecedents, topics of conversation, and intonations.

A sarcastic, sad, or joking tone of voice can easily change the meaning of a sentence. Social context is the term for the relationship between a speaker and an audience.

In the study of language, discourse often refers to the speech patterns and usage of language, dialects, and acceptable statements, within a community. It is a subject of study in people who live in secluded areas and share similar speech conventions. Sociologists and philosophers use the term discourse to describe the conversations and the meaning behind them by a group of people with certain ideas in common. Such is the definition by philosopher Michel Foucault, who holds it to be the acceptable statements made by a certain type of discourse community.

Sacks' approach to the study of conversation is characterized by a view of talk as an activity through which speakers accomplish things in interaction. Talk can, therefore, be strategically employed to achieve communicative goals. For Sacks, this strategic use of talk is not a set of rules or recipes by which actions are accomplished, but rather the production of interactional effects achieved through talk in a particular context (Schegloff, 1992). For Sacks, the conversation was orderly and this order was manifested at all points (Sacks, 1992).

The conversation is realized through sets of practices that speakers can deploy in order to undertake particular actions in a particular context and it will be recognized as achieving the appropriate action by other participants. The core assumptions of conversation analysts (Psathas, 1995):

1. Order of produced underlines. That the order does not occur of its own accord nor does it pre-exist the interaction. Rather, it is the result of the coordinated practices of the participants who achieve orderliness and then interact.
2. Order is produced, situated, and occasioned, that is, order is produced by participants themselves for the conversation in which it occurs. The participants themselves orient to the order being produced and their behavior reflects and indexes that order.

Order is repeatable and recurrent. The patterns of orderliness found in conversation are repeated, not only in the talk of an individual speaker but across groups of speakers. It can result in boredom or it can be beneficial for both parties.

METHODS

The study adopts library research. It is descriptive research by collecting the literature about the issue discussed. The research is to elaborate on the factors that affect the conversation. When people engage in conversation, the factors of turn-taking, body language, back channel, and the opening and closing of the conversation can influence the flow of the talk. It has a tendency that it can make the ideas shared are not transferred well. Consequently, the conversation does not achieve the goal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The following is to describe the factors affecting a conversation when people engage in conversation. Making a conversation is becoming a lost art. This means that there are fewer and fewer people around the world who know how to make a conversation. Therefore, in a trial to restore that art again, some factors are suggested to be maintained in the act of conversation.

1. Turn-taking in conversation:

The traditional turn-taking literature deals with turn-taking as a sort of system independent of the meeting context. In fact, turn-taking is not an end in itself but is related to other meeting properties. For example, research has shown that gaze and gestures can affect turn-taking in a group conversation and can also be related to floors. Turn-taking signals also differ across languages. In order to hold our turn to talk while we think about how to say something, we usually employ some fillers of some sort. These fillers prevent exchange in turn-taking. They allow us to hold the floor. The parties must understand the signals when to take turns.

2. Opening and closing a conversation

The beginning of a conversation does not just happen. Like other things in conversation, the opening of a conversation between two or more participants must be interactionally achieved. Opening a conversation must be under consideration since it must start with the light topic talk. Closing a conversation provides a particular interactional problem. It is not easy to end a conversation. The two parties have already taken part and their intention has been shared. If it is already achieved, the participants need to disengage from talking in a way that does not make the relationship between participants vulnerable. Additionally, they need to ensure that all participants in the conversation have had the opportunity to talk about all of the things that need to be dealt with. Moreover, they must disengage from the turn-taking system (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973).

3. Body Language

Non-verbal communication is a broad term used to describe any method of transferring information without words. Non-verbal communication may be intentional, it may be based on societal cues, or it may be completely unconscious. Common forms of nonverbal communication include body language and facial cues, hand gestures, and graphical signs and design.

It is important to note that non-verbal communication is really about a lack of words, rather than a lack of vocalization. The body language is used when words are not enough. The participants should have shared knowledge about the body language used. It is possible they use the same gestures but in one culture it has different meanings. It can be a mockery.

Therefore, most writing would not be considered non-verbal communication although elements like handwriting style could be considered non-verbal signifiers. By the same token, sounds like grunts are still considered non-verbal communication even though they are oral sounds.

Nonverbal communication can be broadly divided into relatively universal forms and culturally dependent forms. The body languages are culture-dependent. The two parties are supposed to be knowledgeable about the other party's culture. It occurs if the two parties are from different countries.

Many facial expressions, for example, are relatively universal, with most cultures able to identify expressions of fear, joy, or anger. On the other hand, non-verbal cues like bowing, shaking hands, or flashing a peace sign are culturally defined and therefore have little meaning outside of cultures that understand them.

Body language is one of the most studied forms of non-verbal communication, and deals with how the body rests, how it is situated in relation to other bodies, and the spatial distance between bodies. For example, turning towards a person when seated and talking to them is a non-verbal cue demonstrating interest while turning away demonstrates a lack of interest. Tilt your head slightly is a form of non-verbal communication to show curiosity or express that you are listening closely to what they are saying. On the contrary, looking away will show a lack of attention. It means the participant has no interest in engaging. Shaking hands means closeness in some cultures. However, other cultures do not see that shaking hands is necessary to show closeness and solidarity.

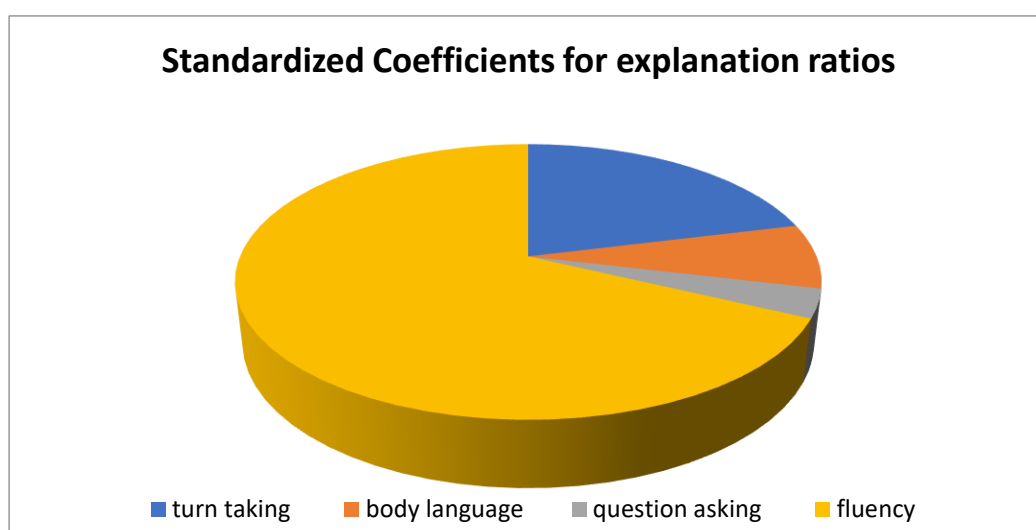
Body language is a part of nonverbal language. It includes things like stance, gestures, facial expressions, and even small things that are barely perceptible like a brief shrug of the shoulder or nod of the head. According to studies conducted at Stanford University it has been found out that:

- 45 percent of a message is expressed by the body language
- 20 percent by the tone of voice,
- 35 percent by the words (and phrases) the speakers use

The diagram following reveals that the speakers use body language more to express their ideas. The blue one shows that turn-taking is also important. One party cannot dominate the talk. It can make the conversation boring. The use of questions is not paramount to making the conversation goes well.

The Y/N questions used by the speaker can impose on people since the provided answer is only Yes or No. The use of WH-Questions is also rare to use for it demands people to answer the question in detail. Questions demand the answers and the participants sometimes are not ready with the answers. Fluency is not the factor that influences the flow of conversation. If participants do not know how to say the words, body language can assist them to express their feeling and speak their minds.

Diagram 1. Standardized Coefficients for explanation ratios



The Canadian communications theorist Marsha k. came up with the now-famous statement “The medium is the message”. This means that the medium in which the message is transmitted is as important as the message itself. This may be true for written messages. However, it is completely false as far as the spoken word goes. Since it is in a spoken language, communication does not take place on the word level alone.

4. Listener’s behavior and back-channel

The speaker-auditor interaction does not only take place at possible points of speaker exchange but also during speaking turns. Those auditors’ back-channel signals do not constitute a speaking turn. On the contrary, listeners might use back-channel.

Active listening is a remarkable way of responding that encourages others to continue speaking while enabling you to be certain that you understand what others are saying. Interpersonal communication begins intrapersonally. Someone has a feeling or idea to express and in order to convey the message to the other party. The speaker must put the message in verbal or non-verbal codes that the listener will understand. During the conversation, minimal encouragement can be used to support the speaker to go on. These encourage include: 'I see'; Uh, huh'.

When engaging in a conversation, the parties involved expect that they can share meaning. In both of them, the participants can gain information about the topic discussed. However, in reality, the goal is not always achieved. They are expected can share ideas, and opinions, and end up with the goal.

Discussion

There are factors that influence the conversation. The communication itself is not a failure, but it hinders the flow of ideas and turn-taking in the conversation. The factors found out are the turn-taking, the opening and closing of the conversation, body language, and listeners' behavior and back channel. The participants should possess the knowledge of how to interact with the other party, so there is no failure in communicating with. In the case that there is silence, one of the parties is to ice break. The ice breaker should take the conversation over to avoid silence and failure in conveying the ideas.

CONCLUSION

Based on a variety of studies mentioned earlier, it was discovered that the four factors under study- *fluency, body language, turn-taking, and question asking*- constituted each a vital part of producing a smooth flow of conversation. For example, CA researchers have focused on *turn-taking* as one of the prominent features of spontaneous conversation. Based on an analysis of naturally occurring conversations (Sacks et al.1974) and Mehrabian (1977) found that the verbal component of a face-to-face conversation is less.

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