

## CONVERSATION ANALYSIS IN TRUMAN CAPOTE'S NOVELLA «BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S»

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The article deals with the conversation analysis (CA) in Truman Capote's «Breakfast at Tiffany's.» Structural elements and principles of CA have been investigated in the novella. The analysis has been done on the principles of Paul Grice and Jeffrey Leach. Conversation significance and its location has been regarded. The attention is paid to characters' interaction and their turn-taking in the communication process. The role of conversation as a form of speech, according to which each phrase is directly addressed to the interlocutor and is confined by the topic of conversation has been studied.

**Keywords:** conversation analysis (CA), principles, maxims, politeness phenomena, interaction, to respond, conduct, turn-taking.

**Problem Formulation.** Modern linguists have expressed a great interest in the process of verbal communication and particularly in the study of dialogues as communicative units. It becomes necessary to provide further studying of the speech patterns that create social, communicative and interpersonal situations.

Conversation analysis (commonly abbreviated as CA) is an approach to the study of social interaction. Language figures centrally in the way humans interact, that is why CA involves the analysis of talk. For all practical purposes, CA can be thought of as the study of talk in interaction and other forms of human conduct in interaction other than talk, for example, gaze, gesture, body orientations, and their combinations. Truman Capote's novella 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' is rich in the variety of conversations.

**Research Analysis.** It has been studied by many scholars, among whom are Harvey Sacks, Emanuel A. Schegloff, Gail Jefferson, Paul Grice, Geoffrey Leech, Bronislaw Malinowski. The field of CA was researched mainly by Emanuel Schegloff, Harvey Sacks and Gail Jefferson. Schegloff was one of the principal creators of the field of conversation analysis. He identified talk-in-interaction as CA's topic. According to him, conversation analysis is a systematic analysis of talk that is produced as a result of normal everyday interactions. It refers to the study of orders of talk-in-interaction that takes place with any individual and in any setting. These settings can be the most ordinary and the most routine everyday situations. Consequently, CA tries to understand the hidden rules, meanings or structures that create such an order in a conversation [8].

The basic idea advanced by Harvey Sacks was that conversation is orderly in its details and that those details manifest themselves in the form of turn types, turn transitions, membership categorization devices, and many forms of indexicality (words and sentence fragments with multiple possible meanings) designed to guarantee that participants fulfill hearing and listening requirements. According to Sacks, these requirements must be displayed by all participants at most points in any interaction if conversation and interaction are to succeed. This solves the problem posed by ordi-

nary language philosophers as to how persons can know whether or not the other has understood what was said and also introduces an inevitable moral dimension to interaction [7].

Jefferson also contributed essential work, especially on side-sequences and laughter. Gail Jefferson claimed that in the course of some on-going activity, like human interaction, for example, there are occurrences one might feel are not part of that activity but which appear to be in some sense relevant. Such an occurrence constitutes a break in activity. This could be described as a side sequence within an ongoing sequence.

**The aim** of this paper is to analyze conversations in Truman Capote's novella 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' and to discover how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk, with a central focus on how sequences of action are generated. To put it another way, the objective of the article is to uncover the often tacit reasoning procedures and sociolinguistic competencies underlying the production and interpretation of talk in organized sequences of interaction.

**The Main Part.** In daily life a person unconsciously communicates with others in many ways such as language, gestures and expressions. In communication he/she is expected to give or share information with others. In order to make a conversation understood by the speaker and the hearer, there must be the general principle of language use, which is called the cooperative principle. The principle states that the speaker gives contribution in conversation in which he is engaged. This cooperative principle contains four categories, which are formulated as basic rules or maxims. Maxim is a set of norms which language users adhere to in order to uphold the effectiveness and efficiency of communication.

Paul Grice explicates what he takes to be necessary elements of successful conversation. For him, successful conversation comprises «Cooperative Principle» (or, 'CP': communicate that which is required of the conversation such that the purpose of the conversation is achievable) and maxims which fall under the following categories: *Quantity* (that which pertains to the amount of information communicated); *Quality* (that which pertains to the veracity of the information communicated); *Relation* (that which

pertains to the relevance of the information communicated); and *Manner* (that which pertains to the way information is communicated) [2].

Grice gives the list of the maxims associated with CP:

1. Maxims associated with quantity: where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more. 'Communicate information that is as informative as required'. 'Do not communicate more information than is necessary'.

2. Maxims associated with quality: where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence. 'Do not communicate things you know to be false'. 'Do not assert that which you have insufficient evidence for'.

3. The maxim associated with relation: where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion. 'Be relevant'.

4. Maxims associated with manner: when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity. 'Avoid obscurity'. 'Avoid ambiguity'. 'Be brief'; 'Be orderly'.

Maxim is a set of norms which language users stick to in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of communication. As the maxims stand, there may be an overlap, as regards the length of what one says, between the maxims of quantity and manner; this overlap can be explained by thinking of the maxim of quantity in terms of units of information. In other words, if the listener needs, let us say, five units of information from the speaker, but gets less, or more than the expected number, then the speaker is breaking the maxim of quantity. The proof of it can be the following extract from the narrator's conversation with O.J. Berman:

*O.J. Berman: What do you think: is she or ain't she?*

*Unnamed narrator: Ain't she what?*

*O.J. Berman: A phony.*

*Unnamed narrator: I wouldn't have thought so.*

*O.J. Berman: You're wrong. She is a phony. But on the other hand you're right. She isn't a phony because she's a real phony. She believes all this crap she believes. You can't talk her out of it. I've tried with tears running down my cheeks. Benny Polan, respected everywhere, Benny Polan tried. Benny had it on his mind to marry her, she don't go for it, Benny spent maybe thousands sending her to head-shrinkers. Even the famous one, the one can only speak German, boy, did he throw in the towel. You can't talk her out of these ideas. Try it sometime. Get her to tell you some of the stuff she believes. Mind you, I like the kid. Everybody does, but there's lots that don't. I do. I sincerely like the kid. I'm sensitive, that's why. You've got to be sensitive to appreciate her: a streak of the poet. But I'll tell you the truth. You can beat your brains out for her, and she'll hand you horseshit on a platter. To give an example – who is she like you see her today? She's strictly a girl you'll read where she ends up at the bottom of a bottle of Seconals. I've seen it happen more times than you've got toes: and those kids, they weren't even nuts. She's nuts [1, p. 9].*

Analysing this extract, we can see that O.J. Berman violates the maxim of quantity by giving much

more information than the narrator expected from him. However, if the speaker gives the five required units of information, but is either too curt or long-winded in conveying them to the listener, then the maxim of manner is broken. The dividing line is rather thin and unclear, that is why, we may say that both the maxims of quantity and manner are broken here.

The maxim associated with relation was mainly broken by Holly, who was 'jumping' from one theme to another. This can be observed when she started talking about Rusty Trawler, continued about mean reds and angst feeling, finished with her intention to set off to Mexico:

*Holly: Poor slob, poor slob without a name. It's a little inconvenient, his not having a name. But I haven't any right to give him one: he'll have to wait until he belongs to somebody. We just sort of took up by the river one day, we don't belong to each other: he's an independent, and so am I. I don't want to own anything until I know I've found the place where me and things belong together. I'm not quite sure where that is just yet. But I know what it's like. It's like Tiffany's. Not that I give a hoot about jewelry. Diamonds, yes. But it's tacky to wear diamonds before you're forty; and even that's risky. They only look right on the really old girls. Maria Ouspenskaya. Wrinkles and bones, white hair and diamonds: I can't wait. But that's not why I'm mad about Tiffany's. Listen. You know those days when you've got the mean reds? [1, p. 12].*

*Unnamed narrator: Same as the blues?*

*Holly: No, the blues are because you're getting fat or maybe it's been raining too long. You're sad, that's all. But the mean reds are horrible. You're afraid and you sweat like hell, but you don't know what you're afraid of. Except something bad is going to happen, only you don't know what it is. You've had that feeling?*

*Unnamed narrator: Quite often. Some people call it angst.*

*Holly: All right. Angst. But what do you do about it?*

*Unnamed narrator: Well, a drink helps.*

*Holly: I've tried that. I've tried aspirin, too. Rusty thinks I should smoke marijuana, and I did for a while, but it only makes me giggle. What I've found does the most good is just to get into a taxi and go to Tiffany's. It calms me down right away, the quietness and the proud look of it; nothing very bad could happen to you there, not with those kind men in their nice suits, and that lovely smell of silver and alligator wallets. If I could find a real-life place that made me feel like Tiffany's, then I'd buy some furniture and give the cat a name. I've thought maybe after the war, Fred and I went to Mexico once. It's wonderful country for raising horses. I saw one place near the sea. Fred's good with horses [1, p. 13].*

Talking about quality maxim that was madame Sapphia Spanella who violated it. Let us observe the example:

*Madame Spanella: Run. Bring the police. She is killing somebody! Somebody is killing her! Run! Tell the police murder! [1, p. 24].*

She did not have the insufficient evidence for what she was shouting about. She should only speak the truth – not knowingly giving false information.

Phatic communication is known as small talk: the nonreferential use of language to share feelings or establish a mood of sociability rather than to communicate information or ideas. The formulas of phatic communication (such as «Uh-huh» and «Have a nice day») are generally intended to attract the attention of the listener or prolong communication. Amongst other things, this 'small talk' helps avoid uncomfortable silences at the beginnings and endings of conversations. The term 'phatic communion' was coined by Bronislaw Malinowski. He stressed that in a phatic exchange the actual words used to fulfil a social function and that is their principal aim, but they are neither the result of intellectual reflection, nor do they necessarily arouse interest in the listener [6]. The kinds of comments-or 'tokens'-that speakers use in phatic exchanges can be classified under three headings:

(1) neutral tokens-comments relating to the immediate context of interaction which are not personal to either the speaker or the hearer;

(2) self-oriented tokens-comments on factors that are personal to the speaker;

(3) other-oriented tokens-comments on factors that are personal to the hearer.

Phatic communication refers also to trivial and obvious exchanges about the weather and time, made up of ready-made sentences or foreseeable statements. Therefore this is a type of communication that establishes a contact without transmitting a precise content, where the container is more important than the content [4].

The universality of politeness has been widely discussed among scholars and a great deal of effort has been made to work out a comprehensive theory of politeness. The issue of politeness has attracted much more attention since Geoffrey Leech published his politeness theory in 1983. As a complement to Grice's CP, Leech proposes the Politeness Principle (PP) to explain why people sometimes fail to observe the CP. According to Leech, if the CP is adopted to facilitate communication, the PP is aimed to «maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place.» Therefore, the PP overtakes the CP in situations where politeness toward the hearer or the referent is necessary. Leech summarizes five pragmatic parameters by which we can decide the degree of politeness:

1. The greater the cost of action to the hearer is, the more polite the speaker should be;

2. The greater the social distance between the hearer and speaker is, the more polite the speaker should be;

3. The more authoritative the hearer is, the more polite the speaker should be;

4. The more options available to a hearer, the more polite an utterance is;

5. The more indirect an utterance is, the more polite it is.

With these five parameters as premise, Leech's PP consists of six maxims as follows:

I. TACT MAXIM: (a) Minimize cost to other (b) Maximize benefit to other

II. GENEROSITY MAXIM: (a) Minimize benefit to self (b) Maximize cost to self

III. APPROBATION MAXIM (a) Minimize dispraise of other (b) Maximize praise of other

IV. MODESTY MAXIM (a) Minimize praise of self (b) Maximize dispraise of self

V. AGREEMENT MAXIM (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other (b) Maximize agreement between self and other

VI. SYMPATHY MAXIM (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other (b) Maximize sympathy between self and other [5].

Among the above maxims, I and III are more powerful than the others, because «politeness is focused more strongly on other than on self». In addition, the sub-maxim (a) is more influential than (b) under each category, because «negative politeness is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness».

Phatic communication, which is known as small talk, is the nonreferential use of language to share feelings or establish a mood of sociability rather than to communicate information or ideas. This can be proved on the example of exchange, which took place between the unnamed narrator and Holly Golightly:

*Holly: What is today?*

*Unnamed narrator: Thursday.*

*Holly: Thursday. My God. It's too gruesome.*

*Unnamed narrator: What's gruesome about Thursday?*

*Holly: Nothing [1, p. 7].*

According to the three-way typology of phatic tokens, they are divided into neutral, self-oriented and other-oriented. Neutral tokens in the novella are frequently comments on the weather:

*Holly: It must be winter sometime.*

*Unnamed narrator: It rains, that I know. Heat. Rain. J-j-jungles.*

*Holly: Heat. Jungles. Actually, I'd like that [1, p. 16].*

The remaining two categories are self-oriented tokens and other-oriented tokens. Self-oriented tokens refer to factors personal to the speaker, whilst other-oriented tokens refer to factors personal to the listener. Examples of the former category would be:

*Holly: Whiskey and apples go together. Fix me a drink, darling. Then you can read me a story yourself [1, p. 6].*

Whilst examples of the latter category would be:

*Holly: Well, darling, does anyone buy what you write?*

*Unnamed narrator: Not yet [1, p. 6].*

According to Geoffrey Leech, there is a politeness principle with conversational maxims similar to those formulated by Paul Grice. The examples of maxims used in the novella are given below:

I. TACT MAXIM:

*Holly: Oh, darling, I am sorry. I lost the key.*

*Mr. Yunioshi: You cannot go on ringing my bell. You must please, please have yourself a key made [1, p. 3].*

II. GENEROSITY MAXIM:

*Joe Bell: Let me build you a drink. Something new. They call it a White Angel [1, p. 1].*

III. APPROBATION MAXIM

*Holly: It's not a joke, darling. I want you to call him up and tell him what a genius Fred is. He's written barrels of the most marvelous stories. Well, don't blush, Fred: you didn't say you were a genius, I did [1, p. 11].*



## IV. MODESTY MAXIM

Holly: *Well, don't laugh. I'm so disorganized...* [1, p. 7].

## V. AGREEMENT MAXIM

Holly: *O.J. Berman's in town, and listen, I gave him your story in the magazine. He was quite impressed. He thinks maybe you're worth helping. But he says you're on the wrong track. Negroes and children: who cares?*

Unnamed narrator: *Not Mr. Berman, I gather.*

Holly: *Well, I agree with him. I read that story twice. Brats and niggers. Trembling leaves. Description. It doesn't mean anything* [1, p. 19].

## VI. SYMPATHY MAXIM

Unnamed narrator: *Thank you. For saving my life. You're wonderful. Unique. I love you* [1, p. 28].

Among the above examples, tact and approbation maxims are more powerful than the others, because politeness is focused more strongly on other than on self.

**Conclusion.** Conversation analysis is the dominant approach to the study of human social interaction across the discipline of linguistics, com-

munication and sociology. CA provides practical tools for analysing patterns in talk, for instance, turn-taking and sequence organization. These practical aspects and the fact that they can be used for a large number of purposes according to the researcher's interests and theoretical stance make conversation analysis a rather interesting and popular research technique.

The notion of phatic communion is presented in 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' with the help of tokens. They are used to share feelings or establish a mood. Tokens also serve to break any uncomfortable silence as well as laying the foundation for further interaction. Conversation analysis of the novella according to Leech's politeness maxims revealed that approbation and agreement maxims dominate.

Having done the conversation analysis of Truman Capote's novella 'Breakfast at Tiffany's', we can state that the author uses a wide range of dialogues in order to present the way characters interact. The novella contains a wide variety of dialogues in which characters violate Grice's maxims, mainly quantity and manner ones.

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## АНАЛІЗ ДІАЛОГІВ У НОВЕЛІ ТРУМЕНА КАПОТЕ «СНІДАНОК У ТІФФАНІ»

## Анотація

Досліджено структурні елементи та принципи аналізу діалогів у новелі Трумена Капоте «Сніданок у Тіффані». Аналіз діалогів здійснено за принципами Пола Грайса та Джефрі Ліча. Прослідковано значення та місце діалогів у новелі. Звернено увагу на способи взаємодії героїв та зміну черговості в процесі спілкування. Сконцентровано увагу на ролі діалогів як однієї з форм мовлення, при якій кожен вислів прямо адресується співрозмовнику й виявляється обмеженим безпосередньо тематикою розмови.

**Ключові слова:** аналіз діалогів, принципи, феномен ввічливості, взаємодія, відповідати, поведінка, почерговість.

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## **АНАЛИЗ ДИАЛОГОВ В НОВЕЛЛЕ ТРУМЕНА КАПОТЕ «ЗАВТРАК У ТИФФАНИ»**

### **Аннотация**

Исследованы структурные элементы и принципы анализа диалогов в новелле Трумена Капоте «Завтрак у Тиффани». Анализ диалогов осуществлен по принципам Пола Грайса и Джеффри Лича. Отслежено значение диалогов в новелле. Сконцентрировано внимание на роли диалогов как одной из форм речи, при которой каждое высказывание прямо адресуется собеседнику и оказывается ограниченным непосредственно тематикой разговора.

**Ключевые слова:** анализ диалогов, принципы, феномен вежливости, взаимодействие, отвечать, поведение, очередность.