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Exploring Grammatical Features of Informal Talk in English Literature

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ملخص البحث:

إن من الوظائف الاجتماعية الاساسية للمحادثة والتي من خلالها تحفظ و تغير هويات الناس، دفع بالكثير من الباحثين إلى استعمال كلمات مثل الحديث والحوار والنقاش بالتناوب في كل نصوصهم. بالإضافة إلى أنها غير رسمية، فالمحادثة تكون في الغالب عفوية، تفاعلية، تشمل كل الناس في إطار واقع محدد. تعتبر هذه الدراسة محاولة لإلقاء الضوء على الخصائص النحوية للمحادثة التي تتميز بها معظم الأعمال الأدبية والتي تختلف كل الاختلاف عن الخصائص النحوية للغة المكتوبة. فقد قام الكتاب والروائيون المعاصرون والكلاسيكيون بجهود معتبرة لإظهار مميزات المحادثة العفوية. وكنموذج لوصف ودراسة هذه الخصائص النحوية، اخترنا الرواية التهكمية "The way We Live Now" للكاتب الانجليزي أنتوني ترولوب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المحادثة، الحوار، الخصائص النحوية،الادب الانجليزي.

Abstract

The most fundamental social function of conversation through which people's social identities are set, maintained and modified urged researchers to use interchangeably terms like 'talk', 'conversation' and 'discussion' throughout their entire texts. In addition of being informal, conversation is predominantly spontaneous, interactive, interpersonal, and always takes place in a shared context. It also displays speakers' identity. The present reflective piece is an attempt to shed light on the fact that informal talk has special grammatical features different from those of written language and that can be easily depicted in literary works. Writers and novelists, not only the contemporary ones have been making efforts to highlight the whiff of spontaneous conversation. These grammatical aspects have been described through Anthony Trollope's Victorian perceptive satire 'The way We Live Now'.

Key words: informal talk; conversation; grammatical features; English literature

Introduction

It is well-known that the gifted humans' aptitude to talk, and discuss makes them totally different from animals. They are said to be superior and endowed with brains that allow them to tell right from wrong. Each one makes considerable efforts to be with others, to love or hate them, to accept or reject them. He / she can never live isolated. He / she needs the others to learn how to cherish, how to tolerate, how to listen and how to talk. An animal, however, can never be aware of being fearful, anxious, or jealous. Its main worry is to get food and find a shelter for just one day.

That is just the way it is! Language is a social entity. We are in dire need of it. How would we appreciate a novel, a song or a joke without language? How would we put our disputes aside without talk? How would a mother console her kid after a violent quarrel without discussion? How could a customer air their opinions and frustrations about a deplorable service without language? How could a patient at a doctor's endure a two hour wait silently without speaking to somebody about weather, politics, or sports?

The present reflective piece is an attempt to shed light on conversation whether casual or formal as central to everyone so as not only to enter into social relationships with others but to strengthen them. It explores not only its linguistic features and the way its vocabulary and grammar are enhanced but the discourse aspects as well focusing on coherence, cohesion, and interactivity of discussion.

1. Exploring Discussion

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines talk as a "a conversation between two people, often about a particular subject", conversation as a "the activity in which people talk about something and tell each other their ideas or opinions", and discussion as a "talk between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information is exchanged."

Talk means simply 'a conversation with someone', 'ordinary conversations between people', 'an informal lecture about a subject', 'a discussion of other people's private lives' or 'a style of talking used by a particular group of people.' (Macmillan English Dictionary). It is said to be cheap when we do not believe that someone will in fact do what they are saying they will do. Kids need to talk to their parents when there is something very important to say. They have to keep talking despite arguments and misunderstandings. It is advisable that parents try to talk sense into their children and avoid talking away when nobody is listening. A friend may talk you through the whole process of sending an email. Another may hate when you talk posh or speak in riddles. Coaches and sports players would prefer pep talk to trash talking. A talk may become a formal discussion between governments or organizations when they decide to talk problems out, speak the same language and particularly, put aside the double talk.

Conversation as "an informal talk in which people exchange news, feelings, and thoughts", (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English) can be held, or carried on with somebody. A friend may engage you into conversation about family, which after a while, will be steered towards football. A husband may be in deep conversation with his wife and tries to sweet talk her into doing something. A conversation can be stilted and made with somebody for the sake of being polite without having anything to say. A work of art in your house may become a conversation piece that friends will always ask about.

The term discussion may first refer to "the action or process of talking about something in order to reach a decision or exchange ideas," (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary) and second, as "a conversation about something, usually important" (Macmillan English Dictionary), "a detailed treatment of a topic in speech or writing" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary) or "a speech or piece of writing that gives information, ideas, opinions, etc., about something." (Merriam Webster's Dictionary).

Thornbury and Slade (2006) identified, in all, seven main characteristics of conversation:

1. Conversation is predominantly spoken and based on a set of prosodic features necessary to enrich interactivity and the interpersonal function of the discussion.
2. Conversation is spontaneous and synchronous. Crystal and Davy (1975) asserted that time has proven to be the main difference between spoken and written language. A spontaneous and synchronous conversation implies that it is immediate, interactive, less structured and transient unless it is recorded. However, a set of ensuing effects will become manifest among which repetitions, incomplete sentences, corrections, false starts, interruptions, and hesitations. Spontaneity also means that the speaker resorts to using fillers, borrowed and stringed chunks, launchers, coordinated clauses rather than subordinated sentences, as well a lower lexical density.
3. Conversation occurs in a shared context. This latter is based on shared experience, and culture. Hence, a certain kind of connectedness based on empathy and understanding becomes prevalent. The shared knowledge will facilitate proximity and reciprocity between speakers who will work together in order to build into a broad community.
4. Conversation is interactive. i.e. It involves all people that communicate and react to each other. It pertains to reciprocity, contingency, and negotiation. Each participant holds his own turn, without monopolizing the talk, makes answers, builds upon prospective and retrospective turns. Van Lier (1996) contended that such progression "is fast, unpredictable, and turns are tightly interwoven, each one firmly anchored to the preceding one and holding out expectations (creating possibilities, raising exciting options) for the next one." (p. 177)
5. Conversation is interpersonal. A participant is inclined to build up relationships gently and patiently with others by understanding their situation, getting the better of their intentions and ideas. Whenever a sender or a receiver exchanges and makes known messages containing feelings, wants, needs and ideas, the communication is said to be interpersonal. Discussion is interpersonal means that people who live and work together, need each other for the sake of friendship, love, security and comfort. They need each other to become more sensitive through dialogue or to attain their goals. When a discussion breaks down, relationships are damaged and people will reap conflicts, dissatisfactions, stress, aggressiveness, and most importantly loneliness and even death.

6. Conversation is endowed with an informal style if it is spontaneous and interactive. Participants use the vernacular regional variety characterized by a set of casual stylistic features among which loose grammatical sentence constructions, pronunciation contractions and colloquial lexis. How could we imagine a talk between buddies gone for a walk after an exhausting working day? How could we imagine a two college girls' chit-chat about their passing romances? They, undeniably, will burst out laughing, tease or heap blame on each other, and curse for the sake of fun. However, in certain communication situations, discussion takes place more formally. It becomes "a careful, impersonal and often public mode of speaking used in certain situations and which may influence pronunciation, choice of words and sentence structure" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 209). Such formality is higher whenever the interlocutors feel more distant in time, space and social background. A TV debate on racism or ecology, an inaugural Queen's speech before a Parliamentary session, or a stiff sentence brought in by a judge are examples of formal talk where the speaker "is very careful about pronunciation and choice of words and sentence structure" (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1997, p. 144). The speaker is as close as possible to the standard form.
7. Conversation displays the speaker's identity. In fact, an individual uses language not only as a system of communication which is "so tightly woven into human experience that is scarcely possible to imagine human life without it" (Pinker, 1994, p. 17) but to maintain and promote connection with others. Even when there is little to communicate, he will very often make a social connection with another human being and simultaneously define his identity and acquiescence to a particular group. A conversation may allow a speaker to announce their identity and be friendly with those involved in the conversation whether they belong to the same social stratum or not.

Hence, "Conversation is the informal, interactive talk between two or more people, which happens in real time, is spontaneous, has a largely interpersonal function, and in which participants share symmetrical rights." (Thornbury & Slade, 2006, p. 25) is a workable definition of conversation that must be highlighted before going further into details.

2. Enhancing Grammar of Conversation

Etymologically, grammar or 'grammatiké tekhné' means the art of letters or alphabet. Its main subject matter par excellence is writing defined as a sequence of letters and in the sense that the birth of grammar was contemporary with the introduction of writing. Grammar can be either practical and deals with practical rules of linguistic structures use or theoretical and proposes thorough description and analysis of those structures on the basis of linguistic principles and approaches.

The proponents of prescriptive grammar very often called standardizers persist in considering that there is no grammar in any spoken language. They bolster up the tight association of grammar to writing and pretend that the absence of fluency is the main characteristic of spoken language. This latter is, in fact, grammatically inchoate and even chaotic. For them, due to recurrent pressures, most importantly spontaneity, the

speaker finds stark difficulty to respect the process both at the cognitive and grammatical levels. Therefore, grammar of written language quite suffices to learn even speaking.

Descriptivists and linguists argue that both spoken and written language have the same grammar. Accordingly, there is no special spoken grammar but only one set of rules, structures and categories. Any difference between the two is due to use and never to the grammatical system itself.

Recently, a third view encountered with authors like David Brazil in his book *The Grammar of Speech* (1995) turns the spotlight on the fact that spoken language has a special grammar different from the grammar of written language. It is special given that conversation is endowed with seven main characteristics (Figure 1).

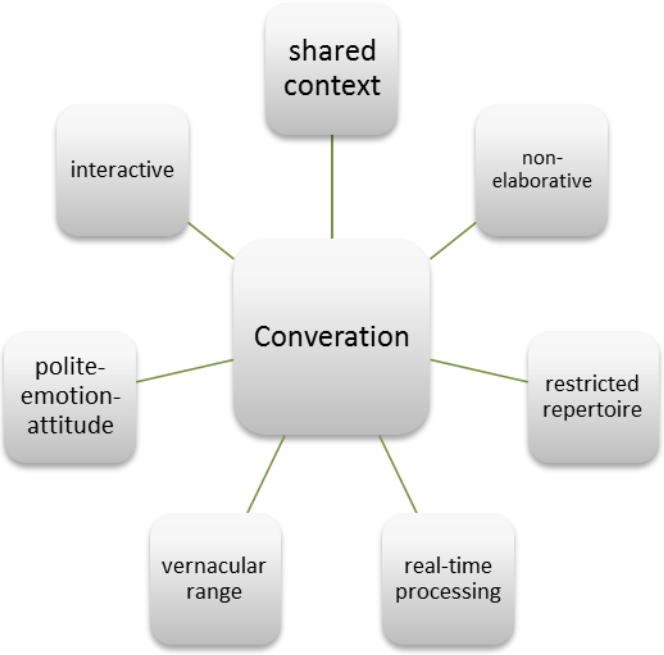

Figure 1: The Seven Features of Conversation. (Adapted from P. Quaglio & D. Biber, 2006)

Quaglio and Biber (2006) argued that any conversation occurs within a shared context encompassing the same physical space, the same time, the same purpose, the same background knowledge, the same culture and shared experiences. It is so important because it facilitates conversations. The greater it is between interlocutors, the easier

it is to carry on discussions. It is very necessary for people to be aware and conveniently identify the overall environment and conditions that surround any interpersonal communication.

Linguistically, this shared knowledge between speakers is reflected in the simple and highly frequent use of grammatical forms and structures such as:

- personal pronouns (*I* and *you*),
- inserts (*Yes, Okay, sorry…*),
- front ellipsis (*Feeling okay?*)
- ellipsis across independent clauses

e.g. A: I was absent yesterday.
B: *Why?*
A: *very tired*.

The second feature of a discussion is interactivity. Participants build up the dynamics of the discourse via the frequent use of:

- first and second personal pronouns (*I and you*) that refer to the immediate interlocutors
- questions, especially
  - tag questions : incredible, *isn't it*?
  - non-clausal questions

e.g. A: Tea and *what else*?
B: Cookies.

- Imperatives: *take a left then a right* / *stand up straight*
- Vocatives: I know, *Stephen* / *Charlie*, don't forget to brush your teeth.
- discourse markers: *well*, you need a computer / *right*, open your books

Non-elaboration is the third feature of a spontaneous conversation. To avoid unnecessary repetitions and long turns, participants opt for:

- elliptic structures:

e.g. A:↔ think you could help her?
B: Yeah ↔

Both participants omitted the auxiliary *do* and the pronoun *you* in order to speed up and, most importantly, keep the conversation alive.

- Deictic expressions:

e.g. *Now then*, it's time to get up!
Come over *here* and look at *this*!

- Vague language: relying on a shared context, speakers try to avoid elaborated and precise meaning through long structures. The interactivity and spontaneity of a discussion incite them to use vague conversational hedges such as: *sort of, kind of, stuff like that, thing, something, etc.*

When speakers choose to avoid elaboration, they are inclined to use very restricted repertoire (the fourth feature) based on repetitive favourite items:

- Modal auxiliaries: *could, might, can, would, will, must, etc.*
- Adverbs: *so, then, now, anyway, etc.*
- Conjunctions: *but, and, so, or, etc.*
- Prepositions: *on, into, before, near, at, etc.*
- Subordinators: *if, because, after, when, until, etc.*

The fifth feature of a discussion deals with the speaker's feelings, concerns and attitudes which surface through some common grammatical devices:

- Polite forms expressing greetings, offers, requests, apologies: *hi, hello, let's, could you, please, sorry, etc.*
- Interjections: *oh, oops, wow, ah, hey, etc.*
- Familiarizing vocatives: *honey, sweetie, darling, dad, dear, buddy, etc.*
- Expletives: *damn it, gosh, bloody hell, etc.*

- Evaluative adjectives (very often co-occurring with exclamations: *nice, beautiful, sweet, good, oh,* what a *beautiful* garden, etc.
- Adverbs: really, probably, actually, etc.

The interactiveness, and the shared context of the conversation will enhance the participants to express their emotions by employing a wide range of vernacular expressions (sixth feature). By vernacular, we mean an everyday language or a variety of such language specific to a social group or region. When using it, speakers express their own solidarity and membership. Several grammatical variants are placed at their disposal:

- Morphological: *y'all* (you-all), *ain't* (am not, is not, are not have not, has not, do not), *wanna, gotta, gonna* (want to, got to, going to), etc.
- Mosphosyntactic: Stephen *don't* know you, do he?

Me and Stephen are friends.
There's a lot of hotels in Vegas.
Dad *don't* have *no* money.

The frequent use of a restricted repertoire and absence of elaboration is, in fact, due to the spontaneity of communication. By spontaneity, as it has been explained earlier, we mean that conversation takes place in real time (seventh feature). People feel an ongoing pressure to produce as quickly as possible. Rather, they tend to use easier but much efficient forms:

- Morphological reductions such contractions (clitics) and aphesis: he's, don't, cos
- Syntactic reduction such as the omission of the auxiliary: you better go
- Vague reference: *and stuff like that, that thing*, etc.
- Hesitation pauses, hesitation fillers, repetitions,
- Non-clausal units including discourse markers (*well, okay*), polite formulas (*thanks*), minimal responses (*yeah, wow, good*), ellipses (*good luck*), non-clausal questions (*where?)*

It is worthy to note that the above situational grammatical features prevailing in conversation do overlap with each other in the sense that speakers are interested in what is said, do their best to negotiate and co-construct meaning. The use of a large variety of grammar devices would reflect and associate the participants' shared context, emotions, attitudes, real-time pressures with a vernacular, non-elaborate, restricted repertoire.

To revisit the question whether spoken and written do have the same or different grammar, one can keep to the third view that English grammar is common to both modes but due to some constraints, there exists a special grammar of conversation. Such constraints incite researchers, and teachers to take them into account when designing new teaching materials. Even writers and novelists, not only the contemporary ones, have been making attempts to highlight the whiff of spontaneous conversation. The following is an excerpt from Anthony Trollope's Victorian perceptive satire (p. 255) *'The way We Live Now'*:

'*You've* asked Miss Ruby to be your wife a dozen times – *haven't you, John*? suggested Mixet.
'*I hove*'
'*And you* mean to be as *good* as your word?'
'I do'
'*And she* has promised to have you?'
'She *hove*'

'More nor once or twice?' To *this* Crumb found it *necessary* to bob his head. '*You're ready*? – *and willing?*'
'I *om*'
'*You're* wishing to have the banns said without any more delay?'
'There *ain't* no delay *'bout me* – never was'
'*Everything* is *ready* in your own house?'
'*They is*'
'*And* you *will* expect Miss Ruby to come to the scratch?'
'*I sholl*'

This interactive spontaneous dialogue between Joe Mixet and John Crumb exemplifies the way written language is often presented as if it were speech. Eight out of fifteen turns are questions eliciting only confirmation. The seven features previously explained are overlapping with each other. We can observe elliptic structures (*I hove, I om, I sholl*,), contractions (*You've, You're*), question tags (*haven't you?*), vocatives (*John*), deictic expressions (*this, everything*), non-clausal questions (*more nor once or twice*?), personal pronouns (*I ,you, she*), morphological (*ain't, 'bout*) and morphosyntactic (*I hove, they is, She hove, I om*) variants, evaluative adjectives (*good, ready*), conjunctions (*and*), modal auxiliaries (*will*).

Thereby, the acceptance of differences between written and spoken language is solely a matter of style, formality and performance. One could recall Saussure's 'langue/parole' dichotomy as well as Chomsky's 'competence/performance' to grasp the distinction between the underlying linguistic system and the actual production of utterances.

The complex nature of a conversation may be affected by a certain category of add-ons or non-clausal slots. Those occurring at the beginning of a turn are called heads and used to introduce a topic. They are usually noun phrases but cannot relate grammatically with the following construction. Their role is more discursive than grammatical. They, most importantly, direct the talk and foreground what is following. Sometimes, they connect to what preceded. The following examples were taken from Trollope's (1875) *'The Way We Live Now'*.

- '*My dear*, what can we do?' said Lady Pomona. (p. 158)
- '*Oh, Georgey*, don't say such horrid things as that,' pleaded her sister.(p. 185)
- '*And my wife* – does she know?' (p. 178)
- 'Who has told you anything about a lady at Islington?'
  '*A little bird*. There are always little birds about telling of ladies' (p. 344)

The tails, however, come at the end. They are retrospective i.e. they classify, ease, reinforce and comment on what has been said previously. Carter and McCarthy (1995), and Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan, (1999) referred to tails as interpersonal grammar necessary to set up and consolidate the participants' relationships, solidarity and attitudes. Among the tail slot items are:

- Question tags: 'You can't have anything to say against it, Miss; *can you*?' (p. 256)
- Interrogatives: 'You don't mean – *never?*' (p. 256)
- Noun phrase identifiers: 'Didn't she like him, Daniel?' (p. 259)
- Evaluative adjectives: 'I won't keep her here, no longer – *nasty, ungrateful*,…' (p.256)
- Comment clauses: 'Not like the Marquis of Westminster's, *I suppose*,' (p. 179)

- Vocatives: 'Didn't you say as you would, *Ruby*?' (p. 256)

Grammatical incompletion, for Thornbury and Slade (2006), is another main facet resulting from the online pressure and spontaneity of talk. Units, very often, remain incomplete. The speaker may:

- abandon what he is actually saying, and reformulate it or re-start a new utterance.
- be interrupted by his interlocutor who would say something else or complete the speaker's utterance.

Another pervasive aspect of a discussion is the elliptical clause. As opposed to a full clause that is used when initiating any new exchange, ellipsis is viewed as a deliberate reaction or a response to a prior initiation (clause). Words, phrases and sometimes whole clauses are omitted. Ellipsis can take place at the beginning of a turn (*front ellipsis*) for it has already been given or recovered from the context.

- 'You go *there* oftener than I do, and perhaps you could do it best,' said Sir Felix.
  '[where do I go] Go where?'
  '[you go] To the Board.' (p. 171)

The shared temporal and spatial context (extra-linguistic context) would incite participants to rely upon particular referential cohesive ties such as deictic expressions. Whenever a speaker uses a deictic whether it is a personal pronoun, a demonstrative, a tense, a certain place or time adverbial, he refers to a certain entity. (See Appendix for an example of a language-in-action talk where the proportion of deictic expression is very high)

Another grammatical form that is used differently in a discussion than any other register and that should be taken into account is the question. One can never conduct a conversation with only assertive statements even at the level of a sole 'adjacency pair' which is made up of a question-answer exchange. Any interactive and jointly constructed conversation rests on questions. Biber et al. (1999) contended that: "there is on average one question per 40 words in conversation." (p. 211). The categorization of question types is based on its form and function. Concerning the latter, a question is used to:

- elicit information:
  e.g. 'Why should Dolly marry such a creature as that? asked Sophia.
  '*Because everybody wants money*,' said Lady Pomona. (p. 97)
- elicit confirmation:
  e.g. 'He will not try again, you think?
  '*I am sure he will not*.' (p. 517)
- elicit agreement:
  e.g. 'It will be the proper thing to do – won't it?'
  '*Very good – thing to do*' (p. 185)

As for the form (syntactic structure), a question is:

- Yes / No question (polarity question):
  e.g. '*Did you say you would be my husband?* Answer me, sir'
  'I did say so' (p. 203)
- Wh-Question (identification question):
  e.g. '*Why should Dolly marry such a creature as that*? asked Sophia.
  'Because everybody wants money,' said Lady Pomona. (p. 97)
- Tag Question (tail question) asked at the end of a statement to confirm it.
  e.g. 'She has written to you – *has she not*?
  '*Yes*, she has written to me.' (p. 546)
- Choice Question (alternative question):
  e.g. '*Do you live in a house or a flat?*'
  'A house, of course' (Researcher's own example)

Moreover, a question can be interrogative i.e. based on a subject – verb inversion. It can be:

- a fully independent clause

e.g. 'What do you mean by that, Mr Melmotte?' asked Paul. (p. 280)

- truncated (elliptic)

e.g. '[where do I go] Go where?' (p. 171)

A declarative form of a question does occur very often in casual conversations particularly when participants share the same context. It primarily elicits confirmation.

e.g. '*And you will go yourself?*'

'Most assuredly,' said the Prime Minister. (p. 445)

Another component of grammar that is in tight connection with the interpersonal features of a discussion is modality. Participants use core modal verbs (must, should, may…), marginal modals (need to, ought to) or semi-modals (be going to, be supposed to, have to…) to show their feelings and express their attitudes and judgments. Biber et al. (1999) pointed out that the use of three types of modals is more common in discussion than any other registers:

- Permission / possibility / ability

e.g. 'Nobody *can* make you marry Mr Crumb, unless you please.' (p. 330)

- Obligation /necessity

e.g. 'I *must* say something.' (p. 326)

- Volition / prediction

e.g. 'But aunt will be letting on about my being out late o'nights, I know she will.' (p. 326)

During a conversation, speakers tend to use some modals more frequently than others. Biber et al.'s (1999) analysis of corpus data has shown that *'can' ,'will', 'would'*, as well as *'must'* are more common than, for example, *'ought to' or 'tend to'*. Within the systemic functional perspective, certain interpersonal dimensions are taken into account through the use of modality. Each participant negotiates his/ her own place within an ideational and interpersonal world. This is commonly known as tenor which Halliday (1978) defined as 'the cluster of socially meaningful participant relationships.' (p. 143)

The extract shown in Appendix B is highly modalized because the interpersonal relationships between the two participants, Roger Carbury and Ruby Ruggles, are built up according to Eggins and Slade's (2005) dimensions of role relations:

- attributed social roles that may come from force, authority, or expertise.
- emotional investment which can be positive or negative, permanent or transient.
- the level of familiarity being regular or intermittent, voluntary or involuntary.
- orientation to affiliation that refers to the values and beliefs of a social group to which a participant seeks identification as being an insider or outsider, accepted, marginalized or rebellious.

Roger Carbury is a Sir, a Squire; has authority and expertise. He is highly and voluntarily involved in the whole thing. He is attempting to bring the young lady to her senses. This latter, feels outraged by this story of arranged marriage. She rebels against the values of her social group at the risk of jeopardizing her life.

Conclusion

The present piece of reflection made some attempts to describe the centrality of the

social function of discussion along with its main characteristics namely being spoken, spontaneous, interactive, interpersonal, occurring in a shared context, endowed with an informal style and finally displaying the speakers' identities. It looked at its linguistic features in terms of grammar and shed light on the way spoken grammar is special and is different from written grammar. Such grammatical features were described and highlighted through the study of 'The Way We Live Now' a satirical novel written by the English author Anthony Trollope in 1875.

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Appendix

In the following extract from Trollope's '*The Way We Live Now'*, a participant, Roger Carbury, a Squire, is attempting to change Ruby Ruggles's, a young lady, mind about a potential arranged marriage. The two participants apprehend the current state of affairs quite differently. They express opposite opinions about the same thing. Each one is staking claims to a certain assessment and attitude. Modals outnumber the other factual verbs. They indicate how committed the two speakers are to those claims.

'As you found yourself obliged to run away,' said Roger, 'I'm glad that you *should* be here; but you ***don't mean*** *to* stay here always?'

'I don't know,' said Ruby.

'You *must* think of your future life. You ***don't want to*** be always your aunt's maid.'

'Oh, dear, no.'

'It *would* be very odd if you did, when you *may* be the wife of such a man as Mr Crumb.'

'Oh, Mr Crumb! Everybody is going on about Mr Crumb. I don't like Mr Crumb, and I never *will* like him.'

'Now look here, Ruby; I have come to speak to you very seriously, and ***I expect*** you to hear me. Nobody *can* make you marry Mr Crumb, unless you please.'

'Nobody *can't*, of course, sir.'

'But ***I fear*** you have given him up for somebody else, who *certainly won't* marry you, and who *can* only mean to ruin you.'

Nobody *won't* ruin me,' said Ruby. 'A girl *has to* look to herself and I ***mean to*** look to myself.' (pp. 330 -331)