



TEACHING CONVERSATIONAL STORYTELLING

15th Anglo Conference Sept 2019
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THINKING ABOUT CONVERSATION

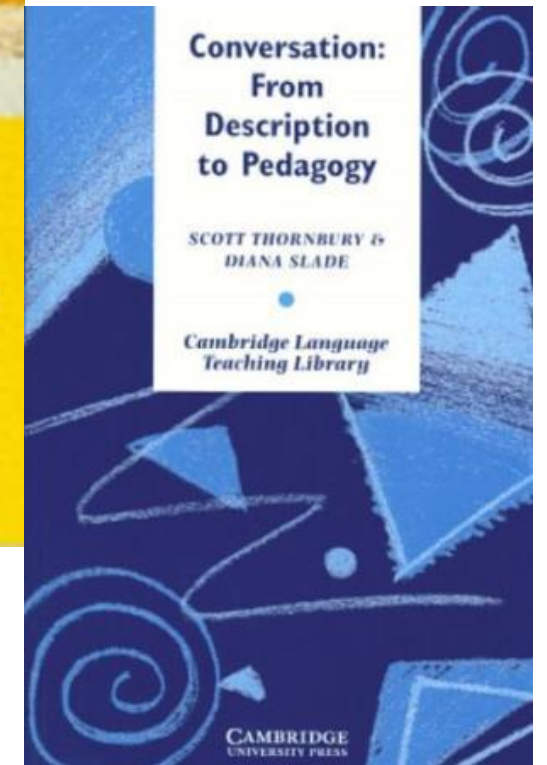
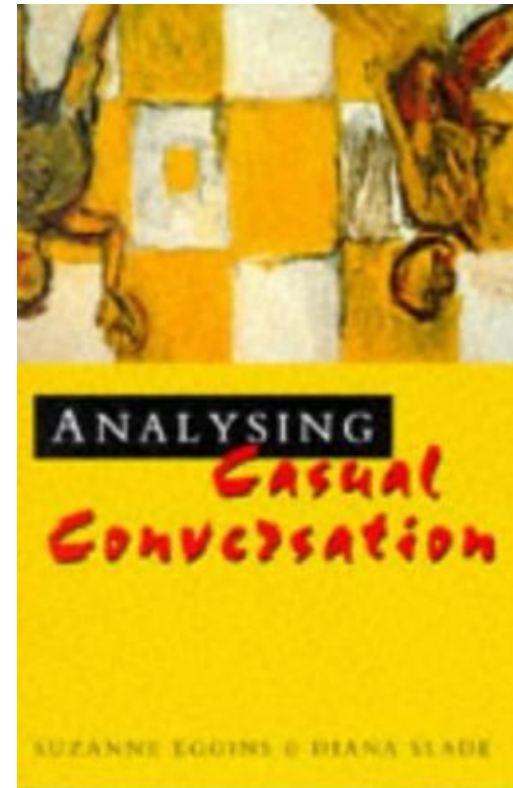
How would you define 'conversation'?

What does 'conversation' involve?

RESEARCH INTO CONVERSATION

Eggins, S., & Slade, D. (2005). *Analysing casual conversation*. Equinox Publishing Ltd.

Thornbury, S. and Slade, D. (2006). *Conversation: From Description to Pedagogy*. Cambridge University Press.





OUTLINE OF SESSION

What is conversation?

Four types of conversation (plus a little gossip)

Expanding conversational resources, e.g.

- *Backchannelling*
- *Informal evaluative language*

WHAT IS CONVERSATION?

“The centrality of conversation to human discourse owes to the fact that it is the primary location for **the enactment of social values and relationships.** Through talk we establish, maintain and modify **our social identities.**”

Thornbury & Slade (2006:1)

WHAT DOES CONVERSATION LOOK LIKE?

Conversation has two main characteristics:

Small talk (even exchanges between participants)

+

Stories (one person takes the floor and other(s) respond minimally for the duration of the story)

FOUR DIFFERENT KINDS OF STORY

1. **Recount**: things happened
2. **Exemplum**: things happened and we should learn from them.
3. **Anecdote**: things happened and I had an emotional response.
4. **Narrative**: things happened and they were complicated and I was emotional about it and there was a resolution

1. RECOUNT: TELL ME A STORY

A recount is a simple story (A and then B, D, E, and F happened).

It has to be important to the speaker.

Bring a photo to class and tell a story about it.

- *Teacher-Student*
- *Student-Student*
- *Class*



LISTENERSHIP

When listening to a story, the participant needs to do the following:

- Backchannel (mmhm, uh-huh, oh)
- Echo any evaluations
‘It/she was useless/ugly/beautiful/dangerous.’
- How would you respond to:
‘But though he wanted to, my sister didn’t allow my brother-in-law to wear a kilt.’

YOUR RECOUNTS

Groups of 3 (A, B and C)

Based on the photo, A tells a simple story to the B & C.

Possible topics:

- *an aggressive pet*
- *an unwanted Christmas/birthday present*
- *a childhood accident*

B listens and responds

C monitors.

A- TELLS A STORY
B- LISTENS AND RESPONDS
(ECHOING ANY EVALUATIONS)
C – MONITORS AND REPORTS



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REFLECTION ON RECOUNTS

Successful recounts:

Allow the speaker to tell a personal experience that is important to him or her

Allow the listener(s) the opportunity to show solidarity and empathy (you need to backchannel and evaluate)

Now let's recycle and expand...

2. EXEMPLUM

Exemplum: something happened and we should learn something from it



STARTING AN EXEMPLUM

How do you begin a conversational story?



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STARTING AN EXEMPLUM

How do you begin a conversational story?

Oh, I remember once...

Oh, that reminds me of when I was...

Oh, a terrible/really nice thing happened once...

CONCLUDING AN EXEMPLUM

How do you end an exemplum?



CONCLUDING AN EXEMPLUM

How do you end an exemplum?

Oh, it just shows you, you can't/shouldn't/must...

Oh, it just shows you how [ADJ] it is (to...)

CONVERSATIONAL EXEMPLUM

Groups of 3: A, B and C

A tells a conversational exemplum to B. This must end with something we have learned.

B responds appropriately throughout.

C monitors responses.



REFLECTION ON EXEMPLA

Successful exempla...

Allow the speaker to talk about a personal experience that has a moral (indirectly reveals attitudes/values)

Allow the listener(s) the opportunity to share or reject those values (again, you need to backchannel and evaluate)

3. ANECDOTES

Anecdotes: something happened and I had an emotional response that I want you to share.





ANECDOTES VERSUS RECOUNTS

Unlike a recount, an anecdote ends with the speaker giving a strong *emotional* evaluation, that the listener is expected to respond to appropriately.

You don't need to learn anything from the anecdote, you just need to share the emotion.

So...how should an anecdote finish?



FINISHING AN ANECDOTE...

I can tell you, I felt so

FINISHING AN ANECDOTE...

I can tell you, I felt so

British National Corpus (BYU-BNC) ⓘ 📄

SEARCH FREQUENCY

List Chart Collocates Compare KWIC

I felt so _j* [POS]

Find matching strings Reset

Sections Texts/Virtual Sort/Limit Options

1 IGNORE

SPOKEN
FICTION
MAGAZINE
NEWSPAPER
NON-ACAD

2 IGNORE

SPOKEN
FICTION
MAGAZINE
NEWSPAPER
NON-ACAD

FINISHING AN ANECDOTE...


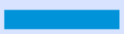

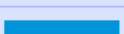
I can tell you, I felt so

British National Corpus (BYU-BNC)      

SEARCH FREQUENCY CONTEXT HELP

CONTEXT: CLICK ON WORD OR SELECT WORDS + [CONTEXT] [\[HELP...\]](#)

COMPARE

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT	FREQ	
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO SORRY	4	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO GUILTY	2	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO ROUGH	1	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO EMBARRASSED	1	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO BLOATED	1	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO ASHAMED	1	
		TOTAL	10	

AMERICAN SOAP OPERA CORPUS

Corpus of American Soap Operas				
SEARCH	FREQUENCY	CONTEXT	HELP	
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO BAD	33	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO GUILTY	28	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO SAFE	15	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO HELPLESS	12	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO ALIVE	9	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO EMPTY	9	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO STUPID	8	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO GOOD	7	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO AWFUL	6	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO BETRAYED	5	
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO HORRIBLE	5	
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO LUCKY	5	
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO TERRIBLE	4	
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO SURE	4	
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO SORRY	4	
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO RESPONSIBLE	3	
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO POSITIVE	3	
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO HAPPY	3	
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO SAD	3	
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO FREE	3	
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO ASHAMED	3	
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO BLESSED	2	
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO ALONE	2	
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO COMFORTABLE	2	
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO DIFFERENT	2	
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	I FELT SO SPECIAL	2	

DRAMA QUEEN ANECDOTE

Choose ONE of the expressions from the SOAP corpus and tell a story that leads up to it.

Oh, a terrible/really nice thing happened once...

Again, you should be in the roles of A (speaker), B (listener) and C (monitor). C monitors B's use of evaluative responses.

I FELT SO BAD

I FELT SO GUILTY

I FELT SO SAFE

I FELT SO HELPLESS

I FELT SO ALIVE

I FELT SO EMPTY

I FELT SO STUPID

I FELT SO GOOD

I FELT SO AWFUL

I FELT SO BETRAYED

I FELT SO HORRIBLE

I FELT SO LUCKY

I FELT SO TERRIBLE



INTENSIFYING EVALUATION

Our hotel room was [POSITIVE ADJECTIVE]

INTENSIFYING EVALUATION

Our hotel room was [POSITIVE ADJECTIVE]

Our *hotel room* was *clean/roomy/cheap/etc.*

How do you intensify this informally?

INTENSIFYING EVALUATION

Our hotel room was [POSITIVE ADJECTIVE]


Our hotel room was clean/roomy/cheap/etc.

How do you intensify this informally?

Our hotel room was nice and clean.


Which adjectives collocate with *nice and* _____?

NICE AND ADJ

! Corpus of Contemporary American English 

SEARCH FREQUENCY

[List](#) [Chart](#) [Collocates](#) [Compare](#) [KWIC](#)

nice and _j* adj.ALL 

Find matching strings Reset

Sections Texts/Virtual Sort/Limit Options

1 IGNORE

SPOKEN
FICTION
MAGAZINE
NEWSPAPER
ACADEMIC

2 IGNORE

SPOKEN
FICTION
MAGAZINE
NEWSPAPER
ACADEMIC

NICE AND ADJ

How many of these expressions could you fit into a story about a holiday?

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND WARM
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND EASY
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND HOT
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND CLEAN
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND SOFT
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND SMOOTH
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND SWEET
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND THIN
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND TENDER
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND MOIST
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND BROWN
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND QUIET
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND FRESH
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND COLD
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND GOLDEN
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND FRIENDLY
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND THICK
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND GREEN
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND HEALTHY
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND CREAMY
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND COOL
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND CRISP
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND CLEAR
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND GENTLE
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	NICE AND DRY

4. NARRATIVES

A full **narrative** is a long story that may include the following elements:

What the story is about

Where and when it took place

Complicating event/problem

Resolution of the problem (or non-resolution)

Evaluations (at any point in the story)

Summing up



WHAT IS THE WORST THING THAT CAN HAPPEN?

WHAT IS THE WORST THING THAT CAN HAPPEN?



YOUR LOST MOBILE PHONE

Introduce the story.

Where and when did it take place?

When did you realise the phone was lost?

Did you ever find it again? If not, what did you do?

Evaluations (at any point in the story).

Summing up: did you learn anything from the story?

REFLECTIONS ON NARRATIVES

Narratives allow the speaker to talk about problems, or obstacles that they have encountered and to explain how they turned out, for better or for worse.

Listeners again help to construct the story – by supplying or echoing evaluation or perhaps by supplying some of the stages (like the summing up).

VARIATIONS ON A THEME...

Variations on the activities used here.

Changing tenses (does moving from past to **present tense narrative** change the dramatic intensity?)

Second storying (A tells a story and B & C must follow it with related but better stories)

Adding **reported speech** ('And he/she was like...')

Trying **gossip narratives** ('X did something bad. This is how I feel about it.') using favourite soap opera characters.

TOWARDS ETHNOGRAPHY

Become conversational ethnographers:

- What kind of conversations do you hear around you?
- Who controls conversational topics?
- What happens if you don't support the speaker?
- Are there gender differences in conversational topics?
- What happens if you don't feel the same way as the storyteller about things?
- Do you always come up with the best 'second story'? If so, does that make you popular?

WHAT IS CONVERSATION AGAIN?

“The centrality of conversation to human discourse owes to the fact that it is the **primary location for the enactment of social values and relationships.** Through talk we **establish, maintain and modify our social identities.**”

Thornbury & Slade (2006:1)

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http://followtheart.info/kareff-Wed_2_20.html



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