

FEATURES OF EVERYDAY DISCOURSE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: March 28 th 2021 Accepted: April 7 th 2021 Published: April 26 th 2021	The article discusses the problem of everyday discourse in the English language. It displays the main features of daily verbal interaction, particularly some elements of everyday oral human communication.
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Conversation is an oral interaction between at least two individuals. The further development of conversational abilities and manners is a significant piece of socialization. Thus, investigating an oral discourse is a part of social science which examines the construction and association of human communication, with a more explicit spotlight on conversational collaboration.

1. CONTRACTIONS

A contraction is a short form like "I'm" instead of "I am". Contractions help to simplify language and people use them to help simplify their spoken English. Knowing different examples of contractions and their meanings is crucial because they are used everywhere in English, especially in conversational or informal language.

Examples:

You're such a sweetheart!

You should come to the party! **It'll** be fun!

She **could've** done it if she really tried.

"If **y'all** want to learn English, **y'all** better pay attention! I **ain't** joking!"

2. ELLIPSIS

The term ellipsis means that something is left out, or elided.

There are three types of ellipsis:

- TEXTUAL, He applied and (he) got the job
- STRUCTURAL, The car (that) he was driving
- SITUATIONAL, where some items are elided because they belong to the immediate environment. We can elide personal subjects, determiners, initial prepositions and initial auxiliary verbs.

Elliptical sentences i.e. sentences in which one or several parts of a sentence are felt as missing. Ellipses are considered to be the norm of oral intercourse. The missing parts are easily guessed because the situation in which the conversation takes place suggests them.

Many elliptical sentences, being widely used in the language, have become set expressions such as:

Examples:

See you tomorrow

Happy to meet you

Pity you didn't come

Ready? Most proper and others.

However, when elliptical sentences are used in written type of speech they become special stylistic devices aimed at making the utterance emphatic.¹

3. DISCOURSE MARKERS

A discourse marker is a word or phrase we use to organise or comment on or frame our spoken as well as written speech. Here are some examples of discourse markers: **ok, well, now, basically, apparently, actually, honestly, obviously, otherwise, besides, right, anyway, you know, you see, I mean, so** and many more.

Discourse markers are not only used to mark boundaries between topics and stages in a conversation or to check the understanding and to keep the listener involved in the conversation, but also they make the speaker sound more

¹ N. M. Kambarov. *Lectures on stylistics and text interpretation*. Tashkent. 2013

natural in a language. However, learners may find it difficult to apply discourse markers due to their cultural-specific features. To clarify they may not be translated easily between languages, and are not used in exactly the same way in different languages.

Here are some examples for discourse markers which are active in everyday English:

WELL is a widely-used discourse marker in a daily discourse and this expression is mostly used to display that what we are thinking about that which has been just mentioned or stated above.

Examples:

1. Tell me about your hometown?
My hometown, well, I grew up in a small town in the north part of China...
2. What do you think of my new car?
Well, I'm certain it's much faster than mine.

ACTUALLY is used to refer to a new topic in the talk or to contrast the idea which is being mentioned or to go into details of the topic.

Examples:

She has been actually really sympathetic.

The theatre itself is actually not that old, but what it's built on is over a century old.

I believe learning a foreign language is getting better in my country. Actually, in the university where study we have a very stable learning programme.'

I MEAN. During the talk the speaker may rephrase some part of his speech depending on the perception of the listener. I mean is used to make what we say clearer for the listener. We can use words and phrases such as **well, I mean, in other words, the thing is, what I mean is**, etc.

Examples:

Ted seems kind of lazy. **I mean**, he never offers to help and he just lies in front of the TV.

My father was a heavy drinker, **I mean**, he used to drink a quart of scotch a day.

4. WIDE USAGE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

English figures of speech such as idioms and different expressions are of great importance in daily English. They exist in everyday oral as well as written speech of English. Since phrases do not bode well in a real sense, we have to be aware of their importance and use. That may appear to be a ton of work, however learning phrases is fun, particularly when you contrast English sayings with the figures of speech in your own language.

According to M. McCarthy and F. O'Dell, everyday spoken language is full of fixed expressions that are not necessarily difficult to understand (their meaning may be quite 'transparent') but which have a fixed form which does not change. These have to be learnt as whole expressions. These expressions are often hard to find in dictionaries. The authors mention about some common expressions that can modify our speech in daily use.

Examples:

- As I was saying (takes the conversation back to an earlier point)
- As I say (repeats and confirms something that someone has already said)
- Talking of ... [Noun/Gerund] (starting a new topic but linking it to the present one)
- If you ask me (if you want to know my opinion, even if no one has asked for it)
- Come to think of it (something in the conversation makes you realise there may be a problem/query about something)

In everyday discourse demonstrative pronouns like this and that are used a lot and in various contexts with different meanings. For example:

- They talked about this and that. (different problems of little importance)
- This is it. [this is a significant point]
- That's it. (I've finished, that's all.)
- Well, that's that, then. (settled, agreed)

5. VAGUE LANGUAGE

Language that is not clear, precise and therefore allows speakers not to sound too definite. 'Loads of', 'that sort of thing', 'stuff' and 'whatsit' are all examples of vague language.

Vague language consists of vague nouns (thing, stuff, thingy, what-do-you-call-it), vague markers (or so, or something, or anything) and vague quantities (number + odd, number + ish, around, approximately, expressions such as bags of, a touch of, thousands, millions...)²

Examples:

Where are all the knives and forks and that kind of thing?

I need to buy cards and wrapping paper and stuff like that.

² <https://www.tesionline.it/appunti/insights-into-english-discourse/features-of-everyday-conversation/859/20>

6. QUESTIONS

Another characteristic feature of the oral type of speech is the use of questions in the form of a statement:

Examples:

You have been to school?

You go to the institute?

The question is understood as such only by the intonation which in its turn is implied by the question mark.

Echo questions have a declarative word order + wh-word. They may also consist in a determiner + what.

Examples:

That looks like a dinosaur. Like a what?

You have to go to Philippines? Have to go where?

Two-step questions

One question may preface another question, which is perceived as too personal or too direct.

Examples:

I wondered if I might ask you something.

Sure.

Would you....?

Question tags. In informal speech, question tags may be used in requests. They are typically found at the end of the clause but they can interrupt the clause in informal speech. At times, fixed tags like right, okay, yeah, don't you think? are used.

Examples:

You couldn't carry this for me, could you?

Don't tell anybody about this, yeah?

7. RESPONSE TOKENS

The term RESPONSE TOKEN refers to adjectives (fine, good, great, excellent) and adverbs (certainly, indeed, really) which provide positive feedback and may mark boundaries in the conversation. They often co-occur with other markers, such as thanks, checks, confirmations and greetings (in adjacency pairs).

Example:

A: Mm. Obviously it's not easy to eat er little and often when you're a busy man driving around the country. (Initiation)

B: Yeah that's true. (Response)

A: Mm. Right. (Follow-up)

As it has been mentioned the spoken language is far more emotional than the written.

This emotionless is manifested in:

- Intonation
- Structural design of the utterance,
- the use of exclamatory sentences, which are a signal of emotional tension, one-member sentences, elliptical sentences.
- The use of interjections, which are charged with emotive meaning. Any sentence that contains interjections will be marked as emotionally coloured.
- The peculiarities of the written type of speech are predetermined by the conditions in which this type of communication takes place. The written type of speech is not spontaneous. It is directed to a full and detailed expression of the thought, which is achieved by different lexical and syntactical means.

SOURCES:

1. Michael McCarthy and Felicity O'Dell. English Vocabulary in Use. Upper-intermediate and advanced. Cambridge University Press. 1999
2. N. M. Kambarov. Lectures on stylistics and text interpretation. Tashkent. 2013
3. <https://www.tesionline.it/appunti/insights-into-english-discourse/features-of-everyday-conversation/859/20>