



## THE STRUCTURAL STUDY OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

This study helps to linguist or language teacher for analysing the element of spoken language and its roles. Human mind takes so many processes to identify words and its meaning for good communication. Many Linguists study human minds and their language structures for successful communication. To understand spoken language, listeners first have to use the sensory input to make contact with representations of lexical for (I.e., the phonological forms of words). It is only when this process of lexical access is archived that the syntactic and semantic properties of words become available for the construction of high-level representation of the utterance. Many spoken idea units are clauses, but the way that idea units are structured is often slightly different from standard written clauses .Teaching and testing experts often talk about speaking as a technical term to refer to one of the various skills that language learners should develop and have.

**Keywords:** *Lexical mapping process, Topicalisation, Tails, Speaking, Choice of Words and Conversational maxims.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Communication is the exchange of information or ideas between two or more people. It is the act of expressing thought in a manner that others understand. This is clearly shows that successful communication can only take place if the listener has understood what the speaker has meant. Human mind takes so many processes to identify the words and its meaning for good communication. Many Linguists study human minds and their language structures for successful communication.

### LEXICAL MAPPING PROCESS

To understand spoken language, listeners first have to use the sensory input to make contact with representations of lexical for (I.e., the phonological forms of words). It is only when this process of lexical access is archived that the syntactic and semantic properties of words become available for the construction of high-level representation of the utterance.

The way in which the lexical mapping process is conceived of in Marslen - Wilson and Welsh's model is follows. In the process of recognising a word, the speech signal is continuously



projected onto representation of lexical form. At the beginning of word, this means that the sensory input will activate all of the words which share the same initial sound sequence. So, for example, the sequence bla.... Will activate all of the words the listener knows beginning with sequence (black, bland, blanket, etc.). This set of activated words gradually decreases in size as more and more of them fail to match the accumulating sensory input. This process of attrition continues until only a single activated word matches the sensory input. It is at this point of separation from all other activated candidates (that is, the word's set of competitors) - which is the first possible point at which a word can be confidently identified - that a listener first recognises the word. It is in this sense that the lexical mapping process can be thought to be highly efficient. Numerous studies with normal listeners have provided evidence for this model ( Marslen - Wilson and Welsh 1978; Marslen-Wilson 1987; Tyler 1983).

#### THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF IDEA UNITS

Many spoken idea units are clauses, grammatically speaking, but the way that idea units are structured is often slightly different from standard written clauses two structure that clearly belong to spoken -like language use are topicalisation and tails.

#### TOPICALISATION

Topicalisation, or thematic fronting, gives special informational emphasis to the initial element of a clause in informal speech, as in *joe his name is* (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1976). Topicalisation breaks the standard word order of written language. In speaking, the word order does not seem 'broken' in any sense, however, since the aim is to emphasise the topic. It is a very frequent feature of informal talk, and McCarthy and Carter (1995:211) suggest that the explanation is that it has significant interpersonal meaning. It often indicates that an important topic of conversation is to follow. Thus, their example of that *that house in the corner, is that where you live?* is presumably an introduction into a discussion on the house or the neighbourhood, something that the speaker is reminded of upon seeing the house.

#### TAILS

Tails, in turn, are noun phrases that come at the end of a clause. In a way they are the mirror image of topicalisation, in that they repeat a pronoun that has been used earlier in the clause. By using tails, speakers can emphasise the comment they make at the beginning of the clause, and still make it clear what they are talking about, as in *its very nice, that road through Skipton to the (Dales McCarthy and Carter, 1995)*. The comment that the speaker expresses at the beginning of the clause is often an evaluation, such as *he's quite a comic, that fellow, you know*, but not always, as in *'cos otherwise they tend to go cold, don't they, pasta*. Tails emphasise the point made at the beginning of the clause, and at the same time, they create an informal tone in the talk. Both topicalisation and tails follow clear patterns, which can be formed into 'rules' for talk. The patterns are characteristically spoken-like, but not traditionally taught in language classes or talked about in grammars. They create an impression of naturalness and interpersonal involvement in spoken discourse, and if examinees use them appropriately they could be rewarded for it. However, they cannot be punished for not using them. Because they are not obligatory in any context.

Speakers may emphasise points by topicalisation, which means starting their turn with the main topic and making the word order unusual, or tails, which means using the natural emphasis of the beginning of their turn for a comment or an evaluation and putting the noun that they are making their comment on at the end of the clause. This gives talk a spoken flavour. It adds interpersonal and evaluative tones, which is typical for spoken discourse.

#### SPEAKING AS MEANINGFUL INTERACTION

Teaching and testing experts often talk about speaking as a technical term to refer to one of the various skills that language learners should develop and have. This type of speaking tends to be seen as something that *individuals* do. It is legitimate, and for educational purpose useful, to see speaking in this ways too. Because it is true that individuals speak, and an important part of language use is personal. Nevertheless, it is also important to



remember that speaking forms a part of the shared social activity of talking.

In a typical spoken interaction, two or more people talk to each other about things that they think are mutually interesting and relevant in the situation. Their aim can be to pass the time, amuse each other, share opinions or get something done, or they can aim to do several of these and other things together. Each participant is both a speaker and a listener; they construct the event together and share the right to influence the outcomes - which can be both shared and individual.

#### **THE OPENNESS OF MEANINGS IN INTERACTION**

When people talk and listen to each other, they are driven by a quest for meaning, but meanings are not always clear and explicit. Moreover, people know that anything that is said has not just one meaning but many; it says something about some topic or other, but it also indicates the speaker's attitude towards the topic and towards about the history of the topic, his or her views about what might be happening next, and more.

#### **TALKING TO CHAT AND TALKING TO INFORM**

One way in which speech events differ from each other is the purpose for which the people are talking to each other. With this approach to analysing talk, Brown *et al.* (1984) characterise two extremes: chatting or listener-related talk, and information-related talk. They stress that this is not a clear-cut dichotomy but rather a dimension along which sections of talk will be situated. Moreover, both types of talk can occur in one and the same speech event; in fact, this is what normally happens. Information-related talk often comes sandwiched between social chat, and a social chat can easily turn into a serious discussion.

Brown *et al.* (1984) define chatting as the exchange of amicable conversational turns with another speaker. The primary purpose is to make and maintain social contact, to oil the social wheels, and thus chatting forms a large part of anyone's social life. Skilful chatting involves finding a fluid stream of topics that the speakers find sufficiently interesting to take up, and on which they can find a shared angle. The topics are not necessarily discussed very deeply, and it is more important to create a positive atmosphere and to agree than to express oneself

precisely or to be completely truthful. Chatting in one's first language can only really become strenuous on a social rather than linguistics dimension. However, we are not all equally socially gifted and not all equally good chatting. Yet, as Brown *et al.* point out, chatting in the first language is so closely connected to personality and individual communication styles that it cannot really be taught.

#### **TALKING IN DIFFERENT SOCIAL SITUATIONS**

One of the features that has an influence on what gets said in a speech event and how it is said is the social and situational context in which the talk happens. Hymes (1972) has helpfully summarised these concerns into framework that forms the acronym SPEAKING. The framework has so many categories because it is meant to be applicable to a large variety of social situations, but all of them may not be relevant for every situation.

The SPEAKING framework lists the potential social and contextual factors influencing speech as:

##### **Situation**

The physical setting (for instance a classroom) and the nature of the event (for instance an end-of-term test of speaking).

##### **Participants**

Speaker, hearer, audience, etc.; for instance, two examinees, an interlocutor and assessor (whether present in the situation or absent, only listening to the interaction afterwards from tape).

##### **Ends**

Conventional outcomes of the event, if any. For instance, accomplishing whatever task is the goal of the event, or producing a test score and verbal feedback. The ends also include the individual participants' goals, such as exposing the strengths and weakness of the examinees' speaking ability, showing one's ability to speak a foreign language at its best, or making fair and equitable assessments.

##### **Act sequence**

The form and content of speech act; the content of what is said, and the way it is said; how each act is spoken, and the sequence of acts in the discourse.

##### **Key**

Tone, manner, or spirit of act; for instance, supportive, friendly, open, formal, impersonal, tentative withdrawn.

**Instrumentalities**

Channel or mode, e.g. spoken, written, pre-recorded forms of speech: dialects, accent, and varieties used.

**Norms**

Norms of interpretation and norms of interaction such as right /responsibility to initiate topics, ask questions, express views, ask for clarification, explain, and elaborate.

**Genre**

Categories such as joke, lecture, description, instruction, storytelling, presentation.

**ROLES, ROLE RELATIONSHIPS AND POLITENESS**

Another feature that influences speakers' choice of words in interaction is speaker roles and role relationship. Together with the social and contextual features of the speaking situation, they can particularly be seen in the way that politeness appears in the talk. Politeness is usually the reason why people do not communicate 'maximally efficiently', as they would if they followed Grice's (1975) four conversational maxims:

Quantity : give sufficient information but not too much;

Quality : say only what you know to be true;

Relation : be relaxant;

Manner : be brief, clear and orderly.

**CONCLUSION**

This linguistics information provides some valuable guidelines for teaching spoken language and assessing too. Meanings and its contexts are playing a prominent role for successful communication. Though speaker and listener have some mutual understanding on the particular topic, they need more analysis and certain parameters to continue their conversation effectively.

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